

The Way and the Goal

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Avatar Meher Baba *the way and the goal*

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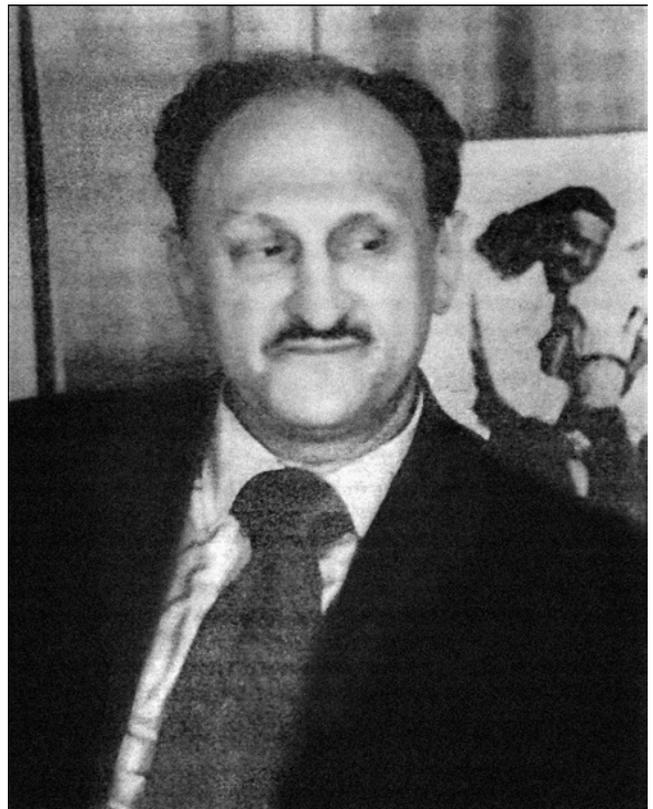
Mediocrity and Meher Baba Do Not Mix.

A Talk Given by Dr. Harry L. Kenmore

The following talk on mediocrity was delivered on Saturday, January 2nd, 1971, at the Society for Avatar Meher Baba. Within it, Dr. Kenmore refers to trends and movements which were current in the late 'Sixties and early 'Seventies—but his observations apply with equal force to the dilemmas of today, more than twelve years later.

When, in 1788, Gibbon wrote his monumental work on the rise and fall of the Roman Empire, he gave five reasons for the crumbling and the disappearance of the empire. He said that, number one, there was a rapid increase in the divorce rate that meant the undermining of the dignity and the sanctity of the home as the basis for human society. Secondly, there were higher and higher taxes and the careless spending of public monies for bread and services. Thirdly, there was a mad craze for pleasure, with sports becoming every year more and more exciting, more and more brutal. The fourth reason he gave was the building of gigantic armaments with the real enemy within—a decadence of the people. And for the fifth reason, he listed the decay of religion. Religion had become a formality, a mere show, had lost touch with the realities of life, and became impotent in giving moral or spiritual guidance to the people.

I can sum up all these five reasons for the destruction of the Roman Empire with one word, and that's "mediocrity." Mediocrity is the social worm that is being introduced into our society today. Mediocrity is something that is neither good, nor is it bad. It's neither hot nor cold. It's neither up nor down, nor right nor left—in fact, it isn't anything specific. When kids grow long hair, for example, they don't know that they are taking sides with mediocrity. They develop a carelessness, an irresponsibility. Of course, for them, they mean it to represent to society a symbol for this carelessness, a "we-don't-care-a-damn" attitude. And this attitude then seeps into every level of society. But, of course, the jungle growth that's on the heads of these youngsters, and sometimes on their faces, is nothing but a symbol of exhibitionism. It doesn't represent anything. Once they've had their say with the long beard and long hair and the mess that they keep their bodies and minds in, they ought to get off that kind of horse and get on a new one.



You know, about three or four thousand years ago in India, Baluchistanis and Afganistanis used to come down into Uttar Pradesh, in the Punjab region of India, the same area where Alexander the Great came over the mountains about twenty-three or twenty-four hundred years ago. And they were ferocious-looking human beasts. The very sight of them would send the Indians in that part of the world into a veritable frenzy of fear and panic.

This terror continued until there came into the region a Perfect Master who took pity on the Indians and showed them a way out of their dilemma. He explained that they were too kind, too gentle, but that He would build them into a match for these fierce-looking Baluchistanis. So he ordered a section of their population to grow long, scraggly, thick-matted beards and long hair, so that when the Baluchistanis came down off the mountain to steal and to rape their women and destroy their fields and take possession of everything they could lay hold on, they were met now by a fierce-looking tribe of people, who later became known as the Sikhs, the warrior class of India. This time, as the Baluchistanis went into battle, they took quite a licking, because now they were met by those who were apparently their equal in brutality and cruelty.

