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The only certain method of release from these millions of binding impressions (*samskaras*) is through the activity of divine love in the soul, which the Master awakens or intensifies; a love which is forgetful of self and thinks only of the Beloved. To be sure, the longing for the Divine Union which this love induces, makes an impression upon the mind too. It also binds; but it binds the soul to God, who eventually frees it.

ELIMINATING THE EGO

Baba explains that these imprints upon the mind of man originated at the moment when the individual 'drop'—in order to gain self—consciousness—emerged from the 'Creator Point' of the infinite ocean of Truth. With that 'drop's' unfolding evolution, the *samskaras* necessarily increased, until in man, the soul is literally encased by them. Whether in a physical body or out of it, the individual soul is enveloped by these mental and emotional barnacles; and not until they are dissolved by the grace of an incarnate Master can the soul become conscious of its divine essence. God-realization, therefore, is the balancing or mutual cancellation of all impressions and tendencies—good and bad; a condition in which the mind is as calm as a still lake. Only when there is something for the mind to focus its attention upon, does an intuitive knowing replace the thinking process. Aurobindo Ghose, a contemporary saint of India, well describes this state of mind: "When we have passed beyond thinkings, then we shall have knowledge; reason was the helper; reason is the bar.... Transform reason into ordered intuition; let all thyself be Light. This is thy goal."

Such a condition is naturally very difficult to achieve. If the mind tries to stop thinking, it tends towards the sound sleep state—that is, the unconscious. Even the greatest Yogis are unable to attain this quiescent state of mind permanently. At best, they induce in themselves periods of Samadhi, during which the mind activity is in abeyance, but when they return to normal consciousness their mental processes begin again and the egoistic store of binding impressions is increased.

To go in and out of *Samadhi*, Baba says, is like yielding to the drug habit. It only makes the soul crave for it more and more, and effects nothing stable in the sum total of consciousness. It is an evidence that one is still bound by the activity of the mind, even though on a high level. Not to *lose* consciousness, but to become conscious of the Unconscious, is the goal.

Egoism, in the sense which Baba uses it, means not merely to be selfish and self-opinionated. To be conscious of our separate existence in any way, is egoism. Such a slight thing as recalling that we did not sleep well last night is egoism; so, too, is any feeling of *self* concern. Hydra-headed though the ego is, its main branches are four: the *craving* which arises from the gratification of passion or desire, *fear*, *anger* and *greed*.

Of the various techniques suitable for the Western man or woman which can be used to weaken the ego, the more spiritual of the psycho--therapeutic methods are among the best. The self--facing and subsequent self--knowledge which psychological analysis engenders does much to clear the ground for deeper soul experience. Any genuine clarification of consciousness, whether through analysis or through religious conversion, helps to liberate the individual from the more blatant forms of egoism. However, the confession of consciously recognized sins takes care only of the more obvious shortcomings. The roots, which are the real source of our egoism, lie deeply embedded in the Unconscious, cleverly intertwined with that part of ourselves which we value most. If creative thought is our highest value, the roots of the ego may be found buried in the intellect. If feeling is our dominant characteristic, then we may expect to find the strangling roots in the emotional nature. To disentangle these roots of egoism from the real Self is a major operation, demanding the utmost skill and insight into the deepest caverns of consciousness; an operation to be performed by a spiritual Master who knows not only how to disintegrate the false personality, but at the same time how to release the true Self.

Perhaps there are only a few in any age whose intensity

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of spirit compels them to seek that final annihilation of the ego which shall make them conscious of their own God-hood. But for these few, we have the Master's word that when a soul is ready for such a step, wherever the individual may be, whatever his circumstances, the means are provided for him to make contact with a Perfect Master in the flesh. So definite is Baba on this point, that He says God himself would take on temporary embodiment in order to give Liberation to the soul which has earned it. Whenever the yearning of the soul for God reaches its climax, God finds a way to satisfy its need.

One outstanding example of this, known to many Western devotees of the spiritual life, is the story of St. Francis of Assisi. According to Baba the vision of the Seraph and the conferring of the Stigmata was St. Francis' initiation into the final phase of the spiritual path--God-realization; and, because no Master was in flesh in that part of the world at that time, Christ himself took form of the Seraph and drew his beloved servant across the great divide which separates the finite from the infinite; the human from the divine.

CHAPTER IV

DEATH

In FEBRUARY 1926, Baba received word of the sudden death of his elder brother Jamshed. Baba immediately called the *Mandali* together and had the telegram read to them. Only a few days before, Jamshed had been moving among them normally and cheerfully. He was a favorite with all the disciples and his sudden passing distressed them. Baba, however, undisturbed by the news, spoke of it in a most matter of fact way. When he asked the disciples if they felt grief, they all replied in the affirmative. Baba then used the occasion to point out the falsity of their attitude.

“But,” persisted one of them, “was he not your brother? And is he not dead?”

“He was indeed my brother, but only his body is dead. *He* is resting within myself.”

“How,” asked another of the group, “are we to know that?”

“By believing one who knows the secrets of life and death,” Baba admonished.

In reply to other questions from the disciples, the Master pointed out that death is common to all. “It is a necessary step in the progression of the soul, which merely changes into a new abode. Thus death means nothing more than changing your coat. Death may be compared to sleep, but the difference between death and sleep is that after death one wakes up again in a new body. People do not go into hysterics because a loved one goes to sleep, for the simple reason that they know the sleeping one will awaken again. The same attitude should prevail in regard to death. Death is but a longer sleep, with the so-called dead one waking up sooner or later in a new body.

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“Yet, what are the expressions we hear from the friends and relatives after a soul gives up its earth body, ‘My beloved father is dead!’ ‘Where is *my* sweetheart?’ ‘My provider has been taken!’ In spite of a great display of grief and pain in the house of death, is not the uppermost thought the ‘my’ and ‘mine’, rather than the welfare of the one who has gone?”

“Every day I see hundreds of thousands of my brothers dying, without feeling distressed by it. Why should my brother in the flesh be an exception? Death is an unavoidable fact of life, and to weep over it is either madness or selfishness. Unfortunately Jamshed is not really dead! If he were dead in the *true* sense--dead to all consciousness of *separate* existence--then you should rejoice, since that would mean he *truly lives*, because he would then be conscious of being one with God. Though I move about among you, playing with you, eating with you, doing all that a so-called living man does, I am really dead! I am living in the true sense, because in the true sense I am dead. Die, all of you, in that real sense, so that you may live eternally!”

The Master would have his disciples ‘die daily’ like St. Paul, so that with him they might say: “For me to *live* is Christ! Nevertheless, not *I* live, but Christ liveth in me.”

That Baba lifts the whole of life--and death--into the realm of spiritual beauty has been brought to my attention through an account just received from India of a ceremony commemorating the passing of some Indian men disciples. At the bottom of the Hill at Meherabad a small grave was dug and in it was placed the remains of Massa--Baba’s beloved old uncle, who had just died. Chanji’s death and burial having occurred in Kashmir, his bedding roll was lowered into the grave. Then, as the disciple Adi read a message from Baba, the Master, looking particularly radiant and beautiful, dropped rose after rose into the grave, as the names of Chanji, Massa and other deceased disciples were read aloud. My correspondent writes that it was the only funeral ceremony which she had ever attended in which death was robbed of all its sting. Sadness was replaced by joy which they all felt as they remembered those who had lived and died in the Master’s service.

For many of the disciples, in the early days, Jamshed's passing was their first experience of the death of a loved one and it accordingly stimulated in them many questions which Baba elucidated for them:

“In sound sleep there is consciousness but no ego, while in the state of death there is consciousness plus ego. After the death of the physical body, the soul remains, together with the limited ego, the mind and the subtle body. Only the outer garment has been left behind. From one to three days the subtle retains its connection with the gross body in a threadlike link, but never longer than that.” Baba further explained:

There are four main conditions of existence after the final severance with the gross body: 1. Upwards—2. Immediate reincarnation-3. Heaven or Hell— 4. Downwards.

1. *Upwards:*

Only the spiritually advanced beings go upwards-- that is, beyond and above the lunar sphere. There they stay until such time as they can reincarnate upon earth, since *perfection can only be realized in the gross human form*. During the interim, however, such advanced beings can and do utilize the bodies of earth beings to work out a certain type of *samskaras*.

2. *Immediate reincarnation:*

Those whose good and bad *samskaras* almost balance each other, but are not exactly equal—because if they were, such souls would at once attain to God-realization—reincarnate immediately on earth in human form.

3. (a) *Heaven:*

The person who has accumulated a large portion of good *samskaras*, and few bad ones, experiences through the subtle body the state called Paradise or Heaven. Here the capacity for enjoyment is increased tenfold,

and the sensitivity to suffering as the result of the few bad *Samskaras* is proportionately diminished. In other words, in this condition there is practically no suffering at all, but only enjoyment until all good *samskaras* are spent. However, the *impressions* of these *samskaras* remain and ultimately impel the soul to take another body on earth.

3. (b) *Hell*:

One who has contracted many bad *samskaras* during his earth life, experiences after death the state called Hell, wherein the susceptibility to suffering is increased tenfold and the capacity for enjoyment is proportionately diminished. In the hell state there is only suffering, until all those *samskaras* which induced this state are exhausted. The impressions remaining compel the soul to re-birth in a body.

4. *Downwards*:

Those who have acquired extremely bad *samskaras*, resulting from deeds like murder for lust, or greed, after death go downwards, into the region of animal spirits, to await a suitable gross form for earthly life.

The condition of one who arrives at death through suicide requires special explanation. Such a one goes neither upwards or downwards, neither does he immediately reincarnate, nor pass into Heaven or Hell. Such spirits remain suspended, closer to the earth plane, inasmuch as no entry is possible for them in any of the aforementioned states. Their condition is pitiable in the extreme, because they too feel the pull of their *samskaras*, but unlike those on earth, they have no gross body in which to fulfill their desires. These are the ones which in common parlance we call ghosts or disembodied spirits. It is these spirits whom mediums sometimes contact, and they prove a source of harm as well as good. Sometimes such a spirit tries to possess a human body with which it feels an affinity due to similarity of *samskaras*.

If, for example, a person who is otherwise eligible

for the Heaven state, commits suicide, he remains suspended near the earth plane, and if he comes in contact with a human being does him no harm. But if one who, through his bad *samskaras*, was eligible for Hell, dies before time, then he may become a source of harm and pain to those whom he contacts. The relatively good spirits, however, usually seek redress through Yogis, or they seek to serve a Perfect Master in the darkness of night. Yet, owing to the karmic law, it takes many cycles for such suspended spirits to have the chance of reincarnating again in human form, through the aid of the Master. The evil spirits run as far away as possible from a Perfect One. Both good and bad suspended spirits can sometimes work out their *samskaras* through a human being, if they can find one with similar *samskaras*, and suitable past karmic connections. However, the ignorant victims of such 'possession' by a suspended spirit may suffer physically and materially, though spiritually they are benefited to the extent of dispensing with three or four incarnations.

TRAINING-SCHOOL FOR SAINTS

By April, 1927, the recently opened School at Meherabad, with ten Indian boys of various castes, was under way, and in July, with the advent of fourteen boys from Persia, a special Persian section was added. The usual secular education was given to the boys by accredited teachers, who served without pay, while Baba instilled into their minds great spiritual truths. This instruction, which to an outsider might have seemed far beyond the boys' depth, was evidently understood intuitively by them, because by the end of November the divine spark which Baba had been implanting in their hearts, burst into a flame of supernal love which spread throughout the school.

In January, 1928, one Mohammedan boy of fifteen, now known as *Chota* (little) Baba, entered into the super-conscious state and remained unconscious of his body for four days. Concerning his experience, he writes:

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“One night, after delivering a spiritual--scientific discourse, the Master said to me, ‘Child, have faith and try your best; I will make gold out of you.’ These words of my beloved Master produced a great impression on my mind, quite out of proportion to what one might expect. They were surcharged with spiritual force and they made me very restless. A great spiritual longing took possession of me, and every waking moment I said to myself, ‘When will this dust of myself turn into gold?’ A great revolution was effected in me. Both boys and disciples wondered at my changed condition. I myself wondered at it. I could not sleep soundly, all relish for any kind of food vanished. Then, one day in the month of December, while partaking of dinner, I felt a great sensation in my body, from the crown of my head to the soles of my feet. Tears rolled down my cheeks and I could not refrain from crying out loud. Everything around me seemed to whirl and vanish. My blood became extremely hot and heat pierced my body from the inside. Then I swooned. When I regained consciousness, I saw my beloved Master sitting near me. I could not help crying. He calmed me and gave me a cup of milk. I could not think of anything or anybody but him. I meditated upon him continuously. Even in school hours, when I was apparently reading, my heart was with my Beloved. Separation from him made me suffer intensely. I was contented only when I was with him. This feeling was divine love, a gift from the Master—the love of which Shams-e-Tabriz, the Sufi poet and mystic speaks: ‘When Shamsul Hacked Tabriz opened the wings of Love, it made the Angel Gabriel run after Him.’

“One day, in January 1928, when the holy Master was imparting spiritual instruction to the boys and disciples, I began to feel that I was losing consciousness, and after blurting out, ‘Oh, Baba,’ I actually lost it. I became unconscious of everything but the divine form of the Master. On the fifth day my gross consciousness was restored to me, but with its restoration the Master’s divine form—which, it should be remembered, is not his *physical* body—did not vanish. Since then I see it in everything, in everybody, and

now enjoy ineffable bliss. Before I attained to my present sublime state I had often read and heard that this gross world is nothing but *Maya* (illusion). Now I see for myself that this is really true. God alone is Real. All else is unreal.”

MAGIC OF DIVINE LOVE

Other boys in lesser degrees experienced something of this same expansion of consciousness. One particularly arresting story is that of Ali, another Persian boy of fourteen. From the outset, Ali was deeply drawn to Baba and under his benign influence became one of the most ardent of the youthful devotees. But Ali’s father and uncle were not men of spiritual understanding. They easily succumbed to the rumors which were now rife concerning the school. It was whispered that the boys were being forced to adopt the Zoroastrian faith; that they were being detained at the school against their will; that the food was meager, and other equally groundless accusations.

Man is so prone to judge others in terms of his own limitations and to see only the surface circumstances or action. To look beneath appearances to the underlying *motive* requires a degree of spiritual maturity which few seem to possess. Man, in condemning a Christ because he associates with harlots and wine-bibbers, reveals his own impure state of mind. He cannot imagine how one might choose to make friends with such people and yet remain untainted by their shortcomings. Only when we are, in a measure, approaching closer to the Christ stature can we comprehend the infinite compassion and pure love which inspires such a One to fulfill his mission to humanity in the way he deems best, regardless of man’s petty-mindedness.

But Ali’s father quite evidently had not reached that status, for when he saw the profound influence which Baba had upon his son, he immediately suspected something sinister, and feared he would lose him to this strange and unpredictable Master, who, some of his friends assured him, was a black magician! So, he withdrew Ali from the school and returned with him to Bombay, a three-hour train journey from Meherabad. But the magic of divine love was more

potent than a father's fear. Ali escaped from his home where he had been kept under strict guard, and made his way back to his beloved Master. But only for a few hours was he permitted to enjoy his re-union with Baba. The father again appeared and Ali was once more made a prisoner in his own home. But again he escaped, undergoing severe hardship and trial as he worked his way back to Meherabad. Four times he escaped and four times was he forced to return to his home, until finally the father became convinced that Baba's influence was not only potent but beneficent.

This boy, Ali, was one of the disciples who came with Baba on his first visit to America. By that time he was about eighteen, a dynamic spirit full of spontaneous humor and play, yet with fine dignity and poise, and utterly devoted to his Master. In more recent years Baba has pushed Ali far away from any outer dependence upon him or contact with him; showing how, in the process of spiritual training, he requires his disciples to rely solely upon their inner contact with him.

ANOTHER SAGA OF A CHILD'S LOVE

Ahmed Muhammed, a little boy of ten, was another whose love for Baba manifested itself in a most dramatic way. He was removed from the school at the same time as Ali. Though by every means his parents and relatives tried to reconcile him to the separation from Baba, the little chap continued to yearn for his beloved Master to such a degree that after four months of living at home he suddenly determined to make his way back to Meherabad. Without bedding roll, food or money he started on foot for his destination. He managed to sell three silver buttons in his shirt for three *annas* (about eight cents), a few of which he paid out for a short train journey, which would take him quickly out of range of his family or friends. Then he proceeded to tramp across the country in the scorching Indian sun. By the time he had walked about fourteen miles, it was night fall and he found himself out in the open country. Muscle-weary, he climbed up into a large tree, which he thought would be safer than the ground; there he tried to rest

stretched out on some broad limbs. But since the Indian nights are cool in winter, and he was without covering, his sleep was very fitful. At dawn, he resumed his journey.

Having only two *annas* left, he knew his breakfast must be slim, so he satisfied himself with a few cold biscuits and a handful of water. At a village, an inn-keeper took pity on the bedraggled little boy and offered to secure transportation for him in one of the passing motor buses. But Ahmed feared he might encounter someone who knew him and who would report having seen him to his family; so he refused the offer and continued his way on foot. At noon he spent another few coins for some sweets, and rested a little while under the shade of a tree.

As he was hiking along the road, a European motorist gave him a lift to Poona, which considerably shortened his journey. His evening meal consisted of a handful of nuts for which he spent his last money. That night he tried first to sleep on a bench beside the public road, but the cold winds sent shivers through his poorly protected body. Later he curled up in the corner of a building and managed to doze a little.

The next morning, being in the neighborhood of Babajan, his Master's Master, Ahmed stopped off to pay his respects to her. She appeared to be sleeping with her head under a shawl when the boy reached her; so he tiptoed softly and when within a few feet from her, he bowed reverently before her prostrate form. At that moment Babajan's beautiful snow-white head emerged from its covering, and peering directly at Ahmed, gave him a look of melting love, which sent a thrill of delight through the little fellow's being.

Feeling recharged by the contact with her loving presence, he proceeded on his journey. At noon an old man offered him some bread and chutney which the boy gladly accepted, as this was the first substantial food he had eaten in forty eight hours. That night, upon the old man's advice, Ahmed took shelter in the village mosque, but since it was cold, he slept but little.

The next day he subsisted on the fruit and leaves of the tamarind trees which grew along the road. After walking

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sixteen miles he felt exhausted from both fatigue and hunger, so he rested a short while. Then with sheer force of will he hiked for another six miles, until he reached a railway station. Here he tried again to rest, but the fire of hunger now raged within him so fiercely that he was driven to beg for food. He approached a Mohammedan who led him to the railway station restaurant and ordered rice and curry for him. But the boy, thinking the curry would contain meat—the eating of which would have violated Baba's order—said he preferred only tea and bread. Later, his hunger somewhat appeased and his body relaxed, he fell into a sound sleep on the station bench, until an officious policeman awakened him and drove him away from the station. The remainder of the night he passed under a staircase. Here he was comforted by his Master's presence in a dream.

The following day he walked from dawn to sundown without food and little rest. At another railway station an old lady on the platform shared with him an unsolicited meal. That night he ventured again to take refuge in a railway station and this time was undisturbed.

On the sixth day he started his journey at daybreak. This time he fed himself on *jawari* plants in the passing fields, eating as he walked, for now he knew himself to be within a short distance from his goal—Meherabad. Once more he begged, not for food, but for flowers to be given as an offering to his Master. This was Baba's neighborhood, where he is held in great reverence by the country-folk. In response to the boy's request, a gardener eagerly presented him with an armful of roses. Sitting by the road, the child used some of the flowers to weave a crown for the King of his heart. A little while later a haggard and hollow-eyed little fellow was placing his offerings upon his Master's head.

