

**Divine Theme (with Charts):
Evolution, Reincarnation, Realisation**

by

Meher Baba

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DIVINE THEME

BY

MEHER BABA

WITH

CHARTS

AND AN

INTRODUCTION

TO THE 2ND EDITION

ONLINE EDITION

SHERIAR FOUNDATION
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“I have come not to to teach but to awaken”

— Meher Baba

INTRODUCTION

TO THE SECOND EDITION

For a five-day period from May 14, 1943, Meher Baba called together 125 of his close male followers from throughout India for a special gathering at Meherabad. The daily meetings were focused primarily on two charts which Rano Gayley had prepared during the previous month under Baba's direction, charts which Baba explained in detail at the gathering on May 17 and which served as the object of a twelve-hour silent meditation the next day. Sometime during this same year these two charts with detailed accompanying explanation were published by Baba's secretary Adi K. Irani as a sixteen-page booklet entitled *Divine Theme (with Charts): Evolution, Reincarnation, Realisation*.* In 1955 this same material was incorporated into the supplement of *God Speaks: The Theme of Creation and Its*

* Meherabad, Ahmednagar, India: Adi K. Irani for the Publication Committee, Meher Baba Universal Spiritual Centre, 1943.

Purpose;† and since that time most people have come to know it from that source.

Despite its brevity as a literary work, *Divine Theme* stands as a significant exposition of Meher Baba's cosmology and metaphysics. It belongs to the same line of development in Meher Baba's "teaching" that gave rise to *Infinite Intelligence* in 1926, *How It All Happened* (the film scenario) in 1934, Meher Baba's fourth discourse on meditation first published in the *Meher Baba Journal* in 1941 (and later incorporated in the collected *Discourses*), and *God Speaks* itself. Yet the 1943 booklet has elements of content that appear nowhere else among Meher Baba's books and messages. The series of circles with their concentric rings in Chart 2, for example, provides an analysis of the structure of individuality and its development through the course of evolution, reincarnation, and involution

† New York: Dodd Mead, 1955, pp. 201–8. *God Speaks* is currently available in its revised and enlarged second edition (1973); the third printing of that edition (Walnut Creek, California: Sufism Reoriented, 1997) has reset the type, and accordingly the pagination differs from earlier printings. In this third printing "The Divine Theme" (with foldout charts IX and X) appears on pp. 220–28.

that will undoubtedly become a major focus of study among philosophers, psychologists, and other students of Meher Baba's work in future generations.

Though the content of *Divine Theme* was faithfully reproduced in its republication in the supplement of *God Speaks*, certain small changes were made. Naturally the charts were redrawn and the text reflowed. The original 1943 charts had incorporated handwritten explanatory matter, much of it paraphrasing and sometimes quoting verbatim from the booklet's main text; the explanations continue from one chart to the next, so that the commentary broken off at the bottom left of Chart 1 resumes at the top left on Chart 2. All of this textual content has been eliminated from the redrawn charts in *God Speaks*. The editors of *God Speaks* also made many slight emendations in the principal text, almost all of them in the areas of punctuation, spelling, capitalization, and font. At three points *God Speaks* emends the original text in a more substantial way. While leaving the original text as it was, we have marked the places where these questions arise with endnotes in this present edition.

Because of its signal importance as an early and

definitive exposition of a central idea in Meher Baba's cosmology, we have decided to republish *Divine Theme* in a form closely corresponding (in size, layout, and general appearance) to that of the original 1943 booklet. Apart from this introduction, other front and back matter, the insertion of three endnote numbers, and the interpolation of a bracketed preposition ("of") on p. 24, the original text has been reproduced in facsimile without correction or emendation.

The original charts too have been reproduced in facsimile as foldouts inside the front and back covers, as in the 1943 original.

Through this faithful near-facsimile republication we hope to bring back into the public awareness not only a renewed experience of the charm of the original booklet but a deepened appreciation of the historical and philosophical importance of *Divine Theme* as one of the major statements of this Avataric Advent.