So the Sikhs had good reason for growing such beards and long hair. But these days, in our kind of society, we don't have an equal reason for it. There's no such need. It merely represents mediocre behavior—and such mediocrity is only going to destroy our society.

You know, former President Truman used to have a little motto on his desk. The motto was very simple: "The buck stops here." Everybody in the country passed the buck. Everybody in government passed the buck. But when it came to the President of the United States, the buck had to stop right there. Because when it was up to the President to make a decision, only he could make that decision, and he alone. He couldn't pass the buck to anyone. That's why Truman said, "The buck stops here."

Now, when you come to Avatar Meher Baba, mediocrity stops right then and there. You're neither hot nor cold, you're neither good nor bad. You've got to become something definite, precise, and specific. If you're on the side of mediocrity, you're on the side of the lowest of the low, but if you want to be on the side of the Highest of the High, in which Meher Baba truly represents the Way and also the Goal, you've got to give up your mediocrity and all of the symbols that represent this distaste for excellence. That's what mediocrity is, you know. Anyone who dedicates himself to mediocrity is a fugitive from excellence. He becomes a fugitive from producing that which is first-class and top-flight. And only the one who can accept Meher Baba as the Highest of the High is going to become established in this excellence.

Meher Baba was not only the incarnation of Love, but when His personality-body was with us—this personality-form to which we ascribe the name of Meher Baba—He was a pretty hard taskmaster and disciplinarian. If you ever came under the personal guidance and jurisdiction of Meher Baba, you had to tow the mark and give Him your best. He demanded the best that was in ever body. And if you didn't give Him your best, you can rest assured, He knew how to spade it right out of you. And if you weren't willing to demonstrate this best, He got rid of you pretty quickly. He wanted people of high calibre around to perform a specific task, and He wanted their best twenty-four hours a day. Not just your waking hours, but even when you were asleep. If you were awakened during your sleeping time, you had to come there wide awake and at your best, and you had to do your best to carry out orders.

This idea of loving God, you see, cannot be loving in a mediocre manner when it comes to Meher Baba. If a man is supposedly looking for love from a woman, and a woman is looking for love from a man, neither wants mediocre love. They want the best in each other to come out and make an even exchange. They don't want anybody that's neither good nor bad at the giving of love or the executing of the duties and the responsibilities connected with love. You see, love is not a word. Love is an action. It is something that you do in relationship to others which is a tacit and concrete

demonstration of what you call love. Love isn't a word that you mouth, that you gumble at one another. It is an action, an activity.

Now the activism that we find in many student and minority groups throughout the country represents action that is dedicated to destroying. There is nothing in it creative or dedicated to creating. It's perfectly alright to destroy so long as you know how to rebuild better what you've torn down. If you can't institute something better than what you destroy, you better leave what you don't like alone. If all you have to offer is just an attitude or an action of mediocrity, you better let things stay as they are. First, you must improve yourself, you must take and get the best out of yourself before you demand the best that others have to give to you. So you see, the job pretty much comes back home. The work to be done must be on ourselves. Meher Baba points this up very poignantly, very directly.

When the Mandali were asked to obey, that obedience which they gave to their Master was simply a proof, or a demonstration, tacitly, of their love for the God-Man. If you're a child living in a home with parents, the only way you can demonstrate your love for those parents is by your obedience to them. If you do not obey the parent, this indicates you don't love the parent. Of course, the parent also must assume responsibility in the exchange of loving. If the obedience that is demanded of the child is beyond the capacity of the child to reciprocate, the parent should not institute the kind of rule which would embarrass the child. Obedience can only demonstrate love when the child carries it out at the express wish of the parent—provided, of course, the parents are conscious of their responsibility in guiding and directing the mind and the life of this child.

The only way that a Mandali or an intimate Disciple or anyone connected with Meher Baba can prove love for the God-Man is to be obedient to the dictates of the God-Man. Love and obedience are the first two steps which prove to the God-Man your sincerity in working with Him, in working for Him. And the next step, the last step, which is the most important, is surrender. Surrender is something that takes place inside the individual as a result of what the God-Man has done to the Mandali and what the Mandali has done on behalf of the God-Man to prove his love. It is the loving care that the God-Man takes of His real lover that makes the real lover respond, ultimately, in complete surrender to the God-Man, in giving up his heart, his mind, his affairs, his entire life.