Thus was a completed another saga of a child's love for Baba, the Master. We in the West, who know so pitifully little of higher states of consciousness, may think we have disposed of such a phenomenon as the magnetic drawing of these children to Baba, when we apply to it the psycho-logical term of 'fixation.' Even if we granted this, what have

we explained? What do we actually know of the tremendous motivation which must inspire a child to undergo such severe hardships and suffering? Certainly no merely human desire, however intense, would induce small boy to forego sleep and food for six days, while compelling his body to undergo the rigorous ordeal of walking fourteen to twenty miles a day. In spite of any possible prejudices such incidents compel the admission that Baba is certainly no ordinary man, to be measured by the usual intellectual yardstick.

While in India, I met a number of these 'school' boys, now grown into manhood and wholly dedicated to their Master's service. For the sake of those who quite sincerely may think that such spiritual upheaval as Baba caused in these young lives might be disastrous in the later effect, I can say with equal sincerity that I have never met men more normal or finely balanced, mentally and emotionally.

The impressions of a European disciple, Mr. C. Leik, who lived at Meherashram during these days, illumine this phase of Baba's work:

"The Master's love knows no bounds. One must see him among his Ashram boys to understand the tie of affinity which exists between Baba and his pupils. How touching it is to watch these urchins crowd around him when he is in their dormitory! They rush from their beds to embrace him, placing their tiny arms around his waist, while Baba, playing with them, teasing them gently, fills their hearts with childish glee."

TURNING WESTWARD

In March, 1928, Baba laid his first cable to the West, when he sent his disciple, Rustom Irani, to England, for the ostensible purpose of bringing back some English boys for his school. But Rustom found little response in England to the idea of English boys attending a school in India, conducted by a 'native.' Even less were the authorities interested in the spiritual aspect of the school which Rustom described to them. He did his best, but this phase of his mission was destined for failure. A cable from Baba ordered

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him to return. It was a dismal six weeks' visit, made additionally trying by the fact that Rustom had been directed by Baba to eat only bread, butter and tea while in the West. This diet in a cold, wet spring in England, especially for one accustomed to the tropics, must have been anything but heart-warming!

But the darkest hour of Rustom's disappointment was high-lighted for him by one experience of singular significance. He received one day a peculiar letter, postmarked Portsmouth, in which the writer, Mr. X* acknowledged the receipt of Rustom's message requesting an interview. Not only had Rustom not sent him a message; he had never heard of the man. He concluded that it was a mistake in delivery and got in touch with all the Iranis in London, but none of them claimed the message as theirs. Curious, Rustom felt impelled to travel to Portsmouth to the given address. Mrs. X met him at the door and said that her husband was expecting him.

When the formalities of introduction were over the man dimmed the light in the room and began to talk as though he were receiving messages on a wireless set, although nothing of the sort was visible. In a low and impressive voice he informed his astonished visitor:

"I see the Master. It is two o'clock in the morning in India." Then he described exactly the Master's hut near the Ashram. "Other Eastern Masters of his plane," he concluded, "are not easily accessible. They don't care to be disturbed at such an hour. But he is of a very loving nature. I have just told him that the authorities will not allow the boys to be taken to India. But the Master replies that there is no power on earth that can stand in the way of his work He does not, however, really want these boys. He wanted to lay the first spiritual cable between the East and the West. Up to now, the East has been under the supervision of Eastern Masters; and the West by Western Masters. He now wants to merge these divisions; and that is the real reason why he sent you here. You are carrying, without

* (*Mr. X requested that his identity remain undisclosed*)

your being aware of it, a sort of wireless connection, and it affects all those whom you meet.”

RETIREMENT AT TIGER VALLEY

In January, 1929, about a year and a half after its inception, the first steps were taken for the disbanding of the school phase of Meherashram, and in April of that year Baba journeyed with a few of his *Mandali* to Panchgani – a hill resort about 200 miles from Bombay. While there Baba decided to go into retirement and directed some of the disciples, together with paid laborers, to dig a cave fifteen feet deep, on a hilltop in Tiger Valley, near Panchgani.

This valley, as the name suggests, is infested with tigers and leopards. The latter may often be seen crossing fields and public roads, even in Panchgani itself. One evening some people saw a leopard following the same track which one of Baba’s men had taken but a few minutes before. No mishap occurred however; the disciple only heard of it later from the townspeople. The only protection which the *Mandali* had against these marauders at night was a bamboo stick, which Baba told them all to keep near by, and a hurricane lamp which they kept outside their huts. The door of the hut occupied by the disciple on duty, was kept slightly open a few inches, in order to enable him to see any person or animal approaching their locality. In such a circumstance, anyone on duty was instructed to alarm the others by striking the kerosene lamp with bamboo stick. The disciples relate that this did not seem to them a very adequate safeguard from fierce, nocturnal prowlers!

Thus passed an anxious fortnight for the *Mandali*, when suddenly, one night at eight o’clock, Baba called his men together and told them he must leave immediately, because his particular work had been accomplished.

The fasting and seclusion which Baba had been observing at Tiger Valley continued for three months at Meherabad. Concerning this periodic fasting, Baba said that when a Perfect Master fasts, it is tantamount to all peo-

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ple of the world fasting, because he is in them all; and it effects spiritual benefits for the whole of mankind.

WESTERN DISCIPLES AT TIGER VALLEY

To this cave, which he had blest with his presence, Baba sent two of his Indian men--Behramji, for twenty-one days on a severe fast of water only, and Pleader, who had for some time been fasting and observing silence. Then, some years later, when the Western group were with Baba in Nasik, he sent Garrett Fort--our dear friend from Hollywood--to stay in the cave for two nights. This episode was not without its humorous side. Chanji, Baba's secretary at that time, was appointed to accompany Garry to the cave and lock him in for the night. Garrett heard soft padding of feet all around the cave and sometimes from the distance, other sounds which he was sure must have emanated from striped and spotted throats! However, he felt fairly secure locked within the cave from which Chanji would release him in the morning. So he settled himself down for a night of repose. Then he heard strange scrapings and patterings in his nice secure cave!

He lighted his lantern and looked around. The place was infested with every specie of small animal life! Mice scampered merrily about; lizards played hide and seek; beetles crackled and buzzed; ants of all varieties, hues and magnitudes built their miniature worlds just at his feet; mosquitoes reminded him of his boyhood days in New Jersey, and roaches came closer to his fastidious person than they had ever before been permitted. He spent most of the night making a mental list of the sprays and powders which he would purchase the next day when he descended to the village below.

True to his resolution, he returned to the cave the next night armed with everything which the town afforded as a protection against the pests--powder guns, liquid sprays, citronella and incense. Again he was locked in the cave for the night. He lit his lantern and undid the packages. Then he looked around. There was no sign of even the tiniest ant! He sat on the roughly constructed cot and

watched as he quietly waited for the onslaught which he expected would shortly begin. But not a moving thing appeared. After meditating for a while, he inspected the cave again, and finding it as free from vermin as his immaculate home in Beverly Hills, he fell asleep. He was awakened in the morning by Chanji banging the door. Together they returned to Nasik. When told of this experience, Baba laughed heartily.

In contrast to this was the experience of the one Western woman, Elizabeth Patterson, who a few years later, while staying at Panchgani with Baba and his group, spent a night in the same cave. Earnestly, she had asked Baba if she might spend a night in the cave and he had promised her that she might, but that he would set the time. Some weeks elapsed, with no further mention of it by Baba, so Elizabeth reminded him of his promise. Smilingly he asked: "Do you wish to go now, or wait until the time is right?" A few days later Baba told her that the time had come for her to go to the cave, and he instructed her to remain for precisely twelve hours. Baba and the women disciples accompanied her to the cave and, at 6 p.m., exactly, Baba locked her in, handing her the key through the iron grating. She says that the last thing she remembered, before being left alone for the night, was Baba's hand extended through the iron bars, resting upon her head for a moment, as if in blessing. As the group disappeared around the bend of the road, profound stillness surrounded her. The fleeting thoughts which passed through her mind she controlled by applying instructions which Baba had given her. She was to concentrate throughout the night. Exactly at ten minutes before seven she lit her lantern, as Baba had ordered.

As she prepared to concentrate she heard heavy thuds, like steps approaching on the path, and she waited anxiously for something to appear. But the sound, though close, gradually diminished and she concluded that it was perhaps a cow or buffalo which had been grazing on the mountainside. Through the cave opening she could see four

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stars in the shape of a kite, resembling the Southern Cross, which stood out more brilliantly than the others.

Suddenly, a shock, like electricity, passed through her body from head to foot. It continued in waves of undulating currents and became so strong that two or three times it seemed to lift her, as though it were a 'rushing wind.' Then she felt herself swinging into space with a blanket swaying unevenly beneath her. She thought if only she could remain on it--as if on a magic carpet--she would be carried along safely, but she rocked so violently that she was impelled to call Baba's name. Immediately the rocking subsided. Later, when the projection into space ceased, she found herself with hands and arms crossed upon her chest. They were so numb that it was some time before she could move them.

Considerable time had seemingly elapsed when she heard the sound of voices which she recognized as those of her friends. They appeared inside the cave and called her that it was five o'clock, and that they had been sent to summon her. But she recalled Baba telling her not to leave the cave until six a.m. sharp. Wondering what she should do she decided to do what Baba himself had told her. At that moment he appeared gleaming in the entrance; brilliant light flooded the cave. Seemingly he answered her mental query: "Do as I said. Do not leave until six."

When she looked at her watch it was almost six o'clock. As she rose, preparing to leave the cave, daylight was faintly penetrating the iron bars. She felt refreshed and invigorated. On her return to their bungalow, she asked Baba if she had dreamed these experiences, to which he explained that she had been neither asleep nor awake but in a borderline state of consciousness. "You actually experienced those things physically. Later you would understand their full meaning."

In the succeeding months, following Baba's return to Meherabad from Tiger Valley, he visited a dozen or more places, fasting at times and occasionally in seclusion.

A child's dream highlights a trip which Baba and his disciples made at this time to Srinagar in Kashmir. The day of Baba's arrival in this beautiful city, the four-year old child of a boat--house keeper had told his father of an impressive dream he had had the night before. A man, whom the child thought to be God, had come to him and told him that he was coming to rent his father's boat--house. "Go find this God and bring him to our house," the little fellow implored his father. The man, however, went on about his business, paying no attention to the child's importuning.

Later in the day Baba and his party arrived in Srinagar and after looking over a number of boat--houses, he selected the one belonging to the father of this child. At that moment the little boy appeared and with unmistakable joy declared loudly to his astonished parent: "Father, this is the very God I saw in my dream!"

From Srinagar Baba took his group to Harwan at the foothills of the Himalayas. Here, in a hut especially built for him, he retired into seclusion for four days. This particular hill is of special interest, for it was here, Baba tells us, that the body of Jesus was buried, after having been brought from Palestine by his disciples Thaddeus and Bartholomew. Jesus, before the crucifixion, had given specific instructions to these disciples concerning the disposition of his physical body after he had given it up. Corroborating part of this story is the tradition that these two disciples were known to have been in India shortly after crucifixion.

Baba had told us that the body in which Jesus was seen after the Resurrection was his spiritual body and not the gross form as many people are inclined to believe. The spiritual body--Baba relates-- is not a ghostly, ephemeral form, but partakes of all the physical characteristics and whatever degree of density the Master chooses to give it.

THIRD TRIP TO PERSIA

In September of this year, Baba left with a group of twelve of his disciples on the third trip to Persia. As

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usual he travelled third class, sleeping on deck. Among the stewards, who were Goanese (Roman Catholics of Portuguese descent) was one who attended to Baba's going and coming from bath in second class, which had been arranged for him by a devotee. One day he asked the disciple who accompanied Baba: 'Who is this saintly person? Is he your living Christ?'

On board Baba's identity was not disclosed, and he saw no one outside of his own party, except a Mohammedan member of the engine room crew, who used to go daily to Baba and stand silently in worship before him for a few moments. On the last day of the voyage Baba gave him his handkerchief, which brought tears of joy to the man's eyes.

BABA PROCLAIMED IN PERSIA

This trip to Persia differed from the others in that Baba and his party received a very cordial welcome from rich and poor alike. Though his visit had not been advertised in advance, the news of his arrival spread like brush fire; with the result that all their shopping places he was greeted by throngs of worshippers which included some of the highest ranking government officials and military officers. These men declared themselves as believing that Baba's presence in their country was a symbol of its redemption, which could only be achieved through the agency of the Masters of Perfection. In their zeal, they wanted to arrange for their king, Reza Shah, to meet Baba and publicly proclaim him as their country's spiritual benefactor. This, however, Baba did not wish. One private reception was given in Yezd by a leading merchant of the city, but the townspeople soon got news of Baba's presence and crowded into the grounds by the thousands. A number of people narrowly escaped serious injury as the eager throng pushed their way toward Baba, that they might see and if possible touch him.

One significant incident occurred when an important leader of the Bahai sect arrived by airplane from Shiraz. His purpose in coming was to question Baba; but when he

saw the Master and felt his divine radiation, he prostrated himself at Baba's feet, crying, 'You are God!' As he rushed out through the crowd, he proclaimed: 'I have seen God!' In this recognition of Baba's spiritual status, he was revealing his own high development, since God can only be recognized by one in whom God is awakened. He was also exemplifying the teaching of the great Bahai Founders--to acknowledge God wherever one finds him.

Another evidence of the understanding with which Baba was greeted on this trip was given at Bam, where the Master and his disciples were resting for a few days. A man in military uniform, with several stripes on his chest asked permission to see the Master. At first he was told by one of Baba's men that no private interviews were being given. But the officer insisted that the 'Holy One' be informed that a beggar was outside, asking alms of him. When told this, Baba consented to see him. The officer marched in, but with his hands folded reverently across his chest. He first saluted the Master in military fashion, then he removed his sword and fell upon his knees, kissing Baba's proffered hand with reverence. When Baba asked who he was, he replied, "Your humble slave!" To Baba's repeated query he answered, "I am nothing in the presence of your Holiness." Then Baba explained that he wished to know his military rank. "A general," the man replied humbly. "To die in the service of one's country is great indeed, but to die in the service of God is greater," Baba told him. "Indeed, Holy Master, I understand," the man agreed, and implored Baba's grace in his search for God. Baba assured him of his help. The general then declared that though he belonged to Persian army, he believed that the salvation of his country lay not in its military strength, but in spiritual rebirth. He besought Baba's help on behalf of his unfortunate country and its ignorant people. "That is why you see me here," Baba assured him.

One more incident illumines his trip for us. In the street opposite to the house where Baba stayed while in Bam, was the 'seat' or headquarters of a Saint, or *Buzoorg*, as such a one is known in Persia. He was held in great

reverence by the local people and had a large following. The first evening when Baba appeared for a walk with his disciples, the Saint arose from his seat and paid his respects to Baba whom he seemed to know. Later, he told all those who approached him that there was in their midst the "Emperor of all Saints."

TESTING AND TEMPERING

The Persian trip was not, however, without the difficulties and trials usually attendant upon Baba's work. The negative forces of illusion, which many good people think it well to deny, Baba uses, even as he does the positive forces, to teach necessary lessons to his followers. To be *comfortable* is certainly not an objective which Baba fosters in his close associates. In fact, as one looks back over the years of contact with him, and hears and reads of the experience of his other devotees and disciples, one must admit that one object of training is to develop in us the capacity to endure hardship or pain cheerfully; to accept the dark side of life as *complementary* to the light, not as opposing it; to integrate it into one's conscious life and to raise it to a higher potential; to cultivate a kind of divine patience in bearing of tension, and in the overcoming of disappointment and unfulfilled desires. He sees and experiences life as a *whole*, and it is what he trains his disciples also to do. But it should not be thought that this is merely stoical training for grim endurance. The most severe hardships are shot through with shafts of redeeming light and compensating love. As the pilgrim advances, the opposites tend more and more to merge into a Whole, so that joy is seen to be but the other side of pain, and is only realized in its fullness as one's capacity to endure suffering deepens. No, following such a Master as Baba is not a comfortable experience! Of necessity the desire for comfort must be relinquished. This journey is an adventure for hardy souls who are fully prepared to endure the hardships of the pilgrimage with hearts courageous and true, because they know that the goal toward which they are being skillfully led by their Master is fair country of perfected consciousness in

which the individual becomes permanently aware of his true God-Self.

PERILS OF THE DESERT

Such hearts were those of Baba's group who accompanied him on the return trip through the Persian desert. The main outlets from Persia are by sea, but for a reason which later becomes apparent, Baba chose the land route and the frontier station of Duzdab, which involved great dangers and risks.

A private bus was chartered for the party and an expert mechanic engaged as the driver. Baba particularly stipulated that, for spiritual reasons, not a single package or piece of luggage other than theirs was to be carried on the bus. To this the driver agreed. But just before starting from Bam, when Baba sent one of his men to see that his instructions had been carried out, he discovered that the driver had tucked in underneath, two bags of almond shells. The driver made the excuse that they were very light. But Baba was displeased. The man had broken his promise. Baba said nothing to the man, however, and insisted that they start at once on their long journey. The disciples, knowing from long past experience that when an order of Baba's is disobeyed trouble ensues, were prepared for anything; and, true to form, difficulties were not long in developing.

The bus was practically new as were also the tires, but within an hour they had two punctures, to the utter amazement of the driver. Then suddenly something went askew with the radiator. Steam poured out through the cap, though water had just been poured in. Upon inspection there seemed to be no visible reason for the radiator to steam, and the driver became even more puzzled. Again he poured in water and off they started, but within a few minutes steam again seeped out through the cap. Completely baffled, the driver stopped and examined the motor. This time he discovered a crack at the bottom of the radiator through which the water was trickling out. Creeping along at a tortoise-pace, they reached the next oasis in

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safety. Here the driver worked all night trying to repair the damage, but in such an isolated desert village it was impossible to get the necessary materials for the job. For two more days he continued trying and finally with ingenuity he made a paste of powder and white of egg, which he spread over the crack. Repeatedly, as he worked, he was heard to mutter: “*Ya Allah* (Oh my God) I never had such an experience before!” But now, he was sure he had found the solution to the problem. He started the engine and all went well for a few minutes. Then the water began to ooze through the crack. In this moment of despair a sudden realization dawned upon him and he fled to the room of one of the disciples, crying: “Brother, I see now why all this has happened. I broke my promise to your Master, and this mishap is the result of my ignorance and folly! I feel ashamed to face him. Won’t you plead for me, please?”

The disciple understood and sympathized. The man was taken to Baba who forgave him with this admonition: “Never disregard the instruction of a Master. And never break your word to anyone.”

Baba then told him to return to Bam, to drive slowly, and to bring back another bus, immediately. With the leaking radiator, the trip seemed impossible to the driver, but Baba told him not to worry and assured him he would see that he reached his destination safely. It seemed like a hopeless undertaking to the man, but he accepted Baba’s encouragement and started back on the four-hour journey, which he made without further mishap. True to his promise he secured another bus, but he sent it back with another driver. He had evidently had enough discipline for the time being.

Through this experience of marking time in the scorching heat of a desert village, the *Mandali* learned to what length Baba would go, or subject his disciples, in order to teach one soul a necessary lesson.

With the new bus and driver they resumed their trip across the burning sands. Two of them were so ill they had to lie prone on the seats, while others were crammed in like sardines, unable to move for hours at a time. About

a hundred pieces of luggage of all sizes and shapes filled every corner. There were *kujas* (earthen water-pots) filled with water, which must be kept in upright positions. Upon these jars depended their water supply for the remainder of the trip. When the wheels of the bus stuck in the sand, they had to untie the heavy planks resting on the top of the bus and force them under the wheels of the truck. Sweating, tired and thirsty, after this strenuous work, they would squeeze themselves into the bus again. Their throats would be parched with thirst, yet, because their water supply was so limited, they could only moisten their lips. They had no idea when the ordeal would be over. But trusting in Baba, and knowing he was sharing this painful and hazardous adventure with them, they were confident he would bring them through in safety.