Ward Parks

for the Avatar Meher Baba
Perpetual Public Charitable Trust

DIVINE THEME

WITH
CHARTS

EVOLUTION
REINCARNATION
REALISATION

BY
MEHER
BABA

EVOLUTION, REINCARNATION AND THE PATH TO REALISATION

(Introduction to the Charts)

A soul becomes perfect after passing through evolution, reincarnation and the process of realisation. To gain full consciousness, it gets increasing *sanskaras* in the process of evolution, till in the human form, it gets full consciousness as well as all the gross *sanskaras*.

In the process of reincarnation, this soul retains its full consciousness and exchanges (i.e., alternatingly experiences) the diverse *sanskaras* in itself; and in the process of realisation, this soul retains its full consciousness, but its *sanskaras* become fainter and fainter till they all disappear and only consciousness remains. While becoming faint, gross *sanskaras* become subtle *sanskaras*, subtle *sanskaras* become mental *sanskaras*; and finally they all disappear.

Up to the human form, the winding-process of *sanskaras* becomes stronger and stronger in the process of evolution. In the human form, in the process of reincarnation, the winding retains its full strength; but in the process of

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realisation, the *sanskaras* gradually unwind themselves, till in the God-state, they are completely unwound.

God, the Oversoul, alone is real. Nothing exists but God. The different souls are in the Oversoul and one with it. The processes of evolution, reincarnation and realisation are all necessary in order to enable the soul to gain self-consciousness. In the process of winding, *sanskaras* become instrumental for the evolution of consciousness though they also give *sanskaric* bindings; and in the process of unwinding, *sanskaric* attachments are annihilated, though the consciousness which has been gained is fully retained.

In the process of the winding of *sanskaras*, the soul goes through seven stages of *descent*; and in the process of unwinding, the soul goes through seven stages of *ascent*. But the phenomena of descent as well as ascent are both illusory. The soul is everywhere and indivisibly infinite; and it does not move or descend or ascend.

The souls of all men and women, of all nationalities, castes and creeds, are really one; and their experiences of good and evil, of fighting and helping, of waging wars and living in peace

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are all a part of illusion and delusion, because all these experiences are gained through bodies and minds, which in themselves are nothing.

Before the world of forms and duality came into existence, there was nothing but God, i.e., an indivisible and boundless ocean of Power, Knowledge and Bliss. But this ocean was unconscious of itself. Picture to yourself this ocean as absolutely still and calm, unconscious of its Power, Knowledge and Bliss and unconscious that it is the ocean. The billions of drops which are in the ocean do not have any consciousness; they do not know that they are drops or that they are in the ocean or that they are a part of the ocean. This represents the original state of reality.

This original state of reality comes to be disturbed by an urge to know itself. This urge was always latent in the ocean; and when it begins to express itself, it endows the drops with individuality. When this urge makes the still water move, there immediately spring up numerous bubbles or forms around the drops; and it is these bubbles which give individuality to the drops. The bubbles do not and cannot actually divide the indivisible ocean; they cannot separate the drop from the ocean; they merely

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give to these drops a feeling of separateness or limited individuality.

Now let us study the life of one drop-soul through its different stages. Owing to the arising of the bubble, the drop-soul which was completely unconscious is invested with individuality (or a feeling of separateness) as well as with very slight consciousness. This consciousness, which has sprung in the drop-soul is not of itself or of the ocean; but it is of the bubble or the form, which in itself is nothing. This imperfect bubble at this stage is represented by the *form* of a stone. After some time, this bubble or form bursts and there springs up in its place *another* bubble or form. Now, when a bubble bursts, two things happen: (1) there is an increase in consciousness and (2) there is a twist or consolidation of impressions or *sanskaras* accumulated during the life of the previous bubble. The consciousness of the drop-soul has now slightly increased; but the drop-soul is still conscious only of this new bubble or form and not of itself or of the ocean. This new bubble is represented by the form of the metal. This new bubble or form also bursts in due course of time; and simultaneously there is a further increase in consciousness and a fresh twist or consolidation of *sanskaras*, which

