

It So Happened

edited by

William Le Page

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IT SO HAPPENED

Stories from days with Meher Baba



MEHER BABA
(with Eruch Jessawala)

IT SO HAPPENED...

Stories from days with Meher Baba

Compiled and edited by William Le Page

MEHER BABA FOUNDATION

AUSTRALIA

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Contents

FOREWORD	xī
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS	iii
REAL GAIN AND REAL LOSS	1
— <i>narrated by Eruch Jessawala (from a tape-recording)</i>	
THE JOURNEY	9
— <i>written by Dr. Ghani Munsiff (from Meher Baba Journal)</i>	
THE OLD MAN	17
— <i>narrated by Eruch Jessawala (from a tape-recording)</i>	
A MAST	24
— <i>written by Dr. William Donkin (from The Wayfarers)</i>	
SEAT OF A QUTUB	27
— <i>written by Elizabeth Patterson (from Meher Baba Journal)</i>	
TEA PARTY	30
— <i>narrated by Eruch Jessawala (from a tape-recording)</i>	
SELLER OF FIREWOOD	32
— <i>written by Dr. Ghani Munsiff (from Meher Baba Journal)</i>	
AIR-CONDITIONING	34
— <i>narrated by Eruch Jessawala (from a tape-recording)</i>	
GUIDANCE	37
— <i>from the Discourses of Meher Baba</i>	
A DREAM	39
— <i>narrated by Rhoda Dubash (from a tape-recording)</i>	
SELFLESS SERVICE	40
— <i>narrated by Bhau Kalchuri (from a tape-recording)</i>	
FALSE	42
— <i>from the Discourses of Meher Baba</i>	
THE INTRUDER	44
— <i>narrated by Eruch Jessawala (from a tape-recording)</i>	

SAMADHI	47
— <i>from the Discourses of Meher Baba</i>	
THE VISION	48
— <i>written by Dr. Ghani Munsiff (from Meher Baba Journal)</i>	
THE SLEEP OF MEHER BABA	51
— <i>narrated by Eruch Jessawala and Bhau Kalchuri (from a tape-recording)</i>	
THE FRIEND	54
— <i>written by Dr. H.P. Bharucha (from The Compassionate Father)</i>	
TWO HEAPS OF GRASS	56
— <i>from the Discourses of Meher Baba</i>	
THE JUDGE	58
— <i>narrated by Eruch Jessawala (from a tape-recording)</i>	
THE MARKET FOR GOD	61
— <i>written by Dr. C.D. Deshmukh (from Sparks of the Truth)</i>	
SARMAD	65
— <i>narrated by Eruch Jessawala (from a tape-recording)</i>	
THE FINAL STEP	68
— <i>written by Dr. Ghani Munsiff (from Meher Baba Journal)</i>	
THREE STORIES ON A THEME	70
— <i>narrated by Eruch Jessawala (from a tape-recording)</i>	
GOD ALONE IS REAL	75
— <i>written by Dr. Ghani Munsiff (from Meher Baba Journal)</i>	
FATE	77
— <i>narrated by Eruch Jessawala (from a tape-recording)</i>	
THE SPARK THAT KINDLED THE FLAME	80
— <i>written by Dr. Ghani Munsiff (from Meher Baba Journal)</i>	
THE RING	82
— <i>narrated by Eruch Jessawala (from a tape-recording)</i>	

DETACHMENT	83
— <i>from the Discourses of Meher Baba</i>	
THE BUDDHA	85
— <i>narrated by Eruch Jessawala (from a tape-recording)</i>	
SUPERSTITION	88
— <i>from the Discourses of Meher Baba</i>	
TEK CHAND	90
— <i>written by Manija S. Irani (from a letter 1963)</i>	
THE TRUE DISCIPLE	92
— <i>from the Discourses of Meher Baba</i>	
THE PRIEST	93
— <i>narrated by Eruch Jessawala (from a tape-recording)</i>	
STORY OF A DEER	96
— <i>from the Discourses of Meher Baba</i>	
HUMILITY	98
— <i>written by Dr. Ghani Munsiff (from Meher Baba Journal)</i>	
FAITH	98
— <i>from the Discourses of Meher Baba</i>	
KNOWLEDGE	100
— <i>narrated by Eruch Jessawala (from a tape-recording)</i>	
THE WAY OF A MASTER	104
— <i>from the Discourses of Meher Baba</i>	
A GOOD TRICK	106
— <i>narrated by Eruch Jessawala (from a tape-recording)</i>	
KINGSHIP	108
— <i>written by Dr. Ghani Munsiff (from Meher Baba Journal)</i>	
ANECDOTES FROM THE LIFE OF THE PROPHET MOHAMMED	110
— <i>written by William Le Page</i>	
THE TOUCH OF LOVE	112
— <i>written by Dr. H.P. Bharucha (from The Compassionate Father)</i>	