The driver warned them that it would be at least six days before they would reach their destination. He was tired and nervous, and complained of pains all over his body. He vowed he would not continue. But Baba, with loving encouragement pushed him on, and when it seemed he had missed the track in the sand, Baba would advise him which direction to take.

Much to the driver's amazement, they arrived at their destination in three days instead of the six he had predicted. He had been crossing this desert for years and even under the best conditions, with the lightest load, had never completed the journey in less than five days. Under adverse conditions-such as he considered the present trip to be- it often took ten to twelve days.

Six months later, when one these disciples was in the British Consulate in Bombay, arranging for the passport of another of Baba's Circle, he learned from the official there that Duzbad, the frontier station, was the only one through which Baba could possibly have passed without signing his signature to the visa. (it will be remembered that he had stopped writing some years before.) Through the main seaports he could never have passed without all the required red-tape. Now the disciples knew why he had

chosen out-of-the-way Duzbad and the difficult desert route, instead of the ocean route.

THE MASTER AND THE MAGDALENES

Upon his return from Persia Baba made Nasik his headquarters, radiating from there on continued journeys which included a trip to the Himalayas and another to Persia. While in that country he visited one of the sacred places of pilgrimage to which people from all parts of Persia journey to pay tribute to Imam-one of the twelve disciples of the prophet Mohammed. One day while there, Baba and three of his disciples were followed by two women. When they arrived at their quarters Baba asked the women to come in. He then removed the covering which he wore over his head as a disguise, and bade the women-whom he recognized to be prostitutes-to sit near him while he talked lovingly to them of spiritual things and advised them to give up their way of life. He gently touched their faces with his hand, as he poured upon them the radiance of his divine love. The women, feeling deeply stirred by the profound purity of The Master's presence, wept bitterly and promised they would never again pollute the bodies which his redeeming hand had blessed.

Baba, even as Jesus was, is beyond sex-as he is beyond all opposites-though he uses the principle underlying it for his cosmic game. His teaching states that the whole created universe is the product of the law of magnetism-attraction and repulsion. If his skill in using this law is as great in cosmic spheres as it is in the field of training disciples-and I have no doubt that it is-it must be vast indeed.

Once, when asked by a London reporter if he were married, he smiled and replied that for him sex did not exist. Perhaps this accounts in part for his freedom from complications with the sex-ridden women who hound the footsteps of most spiritual teachers. Though I have seen many of this type approach Baba, it seems as though in his presence a transmutation of lower desires instantly takes place.

He explained to us once in India: "My mind is like the ocean-all the good and bad in the universe are drowned

in it. If you think good thoughts I absorb them; if you think bad ones, I absorb them too. If filth gets into the water of a small pool, it pollutes it, but if the filth flows into the ocean it is absorbed by it and is no longer filth. Your limited minds become stagnant with a few bad thoughts, but even universal bad thoughts cannot affect my ocean-like mind.

DIVINE DETACHMENT

Just as Baba is unaffected by the evil in the world which expresses itself in lustful thoughts or actions, so is he unperturbed by it when it takes the form of slander against himself. He knows that all spiritual work is strengthened by opposition. “The fun of the game lies in meeting resistance-facing and transcending it.”

Baba’s attitude toward the spoken or written defamations directed against him is one of bored indifference. “I consider all who are not God-realized as mad and pay no attention to what they do or say about me or my work, favorable or otherwise,” he once told us when we were discussing a book which had just been published, in which the author had displayed his negative projection against Baba.

“People who speak ill of me should not be condemned. They, too, are *unconsciously* serving my work, because they often think of me.” From Baba’s detached viewpoint this resistance intensifies the spiritual current of his work.

That Baba is an enigma which puzzles the rational mind is a fact substantiated by all of his closest associates. It is not, therefore, surprising that those who judge others in terms of their limited perceptions should project upon Baba their own limitations. All of us who are close to the Master have confessed our inability to understand many of his methods. But it seems wholly immature to *condemn* what one does not understand. The ill-founded criticisms which have sometimes been leveled against Baba serve as boomerangs against the critics. In the words of Frank LaFarge, the celebrated painter: “No man judges a work of art. It judges him.”

It is Baba’s function to stir up the unconscious forces

in man-dark as well as light-and if for a time the negative forces seem to predominate in an individual, he will inevitably project them upon the Master. Some people-particularly his own countrymen-are outraged because he does not fit their preconceived pattern of a Master. They forget that a Master does not follow patterns: he breaks them.

TRUE SEEKER OF GOD

In contrast to such critics was the reaction of Mr. C. Leik, upon whom Baba made a quite a different impression, no doubt due to the fact that he came as a humble devotee seeking God, not as one over-burdened by prejudice and opinion. He had left Europe with Swami Vivekananda's famous *Song of the Sannyasin* ringing in his heart and inspiring him with the high ideals of discipleship which it proclaimed. But after an year in the modern Ashram in the Himalayas, he discovered how great is often the discrepancy between the ideals of the Master and the practice of those who follow after him. Orthodox external observances were strictly adhered to, but the *spirit* of the true renunciation was missing.

He had been a spiritual disciple of the late Shri Ramakrishna, another Perfect Master of the last century, and was inwardly directed by him to leave the Himalayan Retreat and go to the Master Baba. When his companions heard of his decision they tried their utmost to dissuade him. He would, they assured him, be hypnotized by Baba and paraded by him as a European convert to further his 'propaganda.' At first he would be full of enthusiasm, but soon this would dwindle. Consequently, he was somewhat bewildered when he arrived at Meherabad in October, 1928.

"But how utterly different I found Meher Baba and his Ashram to be!" he wrote. "The Master is a personification of the highest spirituality and love; and the atmosphere of Meherashram reflects the deep peace and radiance of my beloved Master, Baba, as he is affectionately called by the devotees. There is nothing about him of the awe-inspiring solemnity that is attributed to the occult hierarchy. That

love, which all my life I have craved, here I experience more and more as the days pass. One day Baba said he would help me by awakening in my heart the realization of his divine Presence, and later this happened. I became aware of the Self as the Self of all beings-and I know also that the One we call Baba has always been with me and will ever be, for all Eternity.” Then he added: “Truly it has been said that it takes a saint to recognize a saint, a Christ to recognize a Christ. Only those fortunate ones who have this grace given to them by the Master can know his true greatness and realize *who* he really is.”

CONTRARY TO REASON

To average Westerners-even to those somewhat spiritually conditioned-the irrational methods which a Perfect Master uses often constitute a stumbling block to their acceptance of him. In the record of the life of Jesus as it has come down to us the daily intimate details of that perfect life are denied us. We have only the main facts of his activities and the essentials of his teachings which was, moreover, largely for the masses. How the disciples themselves were trained, what they were intimately taught, has been given to us only in fragments. For this reason we apt to think of Jesus as conforming more to a rational standard of perfection. But in this, I believe, we are in error. Like Baba, like other Perfect Masters of whom I have heard or read, he, too, must often have bewildered the rational minds of his followers, even as today the deeper aspects of his spiritual teachings bewilder the average Christian; for instance, when he tells them to take no thought for morrow as to what they shall wear or eat. Do not most of the interpreters of his words try to explain that way? For the average man of body consciousness, bound hand and foot to the material world, this is an impossible command. “Lovely poetry, but wholly impractical,” we say and relegate it to a realm of fantasy.

To illustrate the fact that a Master functions on a plane far beyond three-dimensional consciousness, even beyond man-made ethics or morals-though in the highest sense vir-

tuous, because he is never motivated by self-interest-Baba once related to his Western group the following story:

“If you read the life of Krishna (a Perfect Master of ancient days) you will find that he often said, did, and ordered things to be done which seemed wholly contrary to common sense. He used to tell one thing to one person and contradictory things to another person; sometimes he would give conflicting orders to different people at the same time. Krishna used to bluff, lie and do all sorts of queer things, but solely for the upliftment of humanity. He was perfect and one in consciousness with God; so he found himself in everything and in everyone. Knowing the many diversified needs of man, he used different methods for different people.

“Similarly, I use illusion to draw my disciples out of illusion. The West does not properly understand this as the East does. When there is no self-interest and no selfish motive, but only the intention of liberating others, whatever one may do, will not bind him with egoistic chains, or the others whom he would help. I have to use infinite means for my infinite work. So whenever I tell you to do something, however unusual, you may be sure it is always for your highest good.”

Later, illustrating the importance of obedience on the part of the disciple, as well as the supra-rational way the Master often functions, Baba recounted a startling example of it:

“Once, the Master of Hafiz-the great Persian mystic-ordered one of his disciples to go home and kill the child. Hafiz was present and heard the order and began to wonder about it. But the man to whom the order was given simply thought that there must be some good reason for the Master’s order, so he went home at once and killed the child, and brought the body to his Master. All the while Hafiz was thinking and wondering about this strange order, as were also other disciples, but no one said anything. Then the Master told Hafiz to bury the child, and bury it deep. Hafiz did as he was ordered, and after burying it deep, in accordance with the Persian custom he lit a candle and placed it over the grave. As he looked at the flame of the

candle he heard saying: 'I have been benefited;' then to his astonishment he saw the form of a child rise out of the candle flame. As Hafiz in amazement he then saw millions of child forms rising out of the candle flame. He was greatly puzzled. As he returned to his Master, wherever he looked he saw the forms of children. When Hafiz returned to the waiting group, the Master now told the child's father to go and bring back the child whom he would find at *home*. The man, again without hesitation, without even wondering how the child could be home when he knew that he had killed it and that Hafiz had buried it, went off at once, in compliance with the Master's order. When he reached his home, there he found his child walking around the house, quite well and happy and he brought him to the Master, as instructed."

Though an extreme example of the methods a Master may use in order to show his disciples the illusory nature of this phenomenal world, it illustrates the unquestioning faith which a disciple should have for his Master, and how utterly detached and obedient he is expected to be.

A comparable story of this same kind of implicit obedience is, of course, the Old Testament account of God's command to Abraham to offer his favorite son Issac to him in sacrifice.

In less drastic but none the less effective ways we have seen how the Master, Baba, exacted from these early disciples the same quality of unquestioning obedience; and we have also seen how he used the circumstances of daily life to teach them to rise above egoistic tendencies into lives of selfless, loving usefulness. Life, he had told them in the early days, would not be a summer holiday; nor has it been. Yet, great have been the compensations for the trials they have had to undergo; and today-after many years-we find the great majority of the early ones still loving and serving the Master with all their hearts, minds and souls; completely dedicated to his will and work.

We are told by one of the early Indian disciples, Dr. Ghani, that Baba proved to be an uncompromising task-master and strict disciplinarian, and that his methods follow-

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no spiritual pattern previously known to man. Yet, to his super-human tact and forbearance, his compassion and unfailing love, Dr. Ghani pays full-hearted tribute. He also records that, though impossible to describe in detail, the inner transformation-the colossal reclamation of which the disciples are now subjectively aware-is an acknowledged fact with all of them.

CHAPTER V

JOURNEY TO THE WEST

IN THE EARLY DAYS of the Bombay Ashram, in 1922, Baba had foretold many of the world happenings in which we have been engulfed, as well as his own particular destiny in relation to them.

“War will break out again,” he predicted, “and it will be the worst holocaust the world has ever seen. Almost all the nations of the world will be drawn into it either militarily or economically.” Later he added: “My public manifestation will synchronize with the fag-end of this war which is coming. Both of my Masters will give up their bodies before my outer work begins. I shall travel extensively and my spiritual work will necessitate my going to the Western world.

This prediction-his journey to the Western world-was now about to be fulfilled. On September first, 1931, Baba sailed for England with three disciples. Another prophecy of Baba’s made nine years before, had been that he and Gandhi would meet on the board on his first trip to the West. Accordingly, when Baba’s party had been aboard but a short time, they discovered that Gandhi was also a passenger. Later, one of the Gandhi’s disciples relayed the message that his Master would like very much to meet Baba. So it was arranged that he should go to Baba’s cabin, where they talked of spiritual matters. During the voyage they met three or four times.

While in London, many people came to see Baba and many reporters wrote sensational copy for their papers. But the important meetings were with those men and women who were destined to become his first Western disciples. Margaret Craske, who had danced with the Diaghileff Ballet and later had her own dancing school in London,

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gives her first impression of Baba, who, she writes, was to become the center of her life:

“He was standing at the foot of the steps leading to the front door, dressed in a thin white gown, a short furry coat and a pink turban; and he was looking at the house very quietly. He passed in through the door and gave me a smile in passing.... A little later I went in to see him. I was very nervous and did not know how to address him, but as soon as I entered the room I was completely won over by the love which seemed to permeate his whole personality. He spelt out on the alphabet board: ‘It was your love that brought me,’ meaning, I suppose, that he came to the West in response to the longing of those like myself who had heard of him and greatly desired to meet him. Of the four days which I spent in Devonshire with him and the group, it is difficult to write. The whole time was invested with a dream-like quality of pure love, timelessness and great beauty. It was as if the curtain had been drawn aside and we were privileged to know and feel from our hearts who Baba is. I have not experienced anything quite like it since. We have passed through trials and tests which have deepened our faith in Baba and our love for him, but nothing since has quite equalled the exquisite beauty of those four days.”

One of the first Englishman to become devoted to Baba was Quentin Tod, a gifted actor-comedian, whose spontaneous humor is ever a delight to the Master. He says that prior to his meeting with Baba he felt most unworthy, utterly unprepared and rather shaken, as though he were about to undergo a major operation. But at last the awaited moment came and he found himself in the same room with Baba who was seated, cross-legged, on a bed near the window. There were several other people in the room including one woman who was sitting opposite to Baba, crying softly.

“I only vaguely noticed them,” Quentin admitted. “I was so engrossed in looking at this wonderful man for the first time that everything else faded away. What impressed

me most was his rather wild quality, as of something untamed, and his truly remarkable eyes. He smiled, and motioned me to sit beside him. He took my hand and from time to time patted my shoulder. We sat for several minutes in silence and I was aware of a great feeling of love and peace emanating from him; also a curious feeling of recognition came to me, as if I had found a long lost friend.

“Then Baba took my left hand and some sort of wave of strength passed to me to from him. It was as if an electric current of pure love were turned on, which filled me with ecstasy. I began to breath deeply as if taking an anesthetic. Looking back on this experience, I am convinced that Baba meant me to feel his power. It was as if I had been baptized by him for his future work. The feeling in me was that I must serve him in some way. There were many things I should have liked to ask him, but all questions seemed irrelevant and inadequate. Later I felt that many of them were answered without words. My reaction to Baba was instantaneous and I recognized him for what he is -a great Prophet and Teacher.”

Another who met Baba at this time was Delia De Leon, an actress who gives her first impressions upon meeting Baba:

“I was stunned with the wonder and beauty of him. I had seen his face before in my dreams; the eyes were startling in their beauty; the face seemed of luminous honey color, framed by a halo of long dark hair. His hands were most noticeable; they were strong, slim and sensitive....During the week of his stay in London I saw him every day. Time and place seemed not to exist. Everyone and everything faded from my mind except Baba. He alone seemed real-the Perfect Human Being. Compared to him everyone seemed like a shadow. He drew me irresistibly; his love melted me, and his humor and charm attracted me. His silence was more potent than words....When I looked at the people passing me in the street, I thought, ‘Baba is in the world and they do not it. How strange that this should be happening to me.’ From that moment I gave my

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life into his keeping and I knew that my spiritual search was at an end.”

Also among the early English disciples were Will and Mary Backett who were later to go to India to be with Baba. Of her first meeting with him, Mary says that she felt a great upliftment of consciousness such as she had never experienced with anyone before. “He gave me more, far more, in the space of three minutes, than I had gained in thirty years of earnest seeking, because I actually experienced that definite gift of grace and divine love that he bestowed, whereas others could only talk about it.”

These are but a few impressions of the many people who felt the wonder and beauty of Baba’s presence during those crowded weeks in England.

LIKE THE BUDDHA

Questions propounded by new comers Baba will sometimes consent to answer, but like the Buddha he dislikes his disciples to ply him with questions. The reason for this is easy to understand. It is Baba’s function to help the disciple to *still* the conscious mind, not to stimulate it by intellectual cogitations. Also, like Buddha, Baba rarely replies with a direct affirmative or negative to a question. Factual knowledge, so dear to the intellectual mind, must give place to the higher wisdom, which can seldom reply ‘yes’ or ‘no’ to a fundamental life question. But when Baba does consent to reply to questions his answers are penetrating and concise. The following questions were asked him by James Douglas of the Sunday Express of London, and appeared in that paper on April 10, 1932. Mr. Douglas states that he had prepared a questionnaire with the help of Sir Denison Ross, the Oriental scholar.

“It was designed to trap the teacher, but he smilingly threaded his way through it without stumbling. His mastery of dialectic is consummate. It was quite Socratic in its ease. He frequently put questions to me which startled me by their penetration. But he never evaded a direct question.” The following are a few of the questions which were asked during the interview:

- Q. Are you divine?
 A. I am one with God. I live in Him, like Buddha, like Jesus, like Krishna. They knew Him as I know Him. All men can know Him.
 Q. Have you solved the problem of evil?
 A. There is no evil. There are only degrees of good.
 Q. What is your secret?
 A. The elimination of the ego.
 Q. Do you believe in Buddha and the eight-fold path?
 A. All religion is an ascent by stages to perfect union with God.
 Q. What religion is nearest to yours?
 A. All religions are revelations of one God.
 Q. Is God a person or Power?
 A. God is both personal and impersonal. He is in art, in literature, in science, in everything.

Of the scores of interviews which Baba gave while he was in London, the following are but a few examples of his spiritual technique with new comers:

One woman-the daughter of a clergyman-confessed to Baba her lack of belief in him. She wished she might share the belief which others had regarding him.

“But why?” Baba asked. “Since what you really want is *within* yourself, you will find it only there. My part is to help you find it, whether you believe in me or not. I will help you even if don’t want my help. When the sun is high in the heavens you feel its warmth, whether you wish to or not.” (In regard to his intimate disciples, belief in him is, of course, essential, inasmuch as a perfect rapport must exist between Master and disciple, in order to facilitate the training for channelship.)

Another woman asked him how she could develop the realization of the divine within her soul.

“True spirituality can be attained,” Baba explained, “not by the intellect, but by heart and feeling-by *inner* experience. I might explain for hours, but that would be as nothing compared to one second of my internal help. Do one thing. Every night, just before retiring, think for a

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moment: 'The infinite God is within me, and I am part of the infinite.' This will strengthen your inner contact with me."

To a man-a psychologist-who came to see him, Baba said: "Wonderful soul! You do not need an explanation in words. You understand that it is *feeling* that matters, not words. You will do great work for humanity."

Another man asked Baba if certain person, who claimed to be a leading Master, had the right to such a claim, to which Baba replied that everyone has apparently the right to call himself whatever he likes. "It is for others to accept or challenge it. The real test is not what he teaches, but what he lives."

Someone asked him why, if he were the Christ, did everyone not accept him. To this Baba replied:

"It is the human form which I must take that stands in the way of their recognition. Jesus was not acknowledged in his time, even by some of his own intimate and immediate companions, such as Judas. Though none of you understand me externally in my physical form, I am *within* you-within everybody-as the Real, Infinite Christ."

At the expiration of his stay in England, Baba made a flying visit to Constantinople and Milan. Then he sailed for America, on his first visit, where he blessed the lives of many of us, as related at the beginning of this story.

THE FUN BEGINS

The months in between Baba's first and second visits to America were, on the whole, happy and busy ones, preparing for his anticipated return visit in the spring. Before leaving in December, 1931, he had made certain stipulations which necessitated our raising a specific sum of money to further the establishment of Retreats in Persia and India. Our difficulty in raising this sum was due to not solely to the apathy of most people toward Ashrams in the Orient. The members of the small committee which was formed for the purpose found it extraordinarily difficult to co-ordinate their ideas and work them out harmoniously.