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gives rise to the emergence of another type of bubble or form. This process continues right through the process of evolution, which covers the stages of stone, metals, vegetables, fish, birds and animals.¹ Every time that the previous bubble or form bursts, it gains more consciousness and adds one twist to the already accumulated *sanskaras*, until it reaches the human bubble or form, in which the ever-increasing consciousness becomes full and complete. The process of the winding up of *sanskaras* consists of these regular twists, and it is these twists, which keep the consciousness, gained by the drop-soul directed and fixed towards the bubble or the form, instead of towards its real self, even when consciousness is fully developed in the human form.

On gaining the human form, the second process begins; this process is that of re-incarnation. At this point, the process of the winding up of *sanskaras* comes to an end. The drop-soul takes numerous human forms one by one; and these forms are exactly eighty-four lakhs in number. These human forms are sometimes those of man and sometimes those of woman; and they change nationalities, appearance, colour and creed. The drop-soul through

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human incarnations, experiences itself sometimes as a beggar and sometimes as a king and thus gathers experiences of the opposites of happiness or misery according to its good or bad *sanskaras*. In reincarnation (i.e., in its successive and several human forms) the drop-soul retains its full consciousness but continues to have alternating experiences of opposite *sanskaras*, till the process of realisation begins. And during this process of realisation the *sanskaras* get unwound. In reincarnations, there is a spending up of *sanskaras*; but this spending up is quite different from the unwinding of the *sanskaras*, which takes place during the process of realisation. The spending up of *sanskaras* itself creates new *sanskaras*, which bind the soul; but the unwinding of *sanskaras* does not itself create fresh *sanskaras*; and it is intended to undo the very strong grip of *sanskaras*, in which the drop-soul is caught.

Up to the human form, the winding up of *sanskaras* becomes stronger and stronger, during the process of evolution. In the human forms of reincarnation, the winding continues to operate as a limiting factor; but with every change of the human bubble or form, the tight twists, trained during the process of winding, get loosened

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through eighty-four lakhs of shakings, before it is ready to unwind in the process of realisation.

Now begins the third process of realisation, which is a process of ascent. Here, the drop-soul undergoes the gradual unwinding of the *sanskaras*. During this process of unwinding, the *sanskaras* become fainter and fainter; and at the same time, the consciousness of the drop-soul gets directed more and more towards itself; and thus, the drop-soul passes through the subtle and mental planes, till all the *sanskaras* disappear completely enabling it to become conscious of itself as the ocean.

In the infinite ocean of the Oversoul; you are the drop or the soul. You are the soul in the ordinary state; and you use your consciousness in seeing and experiencing the bubble or the form. Through the gross layer of the bubble, you experience the huge *gross* bubble, which is the earth. You are eternally lodged and indivisibly one with the Oversoul; but you do not experience it. In the advanced stage, upto the third plane, you use your consciousness in seeing and experiencing the huge *subtle* bubble called subtle world, through the subtle bubble or form called the subtle body; but you do not

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see and experience the Oversoul which you are in, since your consciousness is not now directed towards the Oversoul. In the advanced stage from the third² to the sixth plane, you use your consciousness in seeing and experiencing the huge *mental* bubble, which is called the mental world, through the mental bubble or form which is called the mental body, but even now you do not experience the Oversoul. But in God-realised state, you continually use your consciousness for seeing and experiencing the Oversoul; and then all the forms are known as being nothing but bubbles.

So, now, picture yourself as the soul-drop, lodged in the Oversoul, behind five layers after the gross body. You, the soul-drop, are now looking at the gross body and through it at the gross world. When you look at the second layer and through it, the first layer will appear to you as nothing but a layer only, and thus, looking behind each layer, you will find all these layers as only your shadowy³ covers; and finally when you (i.e., the soul-drop) look at and get merged in the Oversoul, you realise that only you were real and all that you were seeing and experiencing till now was your own shadow and nothing else.