MEDITATION	114
—written by <i>Delia De Leon (from Meher Baba Journal)</i>	
STEPS OF THE JOURNEY	115
—written by <i>Dr. H.P. Bharucha (from The Compassionate Father)</i>	
AYAZ AND THE DIAMOND	117
—written by <i>Dr. C.D. Deshmukh (from Sparks of the Truth)</i>	
A CAR ACCIDENT	120
—written by <i>Manija S. Irani (from a letter 1956)</i>	
THE PROPHECY OF BAGHDAD	123
—written by <i>Dr. Ghani Munsiff (from Meher Baba Journal)</i>	
INTOXICATION	126
—narrated by <i>Eruch Jessawala (from a tape-recording)</i>	
OCCULT POWER	130
—written by <i>Dr. C. D. Deshmukh (from Sparks of the Truth)</i>	
ABOUT MEHER BABA	132
SHORT BIOGRAPHY	132
MEHER BABA IS	140
—narrated by <i>Eruch Jessawala (from a tape-recording)</i>	
A QUESTION ANSWERED	142
—written by <i>Dr. Ghani Munsiff (from Meher Baba Journal)</i>	
BEHIND THE ANECDOTES	144
—written by <i>Dr. William Donkin (from The Wayfarers)</i>	
SUFFERING OF AVATAR	148
—a statement by <i>Meher Baba</i>	
WORK	150
—prepared by <i>William Le Page</i>	
A SHORT BIBLIOGRAPHY	152
CENTERS FOR INFORMATION	154

Foreword

All the world loves a good story: dry discourses and intellectual arguments can titillate and intrigue the mind, but a stirring tale, well-told, can capture the imagination and inspire the heart. Of course, the best stories tell of the best men; from the lives of heroes, saints and spiritual masters man derives his most enduring and profound ideals.

For the western world the most powerful and pervasive story is that which is told in the New Testament. The story of Jesus the Christ's birth, ministry and crucifixion, imperfectly as it has been filtered down to us through the centuries, has yet formed the major foundation of inspiration and comfort for two thousand years. Similarly, for each culture, the life of the God-Man (whether for the particular advent he be called Rama, Krishna, Buddha, Mohammed or Jesus) becomes the richest source of stories to nourish and guide the lives of the people while they wait for him to come again.

We of this century are doubly blessed. Not only did the God-Man of our age, Avatar Meher Baba, live a long life (1894-1969) full of variety and incident, but anecdotes of his life have been accurately recorded and passed on by his intimate disciples to many avid listeners. They have been written down, tape-recorded, filmed and videotaped for posterity—an unprecedented coverage of stories of the Avatar, 'straight from the horse's mouth.'

In this book, many of these incidents of Meher Baba's life are recounted, mainly taken from tape-recordings made by Eruch Jessawala, one of Baba's

close male disciples. They have been edited where necessary but every precaution has been taken to ensure that the original flavor and meaning of each tale remains intact. Instructive, provocative, full of humor and humanity, these sketches help form a personal picture of Baba—just as the New Testament stories afford an insight into the life of Jesus and the Hadith (the traditions) into that of Mohammed the Prophet.

There are also many stories included from earlier spiritual traditions. From time to time, Meher Baba would recount incidents from his own previous advents (i.e., as God-Man or Avatar) or from the lives of past saints or masters, interpreting them and explaining their real significance. He would often point out inaccuracies and discrepancies which have crept in with time and men's ignorance—thus giving them new life and meaning for modern man. They provide a wide range of spiritual reference and allow some insight into the vast body of ancient wisdom which underlies life in the East. Lively, practical, profound, the stories are without condescension or smug moral and ethical overtones, and yet they carry the highest moral and ethical values.

The masters of wisdom have always lived lives of perfect example and they have characteristically used stories as a most natural and interesting method of instruction. And while they have not always heeded the instruction, men have ever been delighted by the stories. I trust you will also.

WENDY BORTHWICK

Balmain, N.S.W.