The divine coordinator, now being removed, the old egoistic desires began to re-manifest themselves. We had

been given a foretaste of the heavenly Kingdom, but now we had to begin the work of integrating the higher consciousness into our daily lives; and being far removed from sainthood we encountered many snags in ourselves and in others. Malcolm had been given the task of preparing the American public for Baba's return visit and imminent public manifestation; while I was placed in charge of the house, which our friend was continuing to lend us as a spiritual Retreat. No doubt to provide the 'tension' which Baba uses so dramatically and effectively, he had privately told Malcolm and me that we were his 'chief agents' in America, and therefore in charge of his work. What he had told the others we never knew! But now, with more experience of Baba's unique methods, I would allow for the possibility that he might have told others the same tale—that *they* were 'in charge.' Certainly the difficulty we encountered when we tried to take any initiative on the committee would suggest such a probability! So we left the work of the 'committee' to those in the city, while we concentrated on our particular roles at the suburban Retreat.

Before leaving, Baba had outlined for me the schedule for our daily life there, stipulating certain times for meditation and specifying rules, by which all those who lived in the house were to abide. Living with us were a mother and her daughter. The mother, according to Baba's instructions, was to help me with household duties, while the daughter was to assist Malcolm with his work of preparing the American public for Baba's return visit. It all seemed so simple and clear, with nothing arduous for any—so I thought! But on returning home from saying farewell to Baba I ran right into my first snag! My helper greeted me practically at the front door with an impressive note book in which she had written out her objections to all the duties which Baba had outlined for her, and to which she had agreed. After listening in bewilderment while she 'objected' herself out of all her household tasks, I turned inwardly to Baba, imploring his help. Like a flash came the thought: 'ask her what she really wants of life.' This I did, with the most astonishing result. She ceased at once her muddled

thinking, gathered together her inner forces of concentration, and replied that she really wanted to serve her highest Self. So on that basis we finally arrived at a harmonious and cooperative agreement in which she carried out Baba's directions. The first hurdle had been won! There were many others, not always so easily scaled, and in many of them my part was very imperfectly fulfilled.

It was an invaluable experience, though, and from it I learned at least one priceless lesson. If one has a leading part to play in any group activity and things for which one is responsible are not working out as well as they should, it is wise to ask oneself wherein one has failed before placing blame on others, however obviously they may seem at fault.

Finally the great day of Baba's second arrival in America neared. We had been told that on this trip he would stay a long time-perhaps a year or more. We were elated! Also word had been relayed to us that accommodation would have to be provided for hundreds of visitors, many of whom would be from out-of-town and would require sleeping accommodation. So my ever-active mind got busy with its planning! Since we had plenty of unoccupied land all about us I envisioned a tent-colony which we would erect. The purchase of the tents we postponed until Baba's arrival, but I set immediately to work to improvise some tent furniture-dressing tables, shelves, seats-out of wooden fruit boxes. Painted and decorated, they looked very gay and attractive; but to my knowledge they were never used! When Baba arrived, he stayed three days in New York at a friend's house, and exactly two nights at the Harmon Retreat, before leaving for the West Coast! Thus are his disciples trained in fluidity.

WE JOURNEY TO HOLLYWOOD

Fortunately for us Malcolm and I were included in the party that traveled to California. Baba said at that time that wherever he went in America we were to go with him. Malcolm had done well his job of preparing the American public for Baba's return. His arrival in New York made

splashy headlines in all the important news papers throughout the country. Not yet inured to Baba's shock technique, we secretly deplored, with many others, I am sure, the methods which a modern world teacher must employ if he wishes to stir the imagination and wonder-yes, even the opposition-of the masses. Ever since then we have been hearing repercussions of this fan-fare by really sincere people who assure us that true teachers from the Orient don't do such things! And generally speaking, they are right. Baba just happens to be the notable exception, who cuts through all precedents and prejudices. From the day he landed-when dozens of reporters interviewed and photographed him and his party-throughout the five-day journey across the country, at every stop, he sacrificed himself graciously for the press. All the papers in the country proclaimed the Silent Messiah. On the whole the accounts were remarkably favorable to him-as if in spite of themselves the reporters had felt something of his spiritual radiation. But knowing so little of the nature of a God-realized Master, we in the Western world are very prone to laugh at such a claim; and of course some of the news-reports did just this.

Many of us who winced at what seemed to us to be very vulgar publicity-wholly out of keeping with the sublime character of the Master we loved and revered-thought wistfully of how different it must have been in Jesus' day: a gathering under the shade of an olive tree, hearts awakened, souls quickened and then the glad news spread by word of mouth, with the gatherings growing gradually larger, until one day the five thousand were fed spiritual food on a verdant hillside in Judea-a different rhythm, of course, for a different age. Yet, if we had lived in those days, might we not have heard the same criticism leveled against Jesus, as now we encounter with Baba? Was he not stepping out the usual sedate character of the Jewish Rabbi? Was he not stirring up the rabble and defying on all sides the traditional concept of how a religious teacher should behave? I do not see how it could be otherwise. Such a One always comes to free man from his antiquated notions and tribal values. Of necessity he must especially uproot man's reli-

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gious prejudices, shatter his crystallized viewpoints, even if it means making himself appear ridiculous or a trifle mad.

THE FUN CONTINUES

Since Baba wastes no opportunity for eliminating his disciples' egos, it was quite in order that the long train trip should provide him with many occasions for a rendering this not always appreciated service! Playing one person against another is one of Baba's favorite and most effective techniques for compelling the parties concerned to face their shortcomings and 'Shadows.' On this journey he pitted Malcolm against the Englishman, Meredith Starr. Both would be asked to put into literary form Baba's message to Hollywood. Then Baba would accept Malcolm's version, praising it highly, while the other man, who prided himself on his writing ability and priority of place in Baba's group, would writhe and squirm! The result was that by the time we arrived in Hollywood both Malcolm and I were *persona non grata* with Meredith Starr and his wife. Yet, it was assigned to share a room with her at a hotel! Her husband had told us all that she was a Saint. In certain respects, I think she was!

All of us who have had the privilege of being close to Baba have found that his treatment of us falls into two distinct phases. In the beginning, in varying degrees, we are courted and some are even pampered, until he knows the moment has come to turn on the reverse current. Then starts in earnest the real work of uprooting those egoistic tendencies which obscure the true Self. In this period-according to individual need-he often says and does things which puzzle and perhaps outrage us. Like a master surgeon, once he begins the operation he keeps resolutely at it, regardless of how the patient rebels, until all the cankerous ego-growth is eliminated.

This particular man, Starr, should have had enough experience of Baba's methods-he had been with him in India for almost a year-to realize the nature of the therapeutic treatment to which Baba was subjecting him. But unfortunately his self-interest blinded him. The result was that

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in subsequent months he turned against the Master whom he had formerly lauded from the house-tops. No doubt his vociferous praise of Baba contained in it the seed of his denial. When Baba returned to India he was greeted with a cable from Meredith Starr in which he demanded from Baba five hundred pounds and God-realization! Starr's alternative was to declare Baba a fraud, which later he did. When Baba received this unique ultimatum he laughed heartily.

AT HOME AMONG THE STARS

In Hollywood Baba met hundreds of people in private interviews and a thousand or more at a public reception which was held at the Hoolywood-Knickerbocker Hotel. It was my privilege to stand at his right side and introduce the guests as they came down the receiving line to his position in the center. I say 'privilege' advisedly, because though few of the hundreds who passed before him that night seemed even dimly to apprehend anything of his spiritual magnitude, the act of speaking his name over and over again for an hour or more produced in me a great feeling of ecstasy. I felt as though I were somehow sharing in the Master's work of sowing divine seeds. Some of them, no doubt, fell on barren soil, but others must have taken root, some day to blossom and bear fruit, for the spiritual feeding of the world.

Much of Baba's important work while in Hollywood was with motion-picture luminaries. He was laying his first cables in that sphere of life which, he assures us, will some day produce a wholly new type of motion picture. On all of his succeeding visits to the West, much of his time was given to this same kind of activity, until he finally found those with whom he knew he could trust the motion-picture phase of his work.

One evening, while we were in Hollywood, we went with Baba to Pickfair, where a large dinner party had been in progress. Here Baba—whose choice of abode is a tiny hut on a barren hillside in India—sat in the midst of Pickfair's luxurious appointments as though he had been born

and bred in such an atmosphere. Amidst the tinsel stars he shone like a resplendent planet, completely at ease—wholly unconcerned with the curious stares of the dinner guests, seated against a background of flowers this Bright Messenger, whose x-ray eyes penetrate the most skillfully conceived mask, poured forth his radiance upon this cross-section of ultra-modern and ultra-complex humanity. On a couch opposite sat Cary Grant, receiving with utmost boredom the sincere homage of Baba's handsome young brother, Adi; an interesting contrast between worldly sophistication and child-like simplicity; between ennui and joy.

TESTED AND TRIED

Before going to California, Baba had told us he would break his silence there in July, and that this event would be the signal for the spiritual quickening which he had been predicting for so many years. We were naturally anticipating this moment keenly, because we—as among those close to him—would share in this quickening in a very profound way. This, Baba had told us at the time of his first visit. Yet Malcolm and I had confessed to each other privately how utterly inadequate we felt to participate in such a momentous upheaval in consciousness. We knew how ill prepared we were to take our places as co-workers with a living Christ. Of course we also knew that in a 'twinkling of an eye one could be changed completely. Yet we were deeply aware that the spiritual basis of our lives needed to be greatly intensified before the 'eye' might 'twinkle.'

Nevertheless Baba had definitely declared that he would speak in July and that humanity would experience a great expansion of consciousness. We gladly believed him—perhaps because we wanted to be relieved of the necessity of further conscious growth—but we were not greatly surprised when he told us there would be a slight postponement. He must first make a hurried trip to China, he told us, and would then return to break his silence in Hollywood Bowl, with Mary Pickford to introduce him! How any of us could have given credence to this fantastic story I cannot now imagine! Certainly it revealed what babes in consciou-

ness we then were. Only too willing were we to be lifted up to Heaven by the boot-straps without further delay! One day, in India, years later, Baba laughed as he recalled the picture to us: “Fancy your believing that story—that I would break my silence over the radio in Hollywood Bowl!”

But believe it then we did, and ardently anticipated his return from China. Before leaving with his party Baba had instructed Malcolm and me to go to San Francisco and prepare the ground for his return. Through contacts which we had from our bookshop days we got in touch with various ‘key’ people, who arranged for us to speak about Baba and tell of his imminent return and the breaking of his silence.

On precisely the evening when we were to attend the largest of these gatherings in Piedmont word arrived from Baba that he was not returning to America, but was proceeding to India and Europe; nor would he break his silence at that time. This, frankly, was a very dark moment for us. Within a few hours we were expected to tell these new friends of Baba’s expected return to America; to describe the quickening effects upon consciousness which his speaking would initiate for mankind; to proclaim him as a supreme example of God-hood, worthy of the deepest trust and faith. But in our hearts dark doubts were refusing to be silenced. We did not then know, of course, that for many years he had been predicting the breaking of his silence, and for as many years postponing it. We felt like trustful children who had been cruelly deceived. Either he did not have the God-knowledge with which we had credited him, or he was another of the imposters who pose as advanced spiritual teachers. Either he was deluded or deluding, the rational mind argued and for a few hours held sway.

Now, in retrospect, it is difficult to recapture the agony of soul I went through. But, at that time, being a neophyte among Baba’s followers, I had not become accustomed to his sudden changes of plan when his inner work demanded it. Even today, after fifteen years of close association, I would not attempt to explain why he does and says certain things. Once, in Cannes, in discussing a letter which

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He had recently received, and in which the writer was bewailing the fact that Baba's promises were not materializing according to schedule, he indicated to me that everything he had promised would come true, "but in own time and in my own way."

I accept that, though it explains nothing to the rational mind. However, the demands of the reasoning mind matter less and less as the years pass, whereas the intuitions of the heart matter more and more. But during those dark hours in San Francisco the claims of reason were very strong. I felt myself insecure in a world where one's given word was so lightly regarded. Surely the word of a God-man must be sacred. So I reasoned. But as the hours passed I gained better perspective. I realized that though I could not understand his motive, I knew in my heart that nothing he did was ever prompted by the slightest shadow of self-interest; and that his consciousness so far transcended men-made ethics or conduct that his words or actions could not be judged by our conventional concepts of right or wrong. I recalled my 'mountain-top' experience of illumined consciousness; the God which had spoken to me then had a totally different set of values from man's—some of them strange indeed to the rational mind—yet I could not doubt the innate integrity of that Infinite Mind. In Baba I had found that same quality of transcendental purity and wisdom. Finally, I realized that though I could not comprehend his methods, my heart loved him for what I knew him essentially to *be*.

Out of deference to our hostess and the plans she had mad, we went to the party that night, but only the following day did we send out word of Baba's change of plans. Overnight, practically all of the newly-made friends became ardent enemies! The next day another cable arrived showing the inner contact which Baba had been maintaining with us:

"I knew you two would not fail me. Love, Baba."

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This unexpected change of plans placed us in an awkward position. The rebate on our return tickets to New

York, which was later sent to us by Quentin Tod, courier of our party, was delayed for many weeks. We had no income of our own and no close friends in California. Those former friends of Malcolm's with whom Baba had stayed in Hollywood had turned violently against us because of our association with a Master who didn't keep his word! The baggage we had left with them they forwarded to us with the message that they never wanted to see us again. This caused us more inconvenience than surprise or heart-break. One or two evenings after Baba's departure, while we were still in Hollywood, our host had manifested his spiritual astigmatism concerning Perfect Masters in general by declaring that Jesus had failed sadly in his mission, first by choosing such an unreliable band of disciples, and secondly by permitting himself to be crucified! Quite evidently he missed completely the significance of losing one's temporal life in order to save it for eternity; apparently he failed to understand in any degree the psychological as well as the spiritual implications of what obedience to God, 'even unto the death of the cross' means. Without his agony upon the Cross wherein would lie the redeeming momentum of his resurrection? How, but for his sublime example as the cosmic 'Way-Shower,' would we have the human blueprint whereby man can reach that same transcendent goal of union with the Father? Of course to accept the value of the Cross is to recognize the need and application of it in one's own life. To surrender all human ambitions, to admit one's spiritual poverty, to give up all self-will, is a large order for one who had set himself up as a teacher of the soul, which was our former friend's position at the time he met the Master.

Baba's cable was followed by a letter in which he asked us to hold ourselves in readiness to go wherever he might direct us, at a moment's notice. The prospect of being called-perhaps to join him-was certainly a most welcome one; but to find work which would also leave us free to pick up and leave, without notice, was another matter. Also, this was the year 1932, when America was feeling the peak of the financial depression. Jobs were not lying about on

street corners waiting to be picked up by strangers without reference or credentials. Had we known that it would be two and a half years before we would see Baba again, and four and a half years before the call would come to join him, we might have felt more free to map out a stable living program for ourselves. It is, however, just this not-knowing-in-advance—this living from day to day—which constitutes one of Baba's most effective techniques in training one in the Life of the Spirit.

We soon discovered that we were not as stranded as at first we thought. One or two of the new acquaintances proved to be real friends. One of these, Margaret Ledson, in whose boarding house we had been billeted when we first arrived in Oakland, had become deeply interested in Baba. Though we told her nothing of our private difficulties, she sensed our need and offered to let us remain in her house, rent free, for the summer, while her permanent boarders—school teachers—were away for their vacations. Her offer we gratefully accepted.

Our eating during these days was infrequent and ultra-natural—a couple of raw carrots apiece often constituted our dinner. Invariably, when we did not have even these, our friend would ask us to share her dinner. Toward the end of the summer, when our refund on our tickets was paid us, we were able to reimburse her a little, because by that time she too was under financial strain.

In September, when the teachers returned to claim their room, another new friend came to our rescue by offering us the use of her beautiful ranch in the Santa Cruz mountains. To help us with our food problem she left a standing order with her grocer to supply us with whatever we needed. For a month we revelled in the peace and beauty our mountain home. Malcolm helped the caretaker clear away the brush, while I kept the house in order. The week-ends usually brought to us our benefactor and other house-guests. But again we had to find new quarters. Winter was approaching and the house would have to be closed. We tried to find employment as caretakers at some of the

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neighboring ranches, but on inquiry learned that they too would be closed for the winter months.

On our walks about the country-side we had come across an Inn near our friend's ranch, so we offered our services to the proprietor for board and lodging. But she, too, needed no help in the cold months. She offered us, however, the use of one of her redwood cabins, which we gladly accepted. A few days later we moved in, with no other resources than the will to make of the experience a glad adventure.

We had been told by various neighbors that we were welcome to any of the fruits which lay on the ground, because none but hand-picked fruit, direct from the tree, is ever shipped to market. So for the next four months we literally lived on the 'fruits of the earth.' Malcolm would start out in the morning with a gunny-sack over his shoulder and return at noon, with apples, pears and prunes-the latter encrusted with a quarter inch of dirt which required many washings to remove, very symbolic, I used to think! Sometimes Malcolm would find nuts and luscious Malaga grapes, which we occasionally made into juice. If it became wine, we did not disdain it!

In the beginning we were very content with our simple life. The days were brilliant with early autumn sunshine, and nights were velvety and still. From the veranda of our bungalow we looked up though massive redwoods, fragrant eucalyptus and colorful madrone trees which shed so joyously their barks, to a jewelled or moonlit sky, wondering if 'tomorrow' would bring us the longed-for message from Baba to join him at once! The red-letter days were those in which the mail-box contained a letter with Indian stamp and post-mark, even though the hoped-for summons did not come. We learned to understand better the ideals of St. Francis, whose followers, in the early California days, had perhaps traversed many of the footpaths we took, feeling in their hearts the same love of Christ, living the same life of faith in a Divine Providence.

The Franciscan legend had long ago endeared itself to us, but now we read and re-read all that the Los Gatos

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public library could supply on this subject. Like the early Franciscans we had agreed between ourselves to ask no one for anything, but to accept with thanksgiving whatever the 'good God' provided.

Sometimes a friend would enclose a five-dollar bill in a letter. Then we would buy such luxuries as toilet paper, soap and matches, with an occasional bag of potatoes, our old standby the reliable carrot, and butter substitute, for we found that the exclusive diet of sweet fruits palled on us after awhile, particularly since it consisted largely of prunes! We had mashed prunes, stewed prunes, baked prunes, raw prunes—too many prunes for one who would never have chosen them for her mono-diet! Until cold weather overtook us, and with it, the rain, we managed very well in our primitive life. To be sure, poison oak attacked us virulently and somewhat disturbed our inner peace, while it made bathing an achievement worthy of a vaudeville contract!

With the winter weather arrived various complications—frozen pipes, a toilet long since grown discouraged, chilblains which almost drove us mad when we sat near our wood fire, but if we didn't we almost froze to death. The cabin, which had been built by Japanese architects, was just about as artistic and impractical in winter as their own cardboard houses in Japan are reputed to be. Large gaps between the logs permitted both cold and rain to seep in; and when the rains descended in torrents, and our large solid wooden front door had to be closed, we were in almost total darkness, the small casement windows up near the ceiling affording only the minimum of light.

Then, just about this time, I became ill and lay for weeks in a cold, damp, dark room, while outside the deluge raged ceaselessly. Malcolm, who had been born and bred in a New York City apartment, always with servants and family to wait upon him, had now to prepare the food, clean the house, wash our clothes and linens—by the awkward method of kneeling beside the bath-tub—and keep us supplied with firewood by the strenuous expedient of felling trees and cutting logs by hand. Because of his unfamiliarity with this type of work and his compulsion to be thorough, he worked

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slowly and often did not get to bed until one-thirty or two in the morning; at six he was up again.