EVOLUTION, REINCARNATION AND REALISATION

(Explanation of the Charts No. 1 and No. 2)

Chart I

The big semi-circle in Chart I represents the Oversoul, which contains everything in the Universe. The life of a single individual soul is depicted in the three main stages of Evolution, Reincarnation and the Process of Realisation. 'S' stands for the individual soul. Before attaining the human form, it goes through seven stages of each of the following kinds of existence, viz., stone, metal, vegetable, worm, fish, bird and animal. At the seventh stage, i.e., just before entering a new kind of existence, you will note a pictorial representation of a twist or a knot, which stands for a consolidation of previously acquired *sanskaras*. The outer red circle round the individual soul 'S,' represents the *sanskaras* accumulated during the process of evolution; and the blue appendage to 'S' represents the consciousness, which comes to be developed simultaneously. 'A' soul becomes 'Z' soul after going through evolution, reincarnation and

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the process of realisation. It is only in the God-state that consciousness is free from *sanskaras*.

The gross, subtle and mental worlds (i.e., *Anna Bhumi*, *Prana Bhumi* and *Mano Bhumi*) are each represented by a big circle on the right-hand side. Since consciousness of the gross world is not fully developed in the pre-human stages of evolution, the lines which connect the stone, metal, vegetable, worm, fish, bird and animal souls, through their respective stone, metal, vegetable, worm, fish, bird and animal *forms*, are shown merely as touching the gross world only *partially*; while, since consciousness is fully developed in the human form, it is shown (through corresponding lines) as being capable of understanding the entire gross world in all its different aspects.

In the process of reincarnations, the soul may take a male or a female form; and it may belong to any nationality, creed or religion. From the point of view of self-knowledge, the process upto the attainment of the human forms, represents an actual descent, though it looks like an ascent; and the process of realisation represents an actual ascent, though it looks like a descent: and these two processes are respectively represented by a line (representing

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descent) of *winding knots* of *sanskaras*, which goes *up* from the stone-stage to the gross world, and by a line (representing *ascent*) of *unwinding knots* of *sanskaras*, which comes *down* from the gross world to the God-state. The process of ordinary reincarnations begins after the winding is complete; and it continues till the unwinding has begun.

In the process of realisation, advanced souls from the first to the third plane, are conscious only of the subtle world, through their subtle bodies. They are aware of ordinary souls who are gross-conscious and can act upon them in the subtle world; but all this is done by them through the subtle body and in the subtle world; and they have no connection with the gross world through the gross body. In the same way, advanced souls from the fourth to the sixth planes, are aware of gross-conscious as well as subtle-conscious souls; but they act upon them in the mental world through the mental body; and they have no connection with the gross world through the gross body, or with the subtle world through the subtle body. Therefore, the lines in the chart connect the subtle-conscious souls only with the subtle world; and the corresponding lines connect the mental-conscious souls only with the mental world.

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In the God-state, in which all the *sanskaras* are unwound, consciousness is turned only to God; this is the state of *Majzubs*, who have no connection with the gross or the subtle or the mental world. But a few, who enjoy the God-state, also come down and regain the consciousness of the entire creation. These are the souls of the Masters. The soul of the Master is represented by seven concentric coloured rings.* The following points (which have been brought out by connecting lines) should be carefully noted:—(i) The Master's soul is connected with God-Beyond, which is the *Vidnyana Bhumi* or the resting place of the Masters, (ii) it is connected with the God-state and (iii) it is not only connected with all the three worlds, but all the souls, whether they are mental-conscious, subtle-conscious or reincarnating human beings (who are gross-conscious) or souls, who are in the pre-human evolutionary stage.

Chart II

Chart II brings out the details pertaining to the process of evolution upto the human form and the process of realisation upto the state of God-realised being. The innermost small circle which is referred to by 'S' represents the

* For their significance see Chart II.