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I also wish to thank deeply the many people who have encouraged me to continue this work of editing material by and about Avatar Meher Baba, and particularly those who have so cheerfully and unstintingly helped in the preparation of the manuscript—Judith Garbett, Kaye Davis, Wendy Borthwick, May Lundquist and Janne Marsh.

But most of all, I thank the disciples of Meher Baba. Without them this book would not have been possible; yet no hint of obligating debt is felt because what they do stems solely from their wish to please their Divine Beloved, Meher Baba.

WILLIAM LE PAGE

Meher House
Beacon Hill, N. S. W

Real spirituality is best portrayed in stories of pure love, of selfless service, of truth realized and applied to the most humble circumstances of our daily lives.

— *Meher Baba*

Real Gain and Real Loss

It so happened one day, in the north of India, that Meher Baba was seated on the verandah of the house where he was staying, with only myself by his side. It was dusk, and the rest of the mandali (disciples) were inside for supper. Baba had kept me by him, I was standing and Baba sitting, it was unusual. Suddenly, into the compound, comes a lady, and she hesitantly approaches Baba, falls at his feet and says: 'Oh Baba! I have come to you with a request. I implore you to help me.' Baba replies: 'What is it? What is it you want from me?' And she tells Baba her story: She is the Rani (queen) of a certain state in North India, and her daughter had married a prince in Punjab. The daughter was beautiful and greatly liked by the in-laws with whom she lived. She conceived, and as was customary amongst Indians, just before delivery of the first child she was brought home to her mother's house. But at the time of delivery, the daughter died. The mother was greatly distressed with the loss of her daughter. At this point, Baba asks a question: 'When did your daughter die?' 'Baba, it is now six months ago.' 'Six months?' 'Yes.' 'Well, go on with your story.' And the mother continues: the in-laws loved the daughter so much that they blamed the mother for the death. They said that she had been very careless at the time of delivery. 'But Baba,' says the mother, 'it is not possible that I was careless—she was my own daughter, and I loved her very much. Oh, Baba! I miss her sorely. I cannot live without her. The thought, the memory of her haunts

me.’ Baba asks, ‘What do you want?’

‘I want my daughter back. You are the Ancient One, God in human form, Parameshwar. Nothing is impossible for you. You can give me my daughter back, can’t you, Baba?’

‘Yes, I can give you back your daughter.’

‘Will she come back in the same form? Will you revive her?’

‘Of course.’

‘In the same form that I have loved? Will she be the same daughter that I long for?’

‘Yes,’ assures Baba.

She was stunned at Baba saying this, but I was much more stunned. I thought, what has happened here, what has happened to Baba! You see, Baba never encouraged miracles or anything of the sort. He said that his miracle would not be to raise the dead, but to make people dead to illusion: he had not come to give sight to the blind, but to make people blind to illusion. I was stupefied at all this. How could the Baba I had known all my life say such things?

Then Baba says to the mother: ‘Yes, I will give you back your daughter. All that you have to do is to remember me and love me. Constantly remember me, and love me as much as you can, more and more, day after day. Will you do that?’

She says: ‘Yes, Baba.’

‘Promise me,’ says Baba. And she promised, and Baba again reminded her to simply love him and to remember him more and more.

She was so happy, so absolutely happy. In an instant she became a changed woman. She was light-hearted and gay: she had complete faith

in Baba's words. She then asks Baba: 'Will I receive a sign of my daughter returning?'

Baba says: 'Yes, you will. You will see her in a dream, and that will be the sign for her return.' Then she was satisfied, and she took Baba's darshan (blessing), prostrated herself in intense gratitude and left.

Well, time went by. Whenever Baba would allow people to come to him, this mother would come, and every time Baba would remind her about her love for Baba, about her remembrance of Baba, and all that. And Baba would say: 'Remember, I have promised you will get back your daughter. Have you seen her in your dreams?'

'No, Baba.'

'Remember, when you see her in a dream, you will get her back. Once I have said it, it will be so.' Years passed by. Then, on one meeting with Baba, she says: 'I have seen my daughter in a dream.' Baba answers: 'That is the sure sign that your daughter will be back.' Again she leaves, and again I wonder what is going to happen next.

Now, around that time, something happened to her, some experience that made her love Baba more intensely than ever. You might say she really fell in love with Baba. But of course we, the mandali, didn't know anything about it.