Some of the bright spots of this particular period were the acts of kindness on the part of our neighbors. Apparently they sensed our financial predicament, for occasionally a knock would come at our door, and there would be a visitor with a basket of food—a delicious barley broth for the sick lady, waldorf salad, grape jelly and hot biscuits. Never did food taste so good!

CHALLENGE

Willing as we were to meet life on its own terms I realized after a few months that our unbalanced diet was playing havoc with my health. I was therefore relieved when word came from Baba to move down to Hollywood where Malcolm was to help Rustom - an Indian disciple who would shortly arrive there – to make contacts with some of the motion – picture people.

How to fulfill Baba's order was our problem , because we were still literally in a penniless condition. Some books of ours—stored in New York – listed at \$ 1400 we now agreed to sell to a bookshop owner for \$ 100. When her check arrived we left at once for the South. Owing to my weakened condition I was able to go only as far as Ojai, where I stayed for a month with friends. There in the sunshine and healing peace of that beautiful valley, strength returned.

Before going on to Hollywood the idea came to me that I could make neckties which Malcolm might sell. This kind of business possessed the double advantage of requiring almost no capital to initiate and it left us free to move about as Baba might direct. After finding two inexpensive rooms with a lovely view in the Hollywood hills, we bought a few yards of material and I proceeded to make up two dozen ties. Filling his brief case with them Malcolm set out valiantly to canvas office buildings. This was another new experience for him. Selling books in his own distinguished bookshop was quite a different matter from peddling ties in office buildings. He was sworn at and abused, even threatened with arrest! On the first day, up to five o'clock, he had not

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sold a single tie, though he had canvassed many office buildings and been thrown out of several. He stood on the corner of Hollywood Boulevard and Vine Street, and sent out a silent plea for help. He knew how the making of ties had taxed my small store of strength, and he could not bear to return that evening with none sold. Then he tried again, and at six-thirty he appeared home with two dollars and a half, the price of five ties. Such was the humble beginning of a business which a few years later supplied us with a yearly income fully adequate to all our needs.

In those early weeks, when the experience of being sworn at and ejected from buildings was new, Malcolm remarked that “only a Perfect Master could make the business of selling neckties a spiritual exercise!” -for, as he admitted, he knew of no better way to deflate the ego than the business of peddling.

I have related some of our experiences in more or less detail to show how, after meeting a Master like Baba, the forces of life contrive to temper and strengthen one in every conceivable way. Though our outer circumstances differed widely from those of the early Indian disciples, the same basic principles seem to have been at work. Our faith was tested and severely tried; our ingenuity in the face of apparently overwhelming difficulties was given opportunity for expression; resilience and fortitude were demanded of us; again and again disappointment has to be surmounted, particularly when some of our New York friends – who had met Baba through us – were called many times to join him and the English group in Europe! We did not begrudge them the joy of these visits, but to say that we did not yearn to be with him too, would be a vain pretense. Finally, when they all sailed for India without us, my heart almost broke! This longing to be with Baba can only be properly understood if one realizes the exquisite joy which his presence imparts.

ITALIAN HOLIDAY

When Baba left us in Hollywood in 1932, he stopped in Honolulu for three days, in China for five, and touched

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India only enroute to Europe again, where he arrived on July 28th for his third visit in less than a year. He was met at Marseilles by some of the English group. Later they travelled with him to Santa Margherita, where, under sunny Italian skies, they enjoyed a delightful holiday, bathing in the blue waters, lazing in the sun, and tramping through fragrant vineyards and forests. As always, Baba took advantage of the care-free holiday to achieve deep inner work with his Western disciples.

These days in Italy with Baba were especially happy ones. As the group set out for their morning swim before breakfast, they would see Baba's white-clad figure watching them from the balcony upon which his room opened. Often at night they would sit with him as they listened to records. Baba's favorites were Indian and Persian songs, the spiritual meaning of which he would explain to them. Spanish dance records and Paul Robeson's negro spirituals he also loved. Sometimes, on the terrace, they would act out charades or give dramatic entertainments, to which Baba always responded with loving appreciation, particularly to the comedy situations. Thus, in innumerable ways, would Baba enter into their lives as playmate, friend, child and father. Actually, he worked hard inwardly with them while playing outwardly. The tranquillity of the holiday was interspersed with sudden conflicts of temperament, of jealousies, or other dark moods. Many lessons were quietly and unobtrusively taught; many 'Shadows' were brought into the light of consciousness.

SPIRITUAL MEETING AT ASSISI

On the second day of their visit to Italy, Baba said that he had important spiritual work to perform at Assisi. A special cave connected with St. Francis would have to be found, and there he would fast for twenty-four hours. One of the Englishmen, Herbert, was asked to make the arrangements. Baba instructed him to find a cave which had been used by the Saint, but which was not accessible to tourists. This necessitated considerable searching on Herbert's part. He learned that the slope of Mt. Subasio had been the most

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avored by St. Francis and his companions for their meditations. The famous Carceri Cave was, of course, now enclosed and converted into a Shrine, but there were other caves off the beaten track of tourists in which Francis had no doubt meditated seven hundred years ago.

In exploring the locality, Herbert found a ruined shelter-an overhanging cave of rock on the side of a stone wall, but the roof timbers and tiles had long ago fallen down. Above, the gnarled roots of a tree clung to the rock, but there was no protection from the rain. Tall trees growing at a lower level hid it from passers-by. It was dirty, full of broken tiles, damp rubbish and leaves. Herbert had to excavate it, tear down branches to hide its entrance, and finally make a new path down the hillside so that no one could see Baba enter it.

Baba had directed him to meditate in the selected cave for four hours each day, to fast partially, and on the day preceding Baba's arrival to meditate for eight hours. He felt that the cave was far from ideal, but it was the best he could find.

On August the fifth, before his departure by car for Assisi, Baba called the group to sit silently in the room with him. He was not due to leave until midnight. He lay down for an hour, not asleep, because his hands continually made signs and motions in the air, as he does when he is communicating with his spiritual agents who are invisible to the ordinary eye. There was a potent stillness in the room. Baba had said previously that before he could do his work at Assisi one of two things would happen: either there would be a storm or he would be ill. He asked one of the group to draw nearer to him, as signs of his being in great pain increased. His sudden illness was so severe that he was unable to start at the time arranged. Two hours later, at two thirty in the morning, the party started. During the long drive Baba's pains decreased, but at La Spezia, Quentin Tod became ill, and at Pisa, Kaka an Indian disciple, was stricken. Apparently Baba's illness was being shared by them.

In the meantime at Assisi, Herbert, too, was feeling ill

and depressed. He stood at his hotel window, wondering and waiting. Finally Baba arrived three hours late. After the party refreshed themselves with baths and food, Baba outlined their program. They motored part of the way up the hill to save time. Herbert then led them down by the hidden path to the cave which they reached at seven thirty in the evening. Baba had told them he would stay there during the entire fast and no one was to go near him or to look inside the cave. At all costs the disciples were to keep intruders away. If Baba required anything to drink he would signal them and they would place it just outside the entrance. Chanji and Herbert were to sit outside and guard the cave all night until nine in the morning. Then Kaka and Quentin would relieve them. At four-thirty in the afternoon Chanji and Herbert were to return and at five-thirty, when Baba's fast and retirement were concluded, they were all to eat together.

Accordingly, at eight-forty Kaka and Quentin left the others and walked back to the hotel. Chanji and Herbert shivered in the cool of the night as they sat a short distance from the cave. Chanji related to how Eastern disciples had watched years before at the cave at Panchgani in India. Strange thoughts and questions passed through their minds : how little they "really understood the nature and extent of Baba's work. His body was there in the cave a few feet away but where was he ?" Sleep weighed heavily on their eyelids. Could they not "keep watch for this little while ?". They wondered if St.Francis were sharing in this vigil; no doubt his meditations ages ago had prepared this holy spot. They were so sleepy, so cold. About midnight they made a cup of tea on an alcohol stove and put it beside the cave in case Baba should want it. Gradually light filtered through the trees. At nine in the morning they were relieved by the other two and Chanji and Herbert walked back to the hotel to sleep.

At four-thirty in the afternoon they returned, carrying food with them. Baba came out when they arrived, his work having been accomplished sooner than expected. At five-thirty they all had a very happy meal, seated around

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a wooden plank on the ground. After the meal, Baba called them into the cave and explained some future plans. They felt awe-struck by the atmosphere of solemnity in the cave.

Baba, though happy that his work had been accomplished, was in great pain. The men had to support him during their descent from the mountain. With one on either side of him, they would run – all three together – down the steep path. It seemed as if the jolting and pressure against the earth helped to bring his consciousness back to his physical body. He looked somewhat dazed, as if he were suffering from a severe headache. Often he had to stop and rest. They passed by most of the places connected with the St. Francis legend. At the side of a road Baba pointed to a huge rock where, he said, St. Francis had once sat and wept the whole night through for love of Christ.

One of the day-time watchers recounts how they began their day in the village below by attending Mass in the crypt of the San Francesco. Afterwards they shouldered their rucksacks and toiled up the hill toward the cave. The woods were alive with birds, whose song was almost deafening, as though they were paying their tribute to the Saint who loved them so dearly. At mid-day, as they sat near the cave, one of the men heard sounds coming from inside, and, forgetting he was not to look, saw Baba through the leaves of the saplings which protected the entrance, standing with his eyes shut, facing the sun and making strange humming sounds.

Among the many things which Baba told his men about this ‘inner meeting,’ in which they had taken part, was that all the saints and Masters from the sixth and seventh planes of consciousness had met with him that night and mapped out the spiritual destiny of the world for the next two thousand years.

How such a thing is possible may be understood only if we recognize that the higher states of consciousness are not subject to the limitations of the physical body. The saint or Master knows the created universe to be the illusory product of mind, and therefore dissolvable by mind. He also knows that the physical body is but *one* of man’s bodies, the

densest and most confining, though essential for the Realization God; only in a physical body can we become aware of our union with God. This body is, however, unsuitable for the swift means of communication which saints and Masters often require for their work. For their frequent 'inner meetings' they use either the mental or spiritual body, and temporarily leave behind the physical body, as Baba did during our journey to Boston. There is a descriptive corroboration of these things in R.A.Nicholson's *Mystics of Islam*, in which he refers to a similar spiritual technique among the Mohammedan mystics – the Sufis:

“The saints form an invisible hierarchy, on which the order of the world is thought to depend. Its supreme head is entitled the *Qutb* (hub). He is the most eminent Sufi of his age, and presides over the meetings regularly held by this august parliament, whose members are not hampered in their attendance by the inconvenient fictions of time and space, but come together from all parts of the earth in the twinkling of an eye, traversing seas and mountains as easily as common mortals step across a road. . . The *Qutb* becomes the center of the spiritual universe, so that every point and limit reached by individual human beings is equally distant from his 'station,' whether they be near or far ; since all 'stations' revolve around him – and in relation to him – there is no difference between nearness and farness. To one who has gained this supreme position, knowledge – gnosis – and 'passing-away' (liberation) are as rivers of his ocean, where-by he replenishes whomsoever he will. He has the right to guide others to God, and seeks permission to do so from none but himself.”

A first-hand example of leaving the physical body at will, by consciously projecting the subtle body into space, is the experience which I had on the very night of Baba's 'meeting' in the cave at Assisi. Some months after this red-letter journey, I heard through a message from Chanji of Baba's meeting in the cave, and upon checking the date in my diary, found it coincided with my own initial excursion into space. Fully conscious, I shot out over the Pacific with the speed of light, and then over the continents of Asia and

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Europe, finally arriving at a hotel in Italy--though at the time I did not know outwardly of Baba's being there. My inner order was simply to go to the Master. Passing through walls and ceilings, I went directly to the rooms which I somehow knew were his. Familiar pieces of Indian luggage lay about the room, but Baba was not there. Then, obeying another inner impulsion, I left the Inn and traveled out through the ether to a beautiful countryside where instinctively I knew him to be. At this moment I lost consciousness and fell into deep sleep. But on awakening in the morning I recalled vividly the experience and felt the ecstasy of having been with Baba.

Toward the end of August Baba sailed with his Indian disciples for Egypt where he spent five days visiting the Pyramids and the Coptic church at Cairo. The latter was of particular interest to him because of a cave which it contained where, he informed the group, Joseph and Mary had stayed with the infant Jesus on their flight from Herod. They encountered difficulty with the custodian of the church, who at first refused to open the cave to them, but as this was the sole purpose of Baba's visit to Egypt, he persisted until he finally overcame the man's objections.

During the winter of 1932 and 1933 Baba sent some of his Eastern and Western disciples to travel through Germany, Austria, Italy and Hungary, while others were sent to China and America, Australia and New Zealand. He was apparently laying new 'cables' – new lines of spiritual force – throughout the world. He himself sailed for his fourth visit to Europe on November 21st, 1932.

MESSAGE TO INDIA

Shortly after embarking upon this voyage, he sent back to India the following message :

“It does not matter how much India suffers physically so long as its spiritual power and value are sustained. Moreover, the result of its present suffering will be freedom and great happiness, because it is only after experiencing bondage and misery that the true value of freedom and happiness is really appreciated.

“However, to shorten this suffering, there must be love for friend and foe alike. There must be goodwill, patience and forbearance toward all. Also, India should try to remedy its own defects instead of being concerned with the faults of others. The hatred between leading communities – their petty yet disastrous quarrels – must cease. Only then will the happiness and freedom of India be ensured.

“The whole world will soon realize, that neither cults, creeds, dogmas, religious ceremonies, nor material prosperity and physical pleasure will ever bring to man the happiness he craves. Only selfless love and universal brotherhood can do that.”

WHIRLWIND VISIT

Baba arrived in Venice for the second time on December 2nd, 1932, and after paying a flying visit to Milan and Paris, he reached London on December 6th. Here, as usual, he granted interviews to large numbers of people. On December 14th he left for Switzerland with a few of the English group and on the 17th he sailed from Genoa for Egypt again, where he remained until January 3rd, 1933. On this fourth Western trip he had stayed but one month, but much territory had been covered, many new contacts had been made.

On his way back to India he stopped off at Ceylon for eighteen days. While there he retired to the seclusion of a room in a Buddhist temple for twenty-four hours. Baba's men had difficulty at first with the novice of the temple, who insisted that they could not enter. With Baba leading them, they descended, however, into a small courtyard which adjoined the temple. At this moment a door opened and an old man, who looked as though he were at least a hundred, came out. He apparently recognized Baba instantly, and communicated with him by the strange sign language which Baba used with his spiritual agents. In a few minutes the reluctant novice was ordered to show Baba to a room in the temple where he remained undisturbed for twenty-four hours. On the 6th of February, 1933, he arrived at Nasik, India.

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The last week of March, 1933, a group of nine women – three of whom were from America – and one man boarded a liner at Genoa for India. Baba had given them the impression that they would remain with him for six months but suddenly his plans changed and after three weeks they found themselves on their way back to Europe.

Not for long, however, was this group to be separated from Baba. Two months after their departure, he sailed again for Europe where he arrived on June 24th, 1933. A lovely villa at Porto Fino, Italy, had been leased by the English group. Here amidst surroundings of great earthly beauty, Baba resumed his subtle but effective work of stirring up and eliminating the egocentric tendencies of his Western disciples. One incident particularly is characteristic of how Baba uses the happenings of daily life to draw out latent qualities – both good and bad.

HAZARDOUS ADVENTURE

After tea one afternoon, fifteen or sixteen of the group went with Baba for a walk along the cliffs. He took them down a rather dangerous ravine to the sea. A number lagged behind, despite Baba's repeated admonition to keep together. Several fell out by the wayside – their shoes, their clothing, or their nerves proving inadequate to slide down a steep incline on the last descent to the sea. By the time they reached the sea-washed shore only two men and two girls had kept pace with Baba.

Instead of returning the way they came, Baba elected to climb back another way. Nimble and light-footed as a deer, he made his way up the smooth rocky surface while behind the four tried to keep up with him. At particularly difficult places Baba would stop to help the women with his gentle but strong hands. By this time they all sensed that the dangerous adventure might have symbolic significance so they went forward with renewed confidence in Baba as their guide.

But suddenly they found themselves stuck! Above them was a sheer surface of rock and thin trees while to their right was a precipice that fell almost perpendicularly from

a great height into the sea. They searched for the main path, which they had hoped to rejoin, not realizing that it was more than one hundred and fifty feet above them. One of the men, Herbert, crept around corners, climbed up stone cliffs, hung on to the roots of bushes, his heart pounding like a piston. He half expected that a miracle would happen or that Baba would suddenly find a simple way out. Thirty minutes or more passed as he tried futilely to find the main path. He spied a very steep cleft that seemed to have been used as a rubbish dump. But it proved very insecure footing for him and fifteen feet up it was blocked by a very large boulder, too smooth to provide either foothold or gripping for the hand. Yet it was apparently the only possible way out.

Baba, wiry and sure-footed, climbed ahead, scattering a little earth behind him. He clapped his hands as a signal for them to follow and then disappeared from view. Herbert followed, but got stranded on the smooth boulder for some anxious minutes, while the two women and the other man were waiting tensely below. Above was a very steep gully, perhaps forty feet deep, filled with loose earth, rusty bits of metal, and broken glass; a foot moved meant the descent, on the women below, of stones, possibly a small avalanche of rubbish. With a final wriggle Herbert got past the boulder. By hanging on to the roots of bushes he could crouch on the loose earth but could not move up the remaining forty feet. Baba had completely disappeared. The youth who weighed but one hundred pounds or less, came next. With a slight hand-grip from Herbert, he was safely past the boulder.

Baba's last signal had been "Come up." Herbert called to Vivian to follow on, but she too foundered on the boulder, with her strength slowly ebbing away. The others shouted to Baba for help, but they received no evident response. Had he left them in the lurch ? Was it a symbolic test ? Or had he relied on Herbert to see that the girls got through the difficult places safely ? Herbert thought of all the heroic things he should but could not do. He himself was gradually slipping downwards. Any desperate move meant a

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torrent of earth in Vivian's face, just below him. She hung suspended there for ten to fifteen minutes, possibly longer. It seemed ages to her. Two fingers of her right hand clung to a small hole in the rock, her body rested against the boulder and her left knee was wedged in the rock at the side. She was no doubt fortunate in having trained her body in poise and balance through years of aesthetic dancing.

The majority of the group had by this time returned to the house. They were surprised that after two hours the others had not yet returned. Meanwhile Baba, who had left the gully, was mounting still higher up the cliff and clapping his hands to attract attention. But being a mile or more from the house no one there could hear him. Tino, however, an Italian boy who worked on the estate, had met a priest – or, so he seemed – who told him that someone was signaling for help. Tino then ran to Baba, who gave him signs to fetch a rope. He rushed back to the house kitchen. The three Indian men who were busy cooking the evening meal instantly left their pots and ran to Baba.

A loosening of Vivian's hold would have meant a fall of twenty feet on top of Anita, and then a roll or three hundred feet down into the sea. Herbert could just touch Vivian's hand, but was unable to exercise sufficient force, or to increase his reach, to draw her up, since his right hand had to cling to a bush. Strange thoughts passed through his mind as he pretended to Vivian that he was sure help was coming. She was very plucky, but nearly exhausted, and called every now and then, "Baba, Baba!" At length shouts were heard from the top.

Pendu -one of the Indians – appeared with long ropes and a rescue party. Baba, quite evidently pleased at the scent of danger, came down the gully. Even he found it extremely difficult to keep his footing on this loose earth. Herbert bent down a long-stemmed bush and held its root-end firmly with his right hand, while Baba's right hand held the other end of the stem. Then Herbert leaned down to pull Vivian up over the boulder with his left hand.

Pendu, who was very muscular and agile, took the rope down to Anita, who was still standing below. By means of

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the rope they all climbed to safety, and their exciting adventure was over. Baba was as happy as a schoolboy at the outcome of the afternoon's crisis!