There's only one reason for anyone being on this planet today in human form, and that is to surrender their entire minds and hearts and lives to Almighty God. Meher Baba, in human form, is the personification of Almighty God. That is difficult for some people to accept. I assure you I found it easy to accept, because long before I met Meher Baba, I realized that God is Almighty Power. Almighty Power means what it means—Almighty Power, a Power second to none. A Power, not a force. And it is All-Pervading and All-Powerful. Nothing can stand against it. And if this Almighty Power is possessed of Omniscience, All-Knowingness, and if this All-Knowing, Almighty Power knew how to create this universe and He knew how to create mankind, if He knew how to create a man—then He also knew, with the same Almighty Power and Omniscience, how to create Himself as a man. What is the difficulty in understanding it? It's as simple as that. So to accept the fact that God can become a man, and function simultaneously as a man and as God in human form, was very easy for me. This came to me before I met Meher Baba, as a revelation from out of the blue. Three years later, when I met Meher Baba, I knew that Meher Baba was unique. He was different. He was something that you had to look up to. You had to consider Him, from the very depths of your being, quite seriously. In all of my personal connections with Meher Baba, I came to feel, as time



went on, that not even a blade of grass, not a leaf on a tree ever moved except it be as a result of His will. And why did it move only as a result of His Will? Because He was that leaf. He is that blade of grass. And it cannot move except as a result of His Will. The very energy that we have, that we express, that we exhibit, is given to us by Him, because it is He that has created it.

The reason for the mediocrity and the decadence in people is that they have lost their connection with the Source of all life, which is the very Creator Himself. That's why we are to be grateful that the Avatar has appeared in our lifetime. It isn't necessary that you meet Him personally. Yes, one can consider oneself very fortunate to have met Him in person, but He is just as much here now as when His personality was here. His Universal Body, His Universal Form, His Universal Mind, in which all of Creation is suspended, is still functioning actively, right now, as it has been all throughout time. But now, by concentrating on the personality of Meher Baba, who represents the Personification of Love and Perfection and Truth and Beauty and Harmony—everything connected with the Highest of the High in any endeavor—we are allying ourselves with this Perfection. This is the Perfection to which He has come to lead us on the Way to Himself, which is the very Goal of all existence.

Meher Baba said to me in November, 1968, that the world will come to know that He is the God of all Gods. Then He asked me, "What do I mean by that?" I said, "Every religion has its own God with a different name, and they all profess

that this is One God. Well, I know if it is One God, He shouldn't have different names. He ought to have one name."

But actually, in Truth, God has no name. He's nameless. He just is. He is Existence Itself. But man, to identify Him, has given Him names. Every religion, every tongue, has given God His names, yet He's Nameless. Today we call Him Meher Baba. In seven hundred years He will come again and give another name. So what He wants you to become conscious of is not so much Meher Baba, but what Meher Baba represents: God, the Beloved.

The Beloved will not accept mediocrity in love. When He wants you to love Him, He wants you to love Him with all your heart and your might and your soul. And because He is a personality, we *can* love Him. He has been as one of us, a human being. When we look at His photographs or at motion pictures of Him, we can see Him expressing and radiating this Love—the kind of Love that is radiated from no other human being, because no other human being has this Love. Only God is equipped with it, because that's what God is, and that is why He can radiate it. It isn't something that is learned. It's something that He is. It's not something that He can be, but something that He is. You're able to feel it and respond to it because He is the Highest of the High, He is this Almighty God, our Father and Mother, and our Creator. He is the Real Parent that everyone must become connected with whether they be parents in the physical world or a child. All must recognize Almighty God as the Eternal Parent.

And then, when the recognition and acceptance of this Parent is made in surrender to Him, life takes on a new meaning. You are no longer just a human being wandering aimlessly about on this planet, splintered by any kind of problem that may beset you. Now you're rooted in the very Source of Existence Itself. You're rooted in the Creator, Almighty God. You've accepted, and you can feel His Love. And what does this Love do? It not only gives you that genuine feeling of well-being, of belonging, but it prompts you to do, spontaneously, many things that you ordinarily could never dream of doing. Spontaneity is the true test of loving God—spontaneity in your actions with other people, without thought of self. This means selfless service, without thought of ego, without thought that you are doing something to someone or for someone. You're doing it only for the sake of assisting, of helping, of serving with no thought of reward, no thought even of "thank you," no thought even of reciprocity in appreciation. You do it because you feel it has to be done, and you're happy in doing it. You let no one know of this service. It's as though the right hand is not letting the left hand know.