After a year, another opportunity occurred and she came to Baba. We were all at Guruprasad, in Poona, and after she bows down to Baba, Baba asks: 'How are you?' She answers: 'Baba, I am very happy.' Baba looks radiant and suddenly he says: 'You know, I am in the mood at this moment to give whatever anyone asks of me.' And lie turns to

her: ‘Quick now, answer me—do you want your daughter back? Or do you want me?’ And she puts out her hand and places it gently on Baba’s knee and says: ‘I want you.’

Baba is pleased and answers: ‘Now you have your daughter. In me you have the whole world, including your daughter.’

Then I suddenly knew that Baba had known from the beginning what would happen. I realized afresh what a master psychologist he is. Her remembrance of Baba and her love for Baba would go on increasing in the thought of receiving back her daughter. Then it would become so intensified that her daughter would fade into the background and she would eventually forget her. That is what Meher Baba meant when he promised the daughter’s return—she would return when she was no longer missed.

The mother continued to come and often Baba would tease her and she would say: ‘Don’t play with me. I don’t miss my daughter. I have Baba. No more do I sigh for her, because I have my Baba with me.’

Meher Baba was in Dehra Dun. One day there comes into the room where Baba was sitting, a young man wearing ocher-colored robes. Such robes are a sign in India for a sanyasin, that is, one who has renounced the world. Well, he comes in and falls at the feet of Baba saying that he is determined to surrender to Baba. Baba says, ‘I am very pleased. It is rarely that people come to me, asking for me.’

They come for worldly gains, to gain a wife, to have children, to have jobs, to gain this and that, but rarely does somebody come, like you, wanting me. Do you really want to surrender to me?’

‘Yes, Baba, I am determined. I want to be by your side. I want to live by you, with you, like these others here. . .’ indicating the mandali.

‘You will have to obey me, if you want to stay by my side. It is not a joke. It needs great daring on your part, to say this thing. Are you determined? You will have to obey me implicitly.’

‘I am determined,’ replies the man, ‘I am resolved to obey you.’

‘Yet,’ Baba says, ‘don’t be in such a great haste and hurry about it. Take time. Leave here now and ponder over the whole issue. You should be sure of what you are doing.’

‘No, I am determined, Baba.’

‘Never mind, in spite of that, go out now, think it over and come back after 15 minutes.’

Baba resumes his informal chatting with the mandali. But again the young man bows down to Baba paying homage, and repeats: ‘Baba, I am determined to obey you.’

‘Mind you, I tell you it is easier for you to sit naked on a snow-bound peak of the Himalayas than to live with me and obey me. Do you realize this?’

‘Yes Baba, I know the implications.’

‘I am happy,’ says Baba, ‘that you have accepted this. I am very happy.’ Baba patted him on the shoulder: ‘Now sit down. There are three orders that I want you to follow. Go back to your home and return here in exactly one month. Read as much literature on and about Baba as is available. In doing

so, you will at least learn something of my ways and come to know how you should live with me. The third order is, during this one month don't touch a woman. This last will be easy for you because you have renounced the world.'

'Yes, Baba,' says the young man, 'I have taken a vow not to touch a woman.'

'Then you will be able to do these three things?' asks Baba.

'Yes, Baba! I'll do them.'

'Come after one month exactly, but when you come, come alone,' concludes Baba.

He leaves, ready, willing and happy—but he doesn't know what is in store for him because of his sanskaric patterns (mental impressions).

After about a fortnight, Baba says to me: 'Some- how I want you to contact the man. Give him the message that he should return here after two months and not one month as previously instructed.' So after much effort, I locate him in Delhi and speak to him by telephone. He is overjoyed that Baba has remembered him, saying how compassionate and all-knowing Baba is. 'It is a problem for me to come back as instructed because I am sick in bed after a heart attack. How does Baba know about it? He is so compassionate, he is so practical. The doctor has advised me to rest in bed for six weeks.'

'Well,' I answer, 'I am only a messenger. Baba says to return a month later than the fixed date.'

The time for his return comes and he duly arrives on the appointed day. He enters the hall and Baba greets him and then says: 'Have you come all alone?' 'No, Baba, I have brought my spiritual mate with me.'

‘Spiritual mate? But I said to come alone.’

‘You see Baba, soon after I left you I had a heart attack, and she was the one who looked after me. I could not repay her for all her nursing, and I thought it my duty to bring her here. We would both like to live with you.’