To celebrate the safe ending to the adventure Baba called the group together in the library, re-told the story for the benefit of those who had not participated in it, pointing out the dangers which had been successfully surmounted, and evidencing his happy satisfaction in their safe return. He said that he had done important work through this experience; that the energies released, the feelings aroused, and the courage displayed had been utilized by him for his spiritual work. The Italian servants who were present, knowing well the danger that had been involved in the adventure, wept with joy that no mishap had occurred.

In psychological terminology this adventure suggests an important step taken in consciousness perhaps by the four who participated in it, perhaps by four types or sections of humanity whom these men and women represented. With the help of the spiritual Guide, they made their descent to the realm of the Unconscious – the sea – in safety; but their return journey to balanced, integrated consciousness was fraught with hazards and danger spots. The Guide, being sure-footed and nimble – as the awakened higher consciousness always is – ascended quickly and easily to the safety of mother earth – the feminine principle of instinctive feeling and awareness. The others would doubtless have perished had their spiritual intuition – the Guide – not come to their rescue.

WAYFARING IN SPAIN

After a month at Porto Fino, Baba sailed for India, but within two months he was enroute again to Europe. During this trip most of his attention was concentrated upon Spain, where he visited Avila, the birthplace of St. Theresa and St. John of the Cross. During the twenty-four hours spent there the group fasted with Baba as an expression of love for the great souls who had made the town renowned. No one was permitted to touch Baba during this period, so swift was the spiritual current with which he was then charged.

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In Spain, as in all the countries he visits, Baba wished to contact the masses. In Madrid, where he went from Avila, he and the group tramped the streets all day until their aching feet rebelled. Baba chose particularly to stand in the central square *Puerta del sol* among the crowds. Sometimes as they walked through the thoroughfare – despite the fact that Baba wore European clothes and a Spanish beret which concealed his long hair and made him look quite normal – people would turn and stare at him as if drawn by something beyond their conscious mind. This, Baba explained to the group, was due to the powerful nature of the internal work he was then performing. Instinctively, the crowd must have felt it, because at other times he would attract no special attention. When we realize that this tour was made shortly before the outbreak of the Spanish war, it seems probable that the Master was stirring up the karmic forces in the unconscious of the Spanish people, which, with them as with all nations, must be expiated through suffering before the beneficial effects of redemption can be experienced.

One afternoon they climbed a high hill opposite Madrid. Here they sat around Baba beneath the shade of a large olive tree, while he spoke to them of the future and of the part they would play in his coming world-work. On this beautiful sunlit hill, as they sat circled about the Master, time seemed to roll away; the scene might have been in Palestine with Jesus, or in Brindaban with Krishna, or in the race's childhood, before man had learned to record for posterity the manifestation of Godhood in human form. The world all about them, so intent in its pursuit of false values, seemed unreal and dreamlike. Only this moment out of time, in the presence of one who dwells continually in eternity, was real – had meaning. Always, in fact, the rest of the phenomenal universe seems lost – and *well* lost – when one is in Baba's transcendent presence.

The day they arrived in Barcelona a special delegate from Madrid was being greeted by the city officials. Baba was delighted to be among the vast throngs of people who gathered to watch the great procession of all the notables

of the district. This circumstance, which marked the seal of the new federal state, was highly important politically, and provided essential stage --setting for the subsequent upheaval in the Spanish government. This was but one of the many 'coincidences' which high-lighted their journeys through Europe with Baba. Frequently, at the moment of his arrival in a place, a parade or an important festival would be in full swing, giving him additional opportunity to achieve his magnetic contact-work with the masses. When man has lost his spiritual contact with the *Impersonal* God – as in this present day – then the Personal Aspect must not only take human form but use human contacts to re-charge the spiritual consciousness of mankind.

Another shrine, sanctified by the living devotion of a Christian saint, which Baba visited, was Montserrat, associated with the legend of the Holy Grail and St. Ignatius. While there he predicted that at a later time – whether in this life or another, only Baba knows – the group would return and live there with him for a while.

It must be apparent to any unbiased student of religious history that the Avatar – whose mission is universal – works not only for the benefit of the generation in which he takes form, but of necessity for the many generations to follow. The new momentum which he gives to the race consciousness cannot possibly find full expression until, in the course of time, the power and wisdom of that primary impulsion is thoroughly assimilated by man and integrated into its conscious life. Though we may not comprehend the full significance of Baba's visits to these shrines of outstanding Christian saints, we can see how a continuity of transcendent consciousness is maintained by recalling the spiritual attainments of these great souls and linking them to the new realizations which the Master brings. Seeds planted by Jesus may only *now* be coming to fruition; and a Theresa, St. Francis or Ignatius may have been the precursors of large groups of sainted human beings.

Saying farewell to Baba was especially poignant after the happy weeks the group had had with him. Two de-

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votes from Zurich were waiting for them when they arrived at Marseilles. So exceptional was the flow of love and power from Baba at this time that the new comers felt the ecstatic uplift of it for days afterward. At noon, just before sailing, the group gathered around Baba in his cabin. As always, at such moments, the atmosphere was pregnant with silence and heart-ache. The Divine Presence was withdrawing his physical body from them again, preparing them gradually for the ultimate withdrawal which would someday initiate the inner realization of union with his *Universal Self*. In contrast to their heavy hearts, outside on the dock, a light-hearted youth played a gay tune on a concertina. Even in the depths of sadness the sound of joy was heard.

LIGHTNING VISITS WESTWARD

Upon returning to India Baba moved his headquarters from Nasik to Meherabad. Here he remained practically in seclusion, seeing visitors for a few hours only one day a week. On the ninth of June, 1934, he sailed again for Europe on his seventh visit. After stopping in Paris for three days and in London for six, he traveled to Zurich. He spent one of his ten days here in seclusion on a mountaintop, with his group watching from a nearby peak. Suddenly a heavy rain-storm descended upon them, drenching them to the skin. As they looked over toward the mountain where Baba sat they were amazed to see him encircled in golden light, with no sign of rain touching his person.

He arrived in Bombay on August second, and in November of that year he left for his eighth visit to Europe. His arrival in London coincided with the wedding of the Duke and Duchess of Kent. The streets, of course, were crowded with light-hearted spectators and afforded Baba another opportunity to work with the masses as he drove past Buckingham Palace and through Hyde Park to the West End. On the fifth of December, 1934, he sailed for New York, his first visit to America since that memorable parting in the spring of 1932.

In the meantime, while our friends were being quickened by periodic contacts with the Master, Malcolm and I were struggling with the problem of physical existence – he, trying to build up a clientele for his tie-business; I, trying to achieve physical health. Dependence upon medicine and surgery I had long ago abandoned, but I was still trying the newer forms of electro-therapy and physical manipulation as well as every conceivable kind of diet. For a while I would experience some improvement, then would follow a relapse, which would lead me to a new method, a new doctor, a new ray of hope.

One of these diets necessitated my having freshly pressed vegetable juices every two hours from seven in the morning until nine at night. I was unable to prepare them, so Malcolm would arise at day-break, squeeze out my quota of juices for the day, get his own breakfast, wash himself and the dishes, and then start out with his bag of ties ! At night, on his return, he would prepare his dinner, clean the dishes and the rooms, and retire about midnight. It was not exactly a `holiday' for either of us !

I was well aware of the technique of spiritual healing, having at numerous times in my past life experienced the release of God-power by this means. But now I felt intuitively that my bodily pain and disorder were the by-product of a deeper spiritual cleansing. Having karmically incurred the violence of surgery, I had now to expiate in my body the results of that karma. For many years I had epitomized my spiritual life-ideal in the phrase “resurrection of the body.” In fact, one of the glimpses of Reality which had been vouchsafed me had revealed how the inner forces were even then at work, draining off the old life-blood to make way for the new, in order that the ideal of resurrection might some day be realized.

Then Baba came into my life, and for a number of years it seemed as though the `draining' part of the process would never cease. I finally understood, however – and it was corroborated later by Baba – that these years of illness

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and depletion were simply evidences in the physical body of the prophylactic measures which the spiritual forces were using to effect a true resurrection of the entire being – because freedom from pain does not necessarily betoken spiritual health. It may, on the contrary, signify spiritual stagnation.

It is entirely possible to use the `Law' to impress upon the Universal Mind whatever we may conceive to be right and proper for us; and certainly physical health would seem to be the birthright of every man. I still believe it is, but if we have come to the place in our evolution where we desire something *more* than mere physical well-being; if we really desire that the God-self should become the controlling center of our lives, then we must be willing to give up our mental concept of *how* our life-ideal shall be attained. The higher Law-the Law of Love-seems to require that we enter into the mind of Christ and with him say : “Father, let this cup pass from me; nevertheless, not *my* will, but *Thine* be done.”

This realization came to me most forcibly about a year after we arrived in Hollywood. I had reached what seemed to be the abyss of physical pain and weakness. My case was diagnosed as a complication of various things, which included cancer, tuberculosis and Brights' disease. We had no money for the expensive treatments which were recommended, nor did I feel inclined to give much credence either to the diagnosis or to the suggested remedies. I made the decision to give up all treatments except the one of contacting Baba inwardly and feeling his presence permeating me, through every nerve and cell. This brought me moments of great joy and peace, but I continued to grow weaker. Only with great effort could I raise my hand. I seemed to be losing hold of the body rapidly. Finally, in the midst of constant pain, I dropped off to sleep one night from sheer exhaustion. About four in the morning I awakened to the sense of pain again. I thought of Baba and inwardly talked to him about the situation. I told him I was content to stay in the body or give it up, as he might decree. Having completely abandoned myself to his will – the God – will in

me—I felt a deep sense of peace, in spite of the continual pain. Gradually dawn came, and with the first stirring of wind in the tree-tops a Holy Breath seemed to stir within me. I had the impression of great weight having been lifted from me; a valve of new life had opened within.

As the sun poured its first rays through the tree foliage, ecstasy poured through me, and for a couple of hours I basked in the radiance of this inner sunrise. I had not been able to move about the room for a month or more, but now I arose and walked into Malcolm's room. Sitting on the window-sill in the sun, I told him what had happened.

The healing brought not only physical strength and release from pain, but for many days I experienced that stillness of mind which I had known some years before, at a time of inner quickening. That it was the activity of Divine Love I had no doubt. This was verified some months later in a letter from Baba in which he said – referring to the healing:

“Every thing else may fail – Love never fails.”

This healing was not, however, the final one. There were still deeper layers of the unconscious to be activated and cleansed; a more complete abandonment of self-will and self-desire to be experienced. I was still far from that ultimate capitulation which must precede the resurrection into the life of Eternity. In proportion to the degree of my surrender, I had been released from the effects of my past actions and thoughts. A block of these age-old impressions had been wiped away through the grace of the Master. But there was still more house-cleaning to be done – more bonds to be broken. Like St. Paul, I had to continue to ‘die daily’ – without rebellion, without concern for the outcome.

The metaphysical viewpoint, which insists that physical health, material well-being and prosperity are the legitimate prerogatives of man, may be true if we consider the physical body and its desires as the paramount issue in life. If, however, we think of the body merely as an important *instrument* to be properly cared for, but not pampered; and the inner non-physical entity as the real Self, the true Life, then our focus of attention is turned away from preoccupa-

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tion with the body's desires to the yearnings of that inner Self. It *may* be God's will that the perfection of the inner Life manifests itself in a perfected body, but this becomes of secondary importance to the soul that seeks the supreme goal – union with God. Body – consciousness has no place in such Realization.

REUNION

Finally, after two and a half years of being ready to join Baba at a moment's notice, he came to us again in Hollywood and for three wonderful weeks we were recharged by his radiant presence. At this time I verified many of my intuitions concerning the experiences we had undergone. The constant disappointments, the broken promises, the long periods of his apparent unconcern with our problems were all for the purpose of testing our resilience; of developing in us the capacity to endure tension. Baba is the great destroyer of illusion, and if our illusions include erroneous ideas about himself, these, too, he relentlessly destroys.

If a disciple is to be of use to a Master, he must of course be firm as a rock, and at the same time be fluid as water. In Baba's words: "You must be able to face disappointment, criticism, negative forces, with perfect calm and inner poise. And you must submit yourself at all times to the will of God."

All that we had gone through, and had yet to experience, was part of the process which linked us closer to Him, the Divine Personality. Just as Jesus said: 'I am the Way,' and 'No man cometh to the Father except through me,' so today the Perfect Master Baba offers himself as the divine intermediary who shall unite our consciousness with the Soul of the universe.

CHAPTER VI

PASSAGE TO INDIA

ON JANUARY 18th, 1935, after a month's visit, Baba left Hollywood for India, to remain there this time for about two years. He was in seclusion during this period and fasted most of the time; first in the Abu mountains and later at Meherabad. A new cabin erected for him on the Hill signified the inception of a new phase of his work. The ground-work was being laid to unite the Eastern and Western groups.

In the spring of 1936 we heard the first faint whispers of some new plans of Baba's which would include many of the Westerners; and in the autumn of that year we were called to India. At last the long-awaited summons had come! Our joy knew no bounds. Then we began to wonder how we would get there. We found we would be required to have round – trip `tickets, or a substantial letter of credit, to ensure our entry into India; and though the tie business was now quite flourishing, it would not provide for such an extensive outlay. Once in India, Baba would take care of Malcolm's and my living expenses.

Again, however, we were to learn that when the Master wishes something accomplished, the ways and means are always forthcoming. This time the `manna from heaven' descended upon us through the loving generosity of our friend Garrett Fort, who had met Baba when he came to Hollywood the second time, and since then had been anticipating the moment when he, too, might join the Master in India. Happily for all of us he was among those included in the Indian trip and when he heard about it he immediately offered to take care of our tickets. A week or so later word came from Baba asking Garrett if he would do what already

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he had volunteered to do of his own accord. We were all very happy about it.

On the twenty-second of October Malcolm and I were on our way to New York, and a few days later a party of eight of us sailed on the *Ile de France* for England. Garrett, having some business to wind up, followed a few weeks later with Countess Nadia Tolstoy.

In London we experienced the great joy of seeing Baba again. He had arrived there just two days in advance of our party and two days later he was on his way back to India with his Eastern disciples. This trip was the shortest yet of his journeys to the West. Every moment of his four days in London teemed with activity; dozens of interviews with loving devotees, heart-hungry for another glimpse of Baba; and a few momentous meetings with newcomers, one of whom was Alexander Markey, writer, stage and film-director, who has since dedicated his life to the service of the Master.

On one of the two evenings which we had with Baba we went with him to see Gary Cooper in "Mr. Deeds Goes to Town." Baba was greatly pleased with the picture and cited it as an outstanding example of how motion – pictures may be used for the uplifting of mankind, while providing the utmost in enjoyable entertainment.

One afternoon we had a delightful tea with Baba at the apartment of one of the English group. Suddenly, in the midst of the laughter and joy, we noticed Baba's face drawn as if in great pain. Instantly the group became silent, as we shared in sympathy the unknown burden which we sensed he had assumed. Later, he explained: "If you knew the agony which thousands are undergoing this moment in Spain, you would understand my pain."

Another memory of this trip – one redolent with beauty – concerns an episode at Victoria station in London as we were bidding Baba farewell. Wishing to soften the pain of parting which Baba always shares with his loved ones, two of his English group, in buying flowers for him, had selected about two dozen small bunches of violets, in order that he might have some tangible evidence of his love

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to leave with his sorrowful devotees. I shall never forget the look of tender appreciation which he turned upon Kitty and Margaret when he saw what they had done and recognized the selfless love which had prompted their act. Their thoughtfulness transmuted the pain of parting into a sacrament of joy. Gently, slowly, Baba's sensitive fingers would pick out the fragrant symbols of his compassionate love and hand them to the devotees as they approached for a farewell embrace. One could see that a particular blessing accompanied each individual bouquet. Such gracious acts on the part of his disciples are deeply cherished by Baba.

Baba had instructed the American group to sail for India a week after his departure and the English group to follow a few weeks later. Malcolm and I accordingly boarded the *Elysia* at Liverpool the following week and at Marseilles were joined by Norina Matchabelli, Elizabeth Patterson, Estelle Gayley and her daughter Rano.

EAST MEETS WEST

Except for the landing at Marseilles—where we spent an enjoyable day wandering through the side-walk markets and the old town—and later at Port Said where we had our first contact with the mysterious East, the journey seemed long and wearisome, intensified, no doubt, by our eagerness to be with Baba. Finally, when the long-awaited day arrived, I felt as though everything of my past had been washed clean by the many waters through which we had sailed. We docked at Bombay on the 8th of December, just as the sun was setting behind the domed skyline of the city. Rustom, whom we had met in Hollywood some years before, found us in the lounge of the ship, and we embraced, as is the custom among Baba's people, while the stiff British army families looked on in utter astonishment! Rustom placed beautiful garlands of jasmine and red roses around our necks. Later, below deck, in Norina's cabin, we met some of Baba's other Indian men and a few of the women, who were gayly attired in their colorful native *saris*. As we were greeted by these gracious and gentle women I felt I was meeting very dear sisters whom I had known long ago.

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Few of them could speak English, nor we, of course, their language, but the deep love for our Master which had drawn us to India, also drew us to them and dissolved any superficial barriers.

Later, on the dock as we waited our turn at the customs, we met other members of Baba's spiritual family, all of whom extended to us the same warm, loving welcome. It was truly a heart-feast, as many must have thought who watched this meeting of East and West. The customs were cleared with amazing rapidity and our sixty or seventy pieces of group luggage were loaded onto trucks. Rustom saw to it that everything was executed with speed and precision. Then we were on our way in his car to the Majestic Hotel, where we spent the night.

The next morning, as our escort drove us around the city, we passed through Malabar Hill, the beautiful residential section which overlooks the bay. We visited the Parsee Tower of Silence, where vultures consume the dead bodies within a few moments of their being placed in the Tower. We stopped at the leading motion-picture studio, where Rustom – whose family own motion-picture theatres – was greeted like an old friend. Then we made our way through the bazaars, where dirt, heat, color, music, odors of savory herbs, spicy perfumes and hot bodies all blended into an unforgettable exotic atmosphere which both attracted and repelled. Women in flower-colored *saris* carried gleaming brass and copper bowls on their heads in stately grace. Men strolled lazily about in *dhotis* and loincloths; beggars, in many stages of filth and human misery, whined; half-naked children with nose rings and silver anklets scampered about under foot-much human noise, much languid movement. By now the sun was high in the heavens, and languor poured through our veins too.

The morning papers had carried news of our arrival and our photographs, with the result that as we attended to our shopping, crowds gathered around our car or waited for us outside the shops, curious no doubt to see the Westerners who had traveled across the world to sit at the feet of an Eastern Master.

In the last afternoon we motored to Igatpuri, arriving there about nine at night. Here a bungalow had been lovingly prepared for us by Kaka and Adi, Baba's brother. We turned in early, grateful for a night's rest in the cool and quiet of hilly country after the oppressive heat of Bombay.

The next morning, just as we had finished breakfast, Baba arrived by car and then we knew that we were really in India! He explained that an unavoidable delay in finishing the new quarters which he was having erected for us at Nasik would require us to stay for awhile in some temporary abode. He selected Bhandardara as a cooler and more comfortable place for us. Two days later we moved to this beautiful mountain paradise.