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individual soul. The soul is shown as having increasing number of circles around itself upto the human stage; and it is shown as retaining all these circles later on. The second circle, which is next to the soul, represents consciousness, which goes on increasing upto the human form but afterwards it remains constant. In evolution, vegetables acquire the most undeveloped instinct, but not the subtle body, which emerges in an undeveloped form in worms and reptiles. This subtle body goes on developing until it is fully developed in the human form. Side by side with the development of subtle body, there is a simultaneous development of instinct. Intellect, in its partial development, makes its first appearance at the stage of animals; but mental body appears only at the last stage represented by the human form.

In the human form, the first innermost circle represents the individual *soul*; the next outer circle represents *full consciousness*; and then the other outer circles (in the order in which they are drawn) respectively represent (i) the *seat of individuality*, (ii) *sanskaras or unexpressed desires*, (iii) *intellect*, (iv) *felt desires of the mental body*, (v) *subtle body* (in which there is a partial expression of desires) and (vi) the *gross body*

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(in which the desires come to be fully expressed). All the circles round the innermost circle of the soul, with the exception of the first circle of consciousness, are layers of consciousness. Of these layers the outermost circle and the circle next to it, respectively represent the gross and the subtle bodies, while the other four layers around consciousness, represent four functions of one mental body. Of these four functions of the mental body, two (i.e., felt desires and intellect) are usually included under mind; and the other two (i.e., *sanskaras* or unexpressed desires and the feeling [of] individuality) are included under the ego. Thus, at the human stage, the soul, with its consciousness, has three bodies, but six layers (including the gross layer known as gross body).

When (after reincarnations) the human soul launches upon the process of realisation; *intellect* is replaced by *inspiration*, which finds its expression from the first to the third plane, and from the fourth to the sixth plane, this inspiration is transformed into *illumination*.

The coloured rings or concentric circles represent the soul of a God-realised person, with all the vehicles at its disposal. In respect of this

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diagram, the following points should be carefully noted: (i) The three outer rings respectively represent the gross, subtle and the mental bodies. We find all these bodies also in ordinary human beings. (ii) In the God-realised person, there has emerged a *new* spiritual body, known as the *Universal* body or *Mahakarana Sharira*, which is the seat of the *universal mind*. Just as water is contained in a cup, the Universal mind may be said to be contained in the Universal body. Therefore, though the Universal body and the Universal mind are represented by two different circles, they are inseparable from each other. (The Universal mind of the Master, which works through his Universal body, is in direct contact with the mental bodies of all the individual souls in creation; and it can, through these mental bodies, bring about any changes in the mental, subtle or gross worlds. Though the Master has a mental body like ordinary humans, he always works only through his Universal mind.) (iii) In the Master's soul, the limited ego of the human stage is transmuted into the unlimited Ego, i.e., the feeling of separateness and narrow individuality is replaced by the realisation of unlimited indivisible and all-comprehensive existence. (iv) The soul of the

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Master is endowed with *infinite consciousness*. The full consciousness at the human stage does not reveal or express the infinity of the soul, owing to the limitations of *sanskaras*; but in the God-realised person, this full consciousness is not limited by any *sanskaras* and, therefore, it reveals or expresses the infinity of the soul.

ENDNOTES

1. This list of the kingdoms of evolution omits the kingdom of worms; the fact that worms can be found in their proper place and sequence (after vegetables and before fish) in both Charts 1 and 2 suggests that the omission here occurred inadvertently. The worm kingdom is similarly absent from the list in the first paragraph of the handwritten material in Chart 2, a paragraph paraphrasing the primary text of the passage here. *God Speaks* corrects this mistake by reinserting the word “worms” in the text of p. 222. (Citations from *God Speaks* refer to the second edition, third printing.)
2. This wording seems infelicitous, since what the passage means to designate is the portion of the spiritual path between the fourth and sixth planes. (The previous sentence spoke of spiritual advancement up through the third plane, and Chart 2 similarly divides spiritual advancement into two stages, the first through third planes and the subsequent planes through the sixth.) *God Speaks* (p. 224) has emended this sentence by replacing “third” with “fourth.”
3. *God Speaks* (p. 224) emends “shadowy” to “shadow.”

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