Baba says: ‘There is room only for one. I had called only you. Well, never mind. Did you obey all the three orders I gave you? The first was to come exactly after a month. You did come on time because I postponed the date by a month. Did you read all the books?’

‘I haven’t read even a single book, because I was sick and ailing.’

‘All right,’ Baba replies, ‘you couldn’t do that. The third order was not to touch a woman.’

‘But she looked after me, Baba. I needed the touch of the woman.’

‘And I told you to come alone,’ says Baba. ‘Do you remember what I said? It is easier to sit naked on a snow-bound Himalayan peak than to live by my side and obey my orders.’

‘Yes, Baba,’ answers the man. ‘It is difficult.’

‘Well, never mind, never mind. Don’t worry. I forgive you. Now do one thing. Go back to your place. Touch as many women as you wish, do not read a single word of my literature, and come exactly after a month, but come alone. Will you do that?’ He says: ‘Yes Baba.’ And he leaves.

He did return on the exact date, but could not come alone. He came with the woman.

Baba again asks him: ‘Have you come alone?’ ‘Baba, it is impossible to leave this woman. We will live together a dedicated life at your feet. Allow

us to live by your side.’

Baba says: ‘There is room only for one and that is for you. Go back, and know fully well that it is impossible to obey my orders unless I will it.’

So you see the unfathomable ways of the God-Man. A woman comes to Baba wanting her daughter and gets Baba: a man comes wanting Baba and gets a woman.

He who knows everything displaces nothing. To each one I appear to be what he thinks I am.

—*Meher Baba*

It is difficult for the Western mind to accept the concept of God in human form . . . Though none of you understand me externally in my physical form, I am within you—within everybody . . . I am God undoubtedly . . . If you cannot accept me as God, that should not worry you. Accept me as a true friend.

—*Meher Baba*
(from interviews)

The Journey

The Sultan of Egypt once summoned all the learned priests of his kingdom to meet in a conference for the purpose of settling once and for all, the question of whether the Prophet Mohammed's flight was spiritual or physical. It is said that the Angel Gabriel took Mohammed out of his bed one night and showed him the seven heavens, paradise and hell; and the Prophet, after having had many, many conferences with God, returned from the journey in such a short space of time that it was reported he found his bed still warm, and the pot of water which had fallen down at the moment of his flight had not yet completely run out. These incidents have given rise to a great controversy as to whether the flight that night was spiritual or physical.

The sultan's conference was given great publicity and aroused keen interest throughout Egypt, until it reached the ears of the Perfect Master Shahabuddin. The Master decided to visit the sultan, and on doing so, was received with great courtesy. The sultan said: 'It was very kind of you to have taken the trouble of coming here in the heat of the day. It would have been sufficient to have sent word with a servant, and I would have felt greatly honored in granting him anything that he asked in your name.' But the Master replied that he had come solely to enlighten the sultan regarding the Prophet's journey.

The room in which they talked had four windows. The Master asked the sultan to have the windows closed. After a little time, the Master opened the window which looked out on the mountain called

Red Mountain, and asked the sultan to come to the window. As soon as he did so, the sultan saw a huge cavalcade of horsemen, more numerous than the stars in heaven, advancing at full speed with drawn swords towards the palace. The sultan was terror-stricken and cried out in great dismay: 'Oh God, what dreadful enemy is advancing to attack my palace!' But the Master calmly replied: 'Be not afraid, there is nothing to it.' Saying this he shut the window himself, and opened it again immediately; the sultan heaved a sigh of relief on seeing not a single person on the mountain or plane.

The Master opened another window which over-looked the city of Cairo, and the sultan, looking through it, was horrified to see his beautiful city in a raging fire. He exclaimed: 'What a terrible fire—my beautiful city will be burnt to ashes!' But the Master soothed him saying: 'Do not worry. It's all nothing.' Again he shut the window, re-opened it, and the sultan was relieved to see his city as serene and beautiful as always.

The third window was opened, and the sultan saw the river Nile with angry floods overflowing its banks and threateningly surging towards the palace. So overwhelming was the sight, that again the sultan could not help crying out: 'Everything is lost—we will be drowned!' But the Master said: 'Be not upset, it is all a mirage.' And he again shut the window and opened it, and the sultan was happy to see the Nile pursuing its peaceful course as before.