ASHRAM DELUXE

While visiting us at Igatpuri, Baba had sensed our inability to adjust quickly to the lack of modern conveniences prevalent in India. It was largely to reassure us, that he arranged for us to see our new home at Nasik before going on to Bhandardara. Though he had described to us in London some of the outstanding features of the Ashram, we were none the less deeply touched by his consideration for our needs which was manifest everywhere in this most modern of modern Indian Ashrams. A septic system of drainage had been installed of which not even the richest of the thirty thousand Nasik inhabitants could boast. Running hot and cold water had been piped to all the rooms and neat little water coolers stood in the corner of our individual back porches. The rooms were furnished with modern maple wardrobes and bureaus of simple design. The boxed-spring beds were upholstered with delf-blue rep-each equipped with its canopied mosquito netting. A writing table and chair sat beneath the window of each room. The walls were painted white with cream colored woodwork and blue trim. This new building, which was just being completed, comprised twelve moderate-sized rooms, all opening out onto one long veranda. Between each two was a shower and toilet, and at the rear, connecting each pair of rooms, was a private porch with comfortable chairs.

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The older buildings on the estate were built around a charming garden and were painted a lively blue. The main house contained a large general living room attractively furnished with easy chairs and couches, covered in blue, a piano and radio. The dining-room had a long refectory table seating twenty people. Several kitchens were well equipped. A suite of two rooms and bath was allotted to two of our Western group, and a large double room and bath for two others; the remainder of us living in the new quarters. Adjoining the older bungalow was Baba's little room, bare except for an iron bed and chair. Next to it was a room for the 'boys' as he terms the Indian men. Beyond the house were the servants' quarters. Near the main house was a smaller one in which lived Rustom's wife, Freni, with her children and servants.

I recall one particular instance of Baba's unparalleled thoughtfulness. The doorway to Norina's room was a little low, so Baba, thinking that she might bump her head against it, had ordered it to be carefully padded. His love seemed to have anticipated every need, every contingency.

The tea-table had been laid in the garden; There we sat with Baba as the sun was sinking in brilliant glory behind the distant hills. Freni was a gracious hostess, her lovely face radiant with the adoration for the Master which poured from her expressive eyes. Her youngest child – at that time a boy of five – was as beautiful a spark of God as one would ever find. His enormous dark eyes, gleaming with mischief one moment, almost hypnotized one the next with their deep, serious intensity. During most of the tea-hour, he stood beside Baba's chair stroking his hair and running his soft little hand across Baba's cheek and neck. Every now and then the Master would turn toward the little fellow with a look of great tenderness, and for a moment the child would nestle closely in Baba's arms. At length Baba gave us the signal to depart. Reluctantly, we bade him good-bye, but this time the separation would be only a brief one. In three days he would be with us at Bhandardara.

During our two week's stay at Bhandardara Baba visited us every few days, staying for two days at a time and then returning to Nasik or Meherabad for a couple of days. On one of these visits Baba spoke of one of his Indian women disciples who had been confined to one room for over three years, in a state of trance. One of the Western women exclaimed: "How awful!" Baba looked up and smiled: "Not awful. Wonderful! She enjoys perpetual bliss, but is at present unaware of the outer world. All of you will have the same bliss, but none of you will lose consciousness of the outer world, for you will experience bliss with *knowledge*. To the individual experiencing bliss, one state is as good as another, but the state you will enjoy will not impair your usefulness in the world. Some of you have had brief periods of bliss, but they were mixed with pain of ignorance."

The next day Baba instructed us to meditate with the idea of making our minds a 'blank.' When later we reported what little success we had had, he explained how difficult – how practically impossible – it is to still the mind by conscious effort. Yet only when the lower mind is permanently stilled can the state of God-consciousness be permanently realized. When the limited mind disappears in the final union with the Infinite, then the limited individuality is replaced by unlimited individuality. The soul not only is God-conscious, but *knows* it, and in knowing it, preserves its individuality, which is not extinguished but extended to an all-comprehensive form.

The last week of our stay at Bhandardara Nadia Tolstoy and our friend Garrett arrived. Knowing how Garry's mind was seething with questions, Baba consented to answer a few of the more important ones concerning the spiritual life as exemplified and taught by the Master:

"Divinity is not devoid of humanity – it lifts the manhood and womanhood into God; nor does spirituality necessarily imply the renunciation of worldly activities. True spirituality signifies the *internal* renunciation of mundane desires. Mere external renunciation – asceticism – does not lead to

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spirituality. Perfection is a misnomer if it tries to escape from entanglement by shrinking from the dual expressions of nature. The perfect man must assert his dominion over all illusion, however attractive and however powerful. A Perfect Being functions with complete detachment in the midst of the most intense activity and in contact with all forms of life.”

Later, when Garrett expressed surprise at Baba’s keen sense of humor, the Master reminded him that “Divinity includes all that is beautiful and gracious,” and asked: “How, then, could you expect a Perfect Being to be devoid of a sense of humor?”

Before we left for Nasik, Baba called us to him and indicated briefly how he would train us for participation in his future work. “Every one of you has to help in my work according to your individual capacity; and the extent to which you will remain in the world will be determined by the kind of work which you are destined to perform. I will teach you how to move in the world yet to be at all times in inward communication with me as the Infinite Being . . . As part of your training you will have to experience both the comforts of Nasik and the discomforts of Meherabad.”

We left Bhandardara on December twenty-second, in one sense reluctant to go, in another eager to get settled in the quarters which Baba had told us would be ours for the next five years. This temporary sojourn had been a gracious introduction to our life in India. The physical beauty of the place was impregnated with a quality of timelessness to be found only in India. Surrounding the extensive lake which lay before us were towering mountain peaks rising majestically into the clouds. This region, Baba informed us, had been the abode of great Rishis of the past, and it was easy to visualize those Masters of Wisdom rapt in the silence which these mountains safe-guarded. Untroubled by the illusion of time, they stood like sentinels of eternity, displaying in their outlines the archetypal forms from which man had derived his inspiration for a Great Pyramid, a Cave Temple of the Mayas, a Parthenon, or an Angkor Vat.

At last the Nasik Ashram was completed and we moved in. With the arrival of the English group a week or so later, which included Kitty Davy, Margaret Craske, Delia DeLeon, Tom Sharpley, Will and Mary Backett, and another week later, Ruano Bogislav, or number was increased to fifteen.

Baba assigned our rooms to us, showing, as always, his wisdom in placing those people near together who could best further each other's development. He stood at the doorway of the storage-room which had been erected for our luggage, and personally supervised our unpacking, watching carefully that none of the women overtaxed their strength in the lifting of heavy baggage. On this very first day at Nasik began my particular *via crucis*, which was to continue throughout my stay in India. What I did not then realize, but now know to be true, is that the moment one becomes the recipient of a Master's special attention – such as Baba gave to our group at Nasik – karmic forces converge with singular intensity upon the disciple. Whatever good or bad effects the individual soul has accumulated during its journey through time are brought to one's conscious attention in an unmistakable and perhaps painful way. Particularly is one compelled by force of circumstance to rise above all negative reactions, by developing those spiritual qualities of courage and resilience, which subsequently are converted into power to be used in the service of the Master.

Here, in India, was a group of men and women, drawn from many avenues, of life; all were *individuals* with divergent and fully vocal opinions, highly charged with energy. All had egos which were yet far from having been eliminated, and since it is Baba's therapy to bring into the open whatever egoistic tendencies are hindering the free flow of God-force in the soul, what a potential store of dynamite our Ashram turned out to be!

Since much of my karmic debris was working itself out through bodily illness and pain, it was inevitable that I should experience an intensification of physical disability. The one part of my body which had heretofore been exempt

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from discord was now afflicted with almost continuous pain. The extreme tropical heat which produces in most people lethargy or weakness, effected in me violent headaches which would last for days at a time, with few intervals of relief.

As I was trying to transcend the initial one, word came that we were all to meet in Baba's room. Of all the pains to which I had ever been subjected this 'head' pain was the most difficult to surmount, because the mental *effort* involved seemed to accentuate the pain. This caused me to become more tense, more immersed in the disorder. Baba, of course, sensed at once my problem and used the occasion to drive home needed lessons, which I'm afraid I did not accept very cheerfully.

"When either the mind or body are tired or in pain, the other reacts," he told us. "Only the *soul* is able to remain aloof from such discomforts. That which is disturbed by these things is the limited 'I' – the ego. This 'I' wishes always to be *comfortable*, and is therefore unnecessarily disturbed by the presence of pain. It considers unimportant things as important and vice versa. The body's needs, though of secondary importance, must, of course, be considered."

Later he elaborated on this same theme: "I want you to lead a simple life here in India; then, when you return to the West you may resume your accustomed life there, yet you must be unaffected by either. In view of this you may wonder why I have arranged these comforts for you. If I required you to sleep on the floor, for example, the body would rebel and in turn react upon the mind. Such *sudden*, drastic changes would make it difficult for me to impart truth to you through the mind. I will therefore *gradually* withdraw these comforts from you and later return them to you again. The world is slave to needs. The needs must become *your* slaves. You must learn to use your modern conveniences – not be used by them."

He also warned us that at first we might feel confused, tired and restless, but we were not to be disturbed by these feelings; they would be merely the natural reaction of our minds and bodies to the transition we were making from

West to East. The East symbolizes the passive subjective aspect of consciousness – deeply introverted – in contrast to the active, conscious extraverted attitude of the West. Such a radical change in environment would necessarily be strange and disquieting to us. For the first few weeks we were free to map out our own daily program, except for two stipulations: we were expected to be punctual for meals and we were pledged not to step beyond the confines of the twenty-four acre Ashram property. Except for periodical excursions with Baba, this latter ruling remained in effect until his birthday on February eighteenth.

CHRISTMAS PARTY

On Christmas morning, early, Baba came to our rooms to greet us with a special emanation of love and radiance. Not always does he mete out the same degree of love. He seems at times deliberately to withhold it, as Kabir say:

“My Lord hides himself,
And my Lord wonderfully reveals himself.”

But on this blessed morning Baba poured himself out in Christmas benediction upon us all.

Shortly after daybreak, devotees began to arrive to pay homage to the Master, and by ten o'clock the grounds were covered with groups of men, women and children, some of whom had travelled many miles on foot, others by car or train, intent upon seeing the Beloved One. Meeting these ardent followers of the Master, and seeing the deep love and reverence which they lavished upon him, made us marvel anew at our unparalleled good fortune in being the recipients of his intimate care and guidance.

Just before noon, two cars drove up before the community house. A few moments later happy voices and excited greeting told us the English group had arrived. The child-like spontaneity of 'Kimco'—as Baba calls them – especially endears these English disciples to the Master, and his face gleamed with loving welcome. In the evening about twenty of us sat down to a beautifully decorated table, with Baba at the head. Piled high before him were the gifts which we

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had unearthed from our trunks in the afternoon and made into un-labeled packages for Baba to distribute. Some, of course, were marked especially for him. He would hold a package in his hand for a moment, as if determining its contents and its suitability for a particular person. Then, with a twinkle in his eye, he would designate the recipient. I recall that a bottle of Chanel No.5 came my way!

The crowning touch to the dinner was a speech by Kaka, whose droll English was just then in the formative stage. Every moment of the meal was crowned with gaiety and high good-humor, but at Kaka's speech the house resounded with our laughter. Baba prefaced it by telling us that he had heard it read several times but could make nothing out of it except that apparently Kaka didn't think much of marriage! One would have to know Kaka, or 'hear' him in action to appreciate fully the scene. He smiled good-naturedly at Baba's raillery, but very solemnly, very earnestly and with terrific force – as though he were addressing an audience in a huge colosseum – he delivered his speech while Baba and the rest of us rocked with laughter. We agreed with Baba that it was difficult to know what it was all about. Only occasionally would we hear the word marriage and judging from the violent emphasis he placed upon it, we gathered that he *was* somewhat dubious of the institution!

Later, after having had our fun at good Kaka's expense, Baba pointed out that we Westerners would be brave indeed if after a few months of *Urdu* (an East-Indian dialect) we would attempt to deliver a speech to native Indians! We heartily agreed.

In this account of our Christmas day in India may be seen how simple and natural is life with Baba; too 'simple' perhaps for those who have not yet learned how to recapture the lost joys of childhood. Yet, in the words of the Master, Jesus, we are told that it is just this child-like capacity for acceptance of the *simple*, unsophisticated joys of life that qualify one for the spiritual Kingdom.

During our stay in India, Baba divided his time between his three Ashrams; ours at Nasik for the Westerners, Meherabad for the Eastern men and women disciples, and Rahuri where a refuge for the God-intoxicated had recently been established. This work with the spiritually-dazed is one of the newer phases of Baba's activity, as it is also one of the most important. About a year before our going to India, Baba initiated this symbolic and merciful service. He sent some of his disciples to the bazaars of the large cities to find the particular types of deranged men with whom he desired to work. He wanted especially those whose minds had become unbalanced by intense longing for God, or unguided yogic practices – or, as we would express it in Jungian terminology, those overwhelmed by archetypal experience. When these men were brought to Baba, he could ascertain immediately whether they were 'God-mad' as he called them, or suffering from a derangement due to organic disease or other psychological causes. If among those brought to him were any in these latter categories, they were returned after a short period of treatment, with new clothing and money. The God-mad were ministered to by Baba at the Rahuri Ashram, an oasis of peace and protection in the Jungle – symbolic of the service which the Master renders *all* those earth children who are wondering about dazed and bewildered in the dangerous jungles of the Unconscious.

Baba's treatment of these spiritually-dazed men is uniquely his own. He uses, as he always does, a physical medium to symbolize the spiritual benefit he renders them. One has only to watch his sacramental ritual of bathing, clothing, and feeding the *masts* (Indian name for mad) to realize that something profound and significant is being accomplished through it. Baba pours tremendous concentration, unstinted love and tenderness into his handling of these men; and they respond to him with the spontaneous adoration of little children. He never coerces them in any way; and if they are not in the mood to be bathed, fed, clothed – and none of them seems to enjoy being clothed – Baba sits by, waiting patiently until he is given the 'go-ahead' signal.

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Of the many who have received this spiritual benediction, the majority have been returned to their home towns with their mental balance restored. Depending upon the degree of their spiritual readiness, they find their equilibrium on their present plane of consciousness, or are led by Baba to a higher and safer plane, beyond dangerous psychic entanglements. If, as in a number of cases, they had induced in themselves a state of consciousness for which they were not prepared by character development, then the Master returned them to ordinary functioning, and saw that they were helped to lead normal lives.

When we had been in India about three weeks, we paid our first visit to the Rahuri Ashram, a place of utmost simplicity but great charm. Small huts made of matting, with thatched roofs, lined one side of a large tree-shaded compound: Baba's miniature house, which stood at the far end, was decorated with the symbols of four great world religions – Zoroastrian, Hindu, Mohammedan and Christian. One especially large banyan tree had a circular cement platform built around it. Here some of the men were sitting as our cars drove up. Instantly on Baba's arrival they grouped around him, their faces beaming with obvious delight at his return. These men, functioning as they do in the subjective world, have no intellectual obstruction to their spontaneous response to Baba's love. One of them, Mamoud – a third-plane *mast*, Baba informed us – would, at that time, sit for hours with his head and eyes down, unresponsive to anything or anyone except the Master. To him, however, he reacted with childlike joy. Hours before Baba's arrival he would predict his coming, and a year later, when he was sent for by Baba to be taken to Europe, he told the disciple in charge of the Ashram, a week in advance, that such a message would shortly come. When he finally arrived in Europe we were astonished to see the change in him. He was alert to his surroundings, interested in the new faces and environment, and particularly intrigued with his new Western clothes and shoes to which he called our special attention. He was obviously functioning in a totally new psychological world – about seventy-five percent more

conscious of his environment than he had been when we first saw him. He talked in his Indian dialect with Eastern disciples with no evidence of strain or embarrassment. Only when one of the disciples repeatedly asked him a question which annoyed him did he display any sign of maladjustment – he spit in the disciple’s face! For the three months during which we were in Europe Baba continued his daily ritual of bathing, clothing and feeding Mamoud, whose consciousness, Baba informed us, was being raised to a higher plane.

“The derangement of the masts,” Baba explains, “differs from that of ordinary mad persons both in its origin and nature. The latter lose their mental balance through disintegrating physiological or psychic causes of an ordinary kind. In the physiological field, disease of some sort is the cause, while in the mental field acute and apparently insoluble conflict between deep-rooted instincts and man’s conventional codes is the source of the madness. In the case of the *masts* their state of unbalance is induced by their powerful urge to realize God. As the spiritual aspirant advances in his all-consuming desire to experience God the mental structure with its normal tendencies and capacities is dissolved. The *successful* termination of this urge initiates the aspirant into the supra-mental state of perfect integration and direct realization of the Supreme Self. Naturally the methods of treatment of the ordinary insane person and the God-mad will differ. In the case of the former, the usual method consists in counteracting whatever physical causes may have contributed to the derangement. If a psychic origin is also involved, expert analysis helps to bring to the surface of consciousness the deep-rooted conflicts and complexes which have led to the mental breakdown. Unfortunately the average analyst cannot give the patient the power to solve these problems. Though the analyst may exercise the utmost patience, gentleness and understanding, unless he has the capacity to arouse the latent *spiritual* powers of the patient, no cure is possible.

“It naturally follows that the ordinary analyst, who has little insight into spiritual realities, could hardly be expected

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to help the God-mad, whose experiences and objectives are entirely beyond the range of his own experience or even his imagination. Only a supreme master of consciousness can give them the help that they so greatly need. With his discernment he is able to appreciate both their spiritual yearnings and their peculiar individual obstacles, and through the exercise of his spiritual power he can advance them toward their goal, or bring them back to three-dimensional consciousness, as their case requires.

“During the process of transcending the mind, one is subjected to so much disturbance that the aspirant is unable to use his mind in the normal way, and to all appearances behaves like a mad-man. But a Master who has direct insight into the workings of the mind, knows the true cause and nature of the *mad*'s peculiar mental condition. He knows precisely what spiritual motivation has induced this state of unbalance and is therefore able to help the *mad* attain his goal in his own particular way. With such help the spiritually-dazed eventually emerge into a *supra*-normal state of perfect integration and harmony.

“The appearance of balance which the ordinary man possesses is only provisional, and is due to his ability to strike a compromise between the warring elements in his psyche and his environment. However, in order that the mind may achieve a *true* balance, the provisional balance has to be considerably disturbed. When this happens without the supervision of a Perfect Master, a condition of apparent madness results.”

In the early days of Rahuri, Baba had thrown out hints to the effect that those mad-men to whom he gave most attention represented the leading nations of the world, and that Mamoud – to whom he gave special attention – represented Germany. These hints were given to the disciples before the war in Europe had started.

If the consciousness of humanity as a whole is to be raised – as Baba foretells – then even those nations which have become obsessed by demons of the underworld – or in psychological terms, possessed by destructive archetypes –

must participate in this regeneration. In the course of time further significant phases of this particular work became more apparent to us.

In February, 1937, Baba again established a “Free Meher Dispensary” – this time at Rahuri—with Dr. Nilu Godse in charge, assisted by Baba’s younger brother, Jal. About 200 patients were treated daily by Nilu and Jal with Baba sparing no expense for the treatment of their physical ailments and bestowing upon them the blessing of his divine presence and love. During the period the sleepy little village of Rahuri buzzed with human activity as the hundreds of poor, sick pilgrims poured into the dispensary. Those who came for physical relief departed with the added gift of spiritual benefit – according to their readiness to receive it – for in Baba’s dealing with humanity, the physical and the spiritual go hand-in-hand. Even those closest to him – most responsive to his spiritual ‘touch’ – have experienced this dual aspect of the healing technique which Baba employs.

VISIT TO MEHERABAD

Our first visit to Meherabad was momentous one for us. Here we were to meet the other members of the *Mandali*, and the women were to visit the special group of Indian women disciples. We left Nasik shortly after midnight in order to avoid the heat of daytime travel and arrived at Meherashram just at day break. Baba’s men were gathered outside the doorway of the Ashram to greet us as we drove up to the house. A few we already knew and loved, having been with them in the West or at Nasik; and with these new ‘brothers’ we felt the same quiet strength, the same selfless love and whole-hearted dedication to our Master’s service which had endeared the others to us.