When Meher Baba gave assistance to thousands of people in His lifetime, it was as though His right hand didn't know what His left hand was doing. Someday, when the world is ready, it will hear of some of the really wonderful things that Meher Baba has done with people which until now have been kept secret. Meher Baba was never one to stand on the fence like a rooster and crow. Everything that He did, he did quietly. It was done in Silence—as silent as the vocal silence He kept. But there was a tremendous activity going on in Him and all of the affairs of the world when He was here. All those that came in the presence of Meher Baba were stirred. They did stir inside. They didn't feel it when they were with Him, but after they left, they had the repercussion. After a meeting with Meher Baba, they were not really, exactly, the same people. They were different. They changed. If they wanted to change, they did change. If they didn't want to change, then still there comes a time when, in the quiet moments of their living, the face of Meher Baba comes to them, and suddenly something happens. The seed that was planted in them by the meeting with Meher Baba suddenly begins to sprout. The seedling begins to emerge from the husk of the seed, and something happens to that individual. Nobody ever met Meher Baba without coming out of it a little different and better at the same time.

So we've got to be very careful of our attitudes toward life. Mediocrity must cease. You must become responsible for all of your actions—to yourself and to others. You must work hard at it. It takes a *tremendous* effort. And you mustn't be conscious of your personality in doing this. You must learn to forget yourself. And the only way that you can forget yourself is to remember Him. Only in the remembrance of Him are you able to forget yourself. If there's anything that we should remember of Meher Baba, it is this one statement that He has so often said, Forget yourself. Forget your little personality-self. When Socrates said, "Know thyself," we didn't know whether we were to know the big Self or the little self, the personality-self, the lower-self. He never made it quite clear, and they've been arguing about it for centuries. But Meher Baba is very explicit: "Forget yourself." Forget that silly, little, ten-cent personality-self. Remember Him, because He represents the epitome of your Highest Self, as the Highest of the High. Because when you ally yourself to the Highest of the High, you begin to respond to those inner promptings which elevate your self. The little self is elevated into and lost with the expression of the Highest Self. So the only way that we can forget our little self is to remember Meher Baba. Remember Love, with a capital "L." Remember Him. Remember God, the Beloved.

And the only way you can remember the Beloved is to become a lover yourself. To become a lover of God is a very important, responsible task. It takes a great deal of intensive effort and activity on your part, within yourself. It doesn't mean that from now on you're going to gumble that word "love," but you're going to remember Him through service to others. You're going to clean up yourself on the inside. You're not going to justify mediocre conduct as they do in the outside world. You're going to banish mediocrity from your lives. And you're going to represent the best that is possible for a human being to give in his endeavor, towards himself, to his fellow man, to society—but mostly to God, because God always demanded the best that was in everyone. When Meher Baba gives, He gives the best. And because He gives the best, from you He demands the best. From all of us He demands it. He demands it from me. He demands it from you. He demands it from everyone. And unless you give Him your best, you haven't given Him. proof of your love in surrender to Him, in genuine remembrance of who He is. Because what He is, actually, you are. In your ignorance, however, in your Baba-ignorance, which is asleep to the presence of the Reality of the Highest of the High within you, you emphasize the development and cultivation of the ego and the personality-self alone.

But know you've got to become silent. You must become quiet. You must find a place of solitude, not outside anywhere in the world. but a place within yourself. That's where the solitude is. Whether you're in a crowded streetcar, in a plane, on a boat—no matter where you are, this solitude should be with you in that quiet place where you can think deeply and silently of Meher Baba, where you can learn to surrender in remembrance of Him. It is what you take from that solitude which permits you to give in spontaneity to life what it ought to receive, dedicated in service to Meher Baba.

So let us take this very seriously. When you come to Meher Baba, remember, this is the end of mediocrity. It exists for you no longer, because mediocrity will only maintain you in the shadowy, non-existent existence of Illusion, which is established firmly, completely, and totally in the principle of ignorance. This is the veil that we want to tear from us. We want to become established in Real Knowledge. We want to become one with the Beloved, the Real Beloved who is Almighty God, who has come in person to indicate the Way, to give us His damaan as a symbol to hold firmly to so that He can carry us to where we ought to be and where we ought to reside, which is our rightful Home, the rightful place, and the only place to be, in Reality.

And this will happen. This will happen if you surrender your heart to Meher Baba. Then you can turn and look about you and find that the environment you're in has a different hue. You have a different attitude towards it; you feel that you have a greater responsibility towards it. You must raise your environment, both in people and in place, to that position of the Highest of the High which will please your Real Beloved. Because the only way that you can make the Beloved feel that you are worthy of Him is by having a supreme desire, happily, completely, without any reservation, to please Him. And in pleasing Him, ultimately, of course, you are pleasing yourself. You are elevating yourself. Whatever you do for Him, in the last analysis, you are doing for Yourself.

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