The Master opened the fourth window, from which the sultan was accustomed to seeing a parched, barren desert. In spite of his previous experiences the sultan was swept off his feet with joy at the change, for

instead of a barren desert, before him were beautiful vineyards, exquisite gardens laden with a variety of fruits, sparkling streams winding through flowering shrubs and trees. The air resounded with bird-song and was fragrant with many delicate scents. The sultan was entranced, and he ecstatically cried out: 'This is truly the garden of Paradise.' The Master pulled him up saying: 'Don't lose yourself; it is all a dream.' The window was shut and opened again, and the king saw the familiar arid desert.

The Master then addressed the sultan, saying, 'I have not come simply for the sake of staging the few acts of jugglery which you have witnessed just now. I have come to correct your faith and to increase your spiritual convictions. Please therefore, send for a tub full of water and do as I tell you.' The tub was brought and the sultan was made to strip naked with only a towel wrapped around him. The saint thereupon ordered him to dip his head in the tub, and take it out again. No sooner did the sultan carry out the order than he found himself at the foot of a mountain alongside a seashore.

Finding himself in this plight, the sultan was infuriated, and cried out, 'What a cruel trick you have played on me by this black magic of yours, and if I ever return to Egypt I shall not rest content until I have wreaked vengeance on you.' But gathering himself together and realizing that his threats and abuses were of no avail, he began to take stock of his surroundings. He saw some woodcutters coming down the mountain-side and thought to himself that if he were to disclose his identity to them, they would not believe him, but rather take him for mad. So when the wood-cutters asked him who he was, the sultan said, 'I

am a merchant; the ship in which I was sailing got wrecked and somehow I find myself washed ashore and alive.’ The woodcutters rendered him what little help they could, and directed him to a city just behind the mountain. The sultan was too much concerned with his own sorry plight to take notice of the beautiful sights of the city. He was sorely in need of some rest and food, and eventually taking pity on his obvious hunger and distressed condition, an old farrier invited him to his house. The farrier, hearing the sultan’s tale, gave him food and drink and congratulated him on his escape from drowning. The sultan then sought the advice of the farrier on how best he could live under his changed circumstances, and the farrier replied, ‘The laws and customs of this city are very favorable to strangers, and you will find yourself soon well settled, if you act on my advice. Go to the public baths of the women, and stationing yourself at the gate, ask every woman as she comes out if she is married. The one who says “no” you will be entitled to claim as your wife according to the laws of the city.’

The sultan decided to follow his advice, and bidding farewell to the old man, made his way to the public baths. He was not long there when a very beautiful woman came out. He thought that if only she were to accept him as her husband, he would perhaps forget his misery. However, much to his disappointment, she answered him ‘yes’ when asked if she was married. The next was frightfully ugly. The sultan shuddered at the thought of her being unmarried, and was mightily relieved to hear she was not. After a while another woman came out who was even more ugly than the last, and the sultan wondered whether

he preferred death by starvation to marriage with such a woman. But all was well. She was married. He waited for a fourth woman to come out, fearing the while that she would be even uglier than the previous two. But to his great joy he saw a woman exceedingly beautiful. He took courage to ask her the same question, thinking she was certain to be married, and he could hardly believe it when the woman said 'no.' Saying this, she left him abruptly. The sultan was immediately concerned that he had not come up to expectations, thinking that otherwise she should have assured him of acceptance as her prospective husband.

But while he was thus reflecting, a slave approached him and said, 'I am ordered to look for a stranger in tattered garments and with famished looks. I think you are the one signified. Please follow me.' The sultan soon found himself in a richly appointed house; and after a time a woman of matchless beauty, resplendent with jewels, accompanied by attendants, approached him with courtesy and said, 'Excuse me for paying you such little attention at the first meeting, but I was in a hurry to make myself presentable to my lord and master. Make yourself at home here, and everything that is here, myself and mine, is at your service and command.' The sultan replied, 'A short while ago I was cursing my destiny, and now I am the happiest man alive. To begin with I badly need a wash and change of clothing.' His lady assured him that everything had been prepared in readiness for him. So while he bathed, and feasted, and listened to songs by the poet Baba Scrudai, the sultan considered with happiness his extreme good fortune. His lady too on her part was well satisfied with her husband.

Both of them began to live a life of unstinted luxury and ease. They had a family of seven sons and seven daughters. In the years that followed, they finally found themselves utterly bankrupt, the whole of the woman's estate having been squandered. Faced now with the problem of daily survival, the wife said, 'You never stinted yourself as long as my wealth lasted. You gave yourself up to reckless pleasure and idleness. It's time you bestirred yourself and earned something for your family.'