Their quarters were situated in an open stretch of level country with mountains in the distance. The building, extremely simple, consisted of one large main room about thirty by twenty feet, which served as the general meeting room in the daytime and at night was converted into sleeping quarters through the simple expedient of placing bedding rolls upon the floor. To one side of this room was a smaller one for cooking and eating, and on the other side

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were the wash-rooms and the free medical dispensary for the neighboring villagers. Everything was so immaculately clean that one had the impression that even the floors would be sanitary enough to eat off.

After a short visit with the men, the Western women were taken by Baba across the road and up the hill, where six Eastern women have been secluded for many years. This meeting of the Western women with our Eastern sisters-in-Baba was a memorable experience. As we embraced each other, we felt – as we had on the boat the day of our arrival in Bombay – how the love of our Blessed Master united us and enabled us to transcend any outer barriers of language or background. Certainly more opposite types could scarcely have been brought together ! In the Western group was a former dancer in the Russian ballet (Margaret Craske); a woman with her own insurance business in New York (Elizabeth Patterson); an actress who had held salons in many of the large European cities (Norina Matchabelli); two other actresses (Delia DeLeon and Ruano Boglislav); an artist (Rano Gayley); and one who had devoted a number of years to social work in the slums, alms-houses, prisons and hospitals of New York, Philadelphia and Pittsburgh (Jean Adriel). Practically all were women who had traveled extensively and seen much of what is popularly termed `life`. Contrasted with us were these sheltered, saintly women who up to the time of our coming to India, had traveled no further than from one Ashram to another – within a radius of a hundred miles – as Baba moved his headquarters from time to time. In this group were Baba's sister – a beautiful young woman about eighteen at the time we met her – and two others a few years older, all of whom had been with Baba since they were children of ten or twelve and from that time had seen no other man than Baba. Three older women – one of whom was the mother of one of the younger ones – had also been living this life of seclusion for many years.

I felt we had much to learn from them, but it was difficult to see what our contribution to them might be. In general I think that the West has a distinct contribution to

make to the East, just as the East has its unique heritage to share with mankind. In the coming years this amalgamation must surely take place if the human race is to advance further in consciousness. The conscious use of *will* by which Western man achieves his material goals must be balanced with the sensitive, *feeling* faculties of the Easterner. Before this union of the opposites can become an actuality, however, both Easterner and Westerner must become aware of their need for the missing part of their being, as individuals and as nations.

But these women – long conditioned by the Master to a type of consciousness which transcends both the mental and emotional drives – seemed to need nothing which we had to offer. Their ‘House on the Hill’, in which they lived their quiet, gentle lives, was surrounded by a wall twelve feet high. This enclosed a compound of about forty feet square upon which two houses faced. The larger one consisted--at that time – of a single room about thirty feet by twenty. The chief appointments of the room were six iron beds, each with its mosquito – netting canopy. Beside each bed was a small wooden trunk, in which were kept the few belongings of the women, and a straight wooden chair. There were no ornaments, no gadgets, no books. The most austere convent would be luxurious by comparison. Yet in some indefinable way an impression of gracious living was conveyed. In spite of the ascetic background, one felt nothing of the spirit of asceticism. How could there be with the warmth of Baba’s radiant spirit blessing and adorning this house?

Though on the surface their lives were acutely circumscribed, monotonous and meager, their faces bore the unmistakable imprint of a happier, more contented life than we Westerners with our so-called full, colorful lives had ever known. In them we saw the result of consciousness superceding the intellect with its tendency to speculate and argue. As they performed quietly and graciously their simple tasks, one sensed that the heat of striving for either material or spiritual goals was no longer theirs – if ever it had been. Pure soul-force flowed into their free and spontaneous ac-

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tions. Having no need to disburden themselves of mental impressions, and feeling no inclination toward gossip, they spoke but little. But one could see that they lived deeply, consciously; each one, a distinct *individual*.

A significant story is told of one of these holy women: when Mehera – who was born of a cultured Parsee family in Poona – was a little girl of seven or eight, she felt drawn one day to stop at the tree under which Babajan sat with her circle of disciples and pilgrims. The aged Master greeted the child warmly, and in course of conversation asked her what she would like above everything in the world. The little girl–after pondering the question for a few minutes–replied that she would like a ‘white horse’ on which she could ride. Babajan smiled and promised her that she would have such a horse, and that she would be honored by everyone who saw her with it. When she returned home her mother told her she had a surprise for her. There, in the compound, was a snow white horse which her mother had purchased that day in the bazaar.

The spiritual significance of this incident becomes apparent when we realize that the Avatar of this age has been described in ancient scriptures as the *White Horse Avatar*; and since this little girl, Mehera–now a beautiful young woman–occupies the place of pre-eminence in Baba’s Ashram, the story suggests a deeper meaning than the purely objective one.

Beloved *above* all others by Baba and the other woman on the Hill, she is second only to the Master in the hearts of her spiritual sisters. Because of the utter selflessness of her devotion to the Divine Beloved – which, Baba once described as surpassing the love of anyone in the world – is she worthy of the homage which is accorded her. Having sacrificed all that the average woman holds most dear, she receives from the Master the greatest love.

To anyone familiar with Baba’s way of working, it seems quite possible that through these chosen and safe-guarded women he is resurrecting the soul of woman from her age- old bondage to the male side of life, so that in the impending new day, she may be free to take her destined place as the

co-worker with man-no longer his subordinate, to be dominated by his intellect and enslaved by his desires.

Because we Westerners were still far from the conscious inner freedom which these holy women enjoyed, many of us suffered acutely on the Meherabad trips. I felt as if I were being required to function in a kind of mental vacuum. It was so unfamiliar, so strange, yet withal peaceful and lovely. It was like being dropped into a fair country where language is neither spoken nor read, but where people go about their affairs with serene, happy faces, communicating with each other by some inner means which one does not yet know.

The god of the Westerner – the intellect – was being dethroned and I, for one, had to enthrone the true God – the balanced soul-life in my innermost being. The inner conflict which was generated within me intensified the severe headaches which were becoming an almost daily anguish. Yet always on leaving this hill-top Sanctuary I felt as if I had participated in a sacred and profound experience. Driving away in the late afternoon, just as the Oriental sun was sinking behind the distant hills, painting the sky with liquid rubies, topaz and amethysts, I would feel myself purged and uplifted – better able to appreciate the transcendental beauty and wisdom which is inherent in the soul of the Perfect Master.

SACRED SIGHT – SEEING

Our strict confinement to the twenty-four acre property was periodically relieved by motor trips with Baba to places of spiritual interest. He took us first to the town of Nasik, about five miles from our Ashram. Here we found an Oriental town untouched by Western civilization; one therefore which retains all its dirt, spicy odors, color and uncivilized charm.

Nasik has long been considered one of the sacred cities of India. Its ancient name *Janastana* (The Place of Sacrifice) is mentioned in the *Ramayana*, one of the revered books of the Hindus, as the dwelling place of Rama and his

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wife Sita during their voluntary exile. One finds here many relics connected with the spiritually romantic tales of this great epic.

Mukerji, in his *Visit India with Me* also mentions Nasik as one of the places where Jesus is reputed to have stayed during his legendary visit to India.

After halting at the bridge which spans the Godavari, one of the sacred waterways of India, we threaded our way through another portion of the city to a spot on the Godavari called Gangapur – a place of sacred pilgrimage for centuries. Here Baba led us past the many separate shrines to a spot under the rocks just at the base of a water-fall; A place in which yogis delighted to meditate – the roar and rhythm of the falling water helping them to achieve a still mind.

Baba seated himself under the over-hanging rock while we grouped ourselves silently at his feet, with the water gurgling past us just a few yards away. We were no yogis, but we felt the deep peace which quiet moments with Baba always engender. Some of the Shrine watchers who had recognized Baba stood a little to one side with worship in their eyes. It was a new and wholesome experience for us to see the veneration which these strangers accorded the Master.

Another expedition with Baba – which was for me particularly significant – took us about five miles from Nasik to the Pandulena Caves. These rock dwellings – twenty-two in number- are situated near the top of a mountain which commands a magnificent view of the whole surrounding country. Most of them were originally carved out of the rocky mountain wall by the Pandava brothers, disciples of the Avatar Krishna, who lived, according to some traditions, about the seventh Century B.C. The legend tells how Yudisthira–then overlord of all India – had gambled away his kingdom in a game of dice. As punishment he and his four brothers, of whom Arjuna was one, were banished from the kingdom and wandered as homeless exiles for about twelve years. It was during this period that they carved out these caves as shelter for themselves; here Krishna and other great sages came to visit them, and from here they wandered forth with

Krishna on many pilgrimages. No doubt this exile constituted the preparatory phase to that great battle of the *Mahabharatta* – Kurukshetra – in which Arjuna received his initiation at Krishna's hands. It seems as if a similar drama has but recently been enacted on a more comprehensive scale, and perhaps Baba's foreknowledge of the war to come was one of the reasons he made a special point of our visiting these caves. Again a group of disciples had been undergoing long years of rigorous training, preparatory to a *world* initiation which the subsequent world-wide war heralded.

In later times other Masters lived in these caves with their disciples and left upon them the imprint of their lives there. A particularly unusual one had been occupied by a famous Jain Master with his circle of eighteen men. A balcony, which extended in a semi-circle around the cave, was supported by seventeen pillars, each resting on a massive stone jar. In the center of the cave was a raised pedestal or altar. On the steps in the center – where Baba now sat – the former Master would sit – Baba informed us – with his disciples gathered around him on the steps below, as he instructed them in spiritual Truth. An adjoining cave with eighteen cells, also carved out of the rock, they used for meditation.

Another profoundly impressive cave contained, in an alcove at the rear, a giant figure of the Buddha which was not visible on first entering the cave, but as one's eyes became accustomed to the darkness it suddenly stood out in bold relief, as though some rear lighting had been mysteriously turned on. The spiritual power in this cave was prodigious. One felt inclined to linger here and tune in on the potent wave-length which the accumulated meditations of ages must have produced; but Baba hastily led us on to the next cave.

Since, prior to this trip, I had been rather ill, Baba assisted me in my climb up the mountain by taking my hand. As we neared the place of the caves, I turned to look out over the broad expanse of plain which lay below us. Instantly there flashed through my mind the memory of the 'Mountain-top' experience which I have described at the begin –

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ning of this volume – one of those contacts with Reality which had prepared me for the meeting with the Master. The experience having been so vivid and profound had naturally left an indelible imprint upon my mind. Now as I looked out over the valley below, I saw the same landscape, the same relation of country-side below to the place on which I was standing, as I had witnessed in that transcendent experience. I turned to Baba and asked him if he knew of what the scene reminded me. He nodded, smiling, and indicated to me the ‘Mountain – top.’ Then for a timeless, supernal moment – in which unutterable truths were conveyed – his eyes held mine. In ways which defy the rational mind, I had – years before – tuned in on this mountaintop of initiation, reliving an ancient experience and perhaps anticipating one which was to come. Later, as we were getting into our cars, Baba told us that some of us would go back to those caves some day, and stay there with him for awhile.

MAJOR CRISIS

An important aspect in Baba’s technique of freeing his disciples from their bondage to the past—from their egocentric selves—is the ‘crisis’ which he so skillfully induces. Inevitably, after coming in close touch with Baba, the life processes are so speeded up that one finds oneself in the midst of circumstances which compel one to do some penetrating soul-searching. It is not necessary that we be with Baba outwardly to participate in this speeding-up process. Many who have established a deep *inner* contact with him but have not met him in the flesh, have experienced the same intensification of rhythm. But being with him physically usually makes the experience more dramatic, more poignant. No one who is close to Baba escapes this treatment which, though painful, strips off the constricting veils from the real Self, and opens the way to a more abundant life.

Such a crisis developed for me when I had been in India a little over a month. Baba was on the fifth day of his forty-day fast—and we had long ago been told that

something significant always happened on the fifth day of any of Baba's special activities. Certainly it did for me! One sultry afternoon, having one of my frequent headaches, I had not gone over to the main house for tea. It had instead been brought to my room by one of the servants. I was sitting up in bed, cross-legged, with the thinnest of nightgowns on, when suddenly the pot-full of boiling water overturned onto my lap. As may be imagined, the pain was excruciating. I had nothing to apply to the seared flesh and there was no one within calling distance. There was nothing to do but wait – with as much fortitude as I could muster – until tea was over and someone came back to our building. About forty minutes later, Malcolm and the others returned to their rooms. Baba was at Rahuri, but word of the accident was telephoned immediately to him. One of his first questions : “Was she brave ?” indicates the essential quality in a disciple which he looks for at such times. The doctor whom Baba recommended arrived about an hour later.

One strange and psychologically important feature of this experience was a dream which I had had, just the night before, of being burned at the stake. Evidently my inner being knew that I was ripe for a drastic purification, to such an extent that it immediately became objectified in my outer life in the form of the accident.

When Baba arrived a couple of days later, after assuring himself that I had received the proper care, he told me that painful though the burn was, its results would be good. He showed keen interest in the dream.

Though the acute pain diminished after a few days, the nervous shock lasted for some weeks. Just as I was beginning to limp around my room, a bitter altercation arose between Malcolm and another man. Now, in retrospect, it is quite apparent that Baba engineered the whole conflict – and drew me into it-to effect one of his major surgical operations; perhaps a three-in-one operations, because as time has since revealed, all three of us have been compelled by force of subsequent circumstances to face the emotional conflict involved in this crisis. I, for one,

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realize it to be the most helpful of the many benefits which Baba has rendered me, for it was the initiatory momentum which compelled me to integrate into my conscious life certain latent qualities of soul, without which I would have remained very lop-sided. At the time of the crisis, however, I did not see it this way. But, as Baba predicted when he heard of the accident, the salutary effects of this painful ordeal have been incommensurable.

After speaking to me in the morning about this friction between the two men, Baba said he wished us all to meet together, when the whole affair would be thrashed out. The other man had written an editorial for the new magazine on which some of us were assigned to work. Malcolm groaned when he read it, for when it was not pontifical it dripped with sentimentality. When he spoke to Baba about it he was instructed to put in writing his comments on it. Though his criticism was justified and in fact ordered by Baba, the other man could not `take it'. He responded with a vitriolic outpouring which made me feel actually ill when I read it. Baba pointed out that my reaction to it was due to the fact that there was something in me – something in my relationship to this man – which absorbed the poison of his remarks. Consequently, I was indirectly involved in the situation. Baba gave me very explicit orders to say quite frankly whatever came into my mind, when we all met together, regardless of its possible effect upon the two men or upon myself.

Late that afternoon I was helped down to the room at the far end of our long porch. There – with Baba as the masterly director – the crisis, of which the dream and the burn were but the pre figuration, took place. Considering the symbolism inherent in both the dream and the accident, I have no doubt that the session in that room marked the beginning of a life-initiation which was destined to take us all to the brink of the abyss. Upon me it has bestowed a more universal understanding of love and human relationships such as every woman must experience if she is to fulfil her appointed destiny.

Baba directed each of the two men to give his side of

the affair. Then I was told to say wherein I thought each one was at fault. The emotional pain which this produced in me seems now—as it did even twenty-four hours later—out of all proportion to the immediate cause; an indication, no doubt, of the deep *unconscious* forces which Baba was bringing into consciousness. I felt as though I were undergoing all the anguish which woman has ever suffered for the man she loves. Yet all I was doing was to say frankly what I thought were the basic faults in the two men's characters, which had precipitated this unhappy situation.

By compelling me to override my feminine instinct to avoid painful controversy, Baba was bringing into my consciousness the fearlessness of the male side of my nature, which was largely dormant. By this means he was releasing me from an age-old bondage which I shared with most of woman-kind—the bondage of fear that she will lose the loved one, if she chooses the strong course and ceases to cater to his egocentricity and his role of intellectual dominance.

In taking this line of least resistance in her contacts with man, woman relegates herself to an inferior position, and impedes the higher function of her sex, which is to arouse in man his latent soul side. But to do this she may have to inflict pain, or risk his displeasure even to the point of forfeiting her close relationship with him.

Since writing the above, I have read *In search of maturity* by Dr. Kunkel, in which I find corroborated the above conclusions: “. finally we may meet the great test of maturity; if necessary to inflict, consciously and conscientiously, pain and sacrifice upon our most beloved friends.”

Only the perspective of time, however, revealed these things. While in the midst of it I felt that Baba was unnecessarily cruel in compelling me to participate in this dispute. My only part in it had been that of arbitrator, but Baba, with his penetrating insight—knowing better than I—used this occasion to teach me a greatly needed lesson. First he would stir up my emotions by insisting I speak my

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mind; then he would include me to become clam – detached. This soul-surgery continued for about an hour, during which time I must have recapitulated all the emotional crises of my entire life – and there had been many. Perhaps this emotional review was another aspect of Baba's `game' – one for which at the time I felt little zest.

When it was finally over, I was utterly shattered. I had to be carried back to my bed, where for hours I lay sobbing with hysterical heart-break. I could see no reason for the ordeal to which Baba had subjected me. The tender, loving Father seemed to have become the Devil himself! When he looked in on me a little later, I told him I could not stand any more; I had reached my limit of endurance. Then from sheer exhaustion I fell asleep.

On awakening in the morning I felt more dead than alive. My body seemed drained of life, my soul devoid of hope, my heart barren and cold. The brilliant Indian sun infiltrating through the doors and windows of my room was powerless to penetrate my inner darkness. Later I sat on our back porch with Malcolm, in silence. I saw the sympathy in his eyes, but my heart could not receive it. Where faith had upheld me, despair now ruled; where love had drawn and impelled me, icy fingers gripped my heart. My God had failed me; I longed for the oblivion of unconsciousness—for the peace of utter annihilation—the great temptation which comes to all at this moment of the soul's Calvary. Then I thought of Jesus' agony in the Garden of Gethsemane—how even he had asked to have the cup removed from him. But with the next breath I remembered the succeeding words: “Nevertheless, not my will but Thine be done.”

“Not my will, but Thine”; here was the key to my problem. I let the words sink deep into my soul. A deeper abandonment to God – to my Master, an incarnation of God –this was what was required of me. Much of my anguish was due to my rebellion against what Baba knew to be for my highest good. I had trusted him for many years; he had not failed me. I must know that he was not failing me now. He saw more deeply into my need than I could

possibly see; and better than I, he knew how to meet that need. In my heart I offered my life to him anew to use as he deemed best. I accepted the darkness, then I let go. At that moment out across the fields a robin sang its liquid canticle; and with its melting lilt a blockage was released in me and peace poured into my heart.

A few minutes later, with his perfect timing, Baba appeared. He had pointedly stayed away until this moment. He looked at me seriously – questioning me with his eyes, even as a surgeon examines his patient after a major operation. Then I asked him a question:

“Is it possible to love God merely through obedience-when feeling is absent?”

He smiled. The operation had been successful and the patient would live!

“It is the highest form of love,” he replied.

Later in the day, with Malcolm’s help I walked over to Baba’s room to tell him he could finish the job whenever he wished. The look of happy satisfaction which he gave me wiped away the last vestige of pain.

Such an experience as this reveals many *other* basic truths in addition to the fundamental lesson one needs to learn. I see now what an invaluable service Baba rendered me in compelling me to accept the dark side of life as well as the light; the Devil as well as God; crucifixion as well as resurrection. Through this crisis he inspired in me a deeper surrender to the will of God – of the Master – than I had yet made. I had offered my self to God; the Master was making sure that no hidden sins or virtues were being withheld.

I had always before run away from love when it hurt. Now I was learning to love in spite of the pain – to have faith in spite of disillusionment. I could now better understand those words of Kahlil Gibran:

“For even as love crowns you so shall he crucify you. Even as he is for your growth so is he for your pruning. . . . He threshes you to make you naked. . . . He grinds