The sultan in despair turned once again to the old farrier. 'Revered sir, I find myself in a worse plight than when I first came to this city. I now have a wife and fourteen children to look after. But I know no trade or handicraft.' So the farrier gave him some coins, and told him to purchase rope and become a porter in the market-place. After the day's labor the sultan carried the few coins he had earned to his wife, who cried on seeing them: 'You will have to earn ten times as much if you want to save me and the children from starvation.'

The next morning, overwhelmed with grief, the sultan wandered towards the sea-shore, cursing his fate and those responsible for it. He particularly remembered with anger the Master who had placed him in this predicament. He had by now reached the sea-shore, and he felt compelled to offer prayers, in his plight. But before prayers he decided to bathe in the sea, and as he raised his head from the water, he found himself in his own palace, in the tub and surrounded by all his officers. On perceiving the Master, he burst out, 'Oh treacherous man, what did you mean by playing such a mean and dirty trick on your sultan?' The Master quietly and calmly replied:

‘There is no need for your Majesty to be angry. It was only a moment ago that you plunged your head into the water of the tub. I am telling you nothing but the truth; if you do not believe me, your officers will vouch for my statements.’

But the sultan continued to find it difficult to believe even his courtiers, and wanted to know how and where he had been all these years and how he came to have a wife, seven sons, and seven daughters. The unkindest and most cruel part of the situation for which he could never forgive the Master, was having been forced to work as a porter.

The Master replied: ‘Since you will give no credit to my words, I shall give you another demonstration in my own person.’ So saying, the Master undressed himself, entered the tub and thrust his head beneath the water. While the Master was beneath the water, the sultan remembered his vow of punishing him if he ever returned to Egypt, and therefore took a sword to cut off his head when he raised it from the water. But the Master, divining the sultan’s thoughts by means of his spiritual powers, disappeared physically to reappear in the city of Damascus a thousand miles away. From there he sent a message to the Sultan of Egypt which in essence said: Know, O king, that we are both but humble servants of God. During the short time that you had your head in the water, you made a journey of a number of years, underwent many hardships, married and had seven sons and seven daughters, and labored like a coolie to earn a meagre wage; and yet you would not believe that the Prophet Mohammed, after his return from the spiritual journey, found his bed still warm and his pot of water not completely run out. Be knowing

therefore, that nothing is impossible to Him who out of nothing created the seven heavens and the seven earths with the single word ‘Be.’

At another occasion Baba said: ‘God is not to be found in the skies or in the caves of the Himalayas. God is in the heart of each one. Once your heart is clean, God will shine out in it. But it is not easy to clean one’s heart. It is like diving deep into a sea of fire! To love me is to lose yourself. Hence, where you are, God is not; and where God is, you are not. It is easy to become good but very difficult to become God.’ With tongue in cheek, Adi remarked that it should be easy to become God after becoming ‘good’—one just had to knock off an ‘o.’ Baba replied: ‘It is no joke to do that—even if one were to die in the attempt to knock off that ‘o’ one would not succeed!’ Baba continued: ‘To love God is not easy. The easy path is to hold fast to my daaman (hem of garment). Throw down all your burden of sanskaras at my feet by complete surrender to me. I am the Ocean and can absorb all your burden. But in fact there is no such thing as “burden”—it is all imagination, a play of “maya” (illusion/ignorance).’ Baba said: ‘Maya has been compared to ringworm infection. The more you scratch, the more you want to scratch, and the more miserable you become. In the same way, the more you indulge in maya the more you want to indulge in it, and become all the more miserable.’

—*Manija S. Irani*
(from a letter 1963)

The Old Man

Sometimes before Meher Baba began to give darshan* to the public, he travelled all over India incognito. This was especially so when he had to do his work. He would go to lengths to disguise himself, to cover as it were, his personality. His personality or presence was so arresting that people would single him out amidst the crowds and just stop and gaze at him. So Baba would cover his face with scarves, wear goggles or wear a turban or a felt hat; he would wear the headgear that suited the conditions and fashion of that area. In this way he remained incognito.

At the time of this story we were in search of masts.** Before the journey, Baba would have us prepare an itinerary for the period of perhaps two or three weeks. It would take us a couple of days to co-ordinate everything.

So on this journey, we were travelling in a third class compartment. No amount of words can describe the condition of travelling third class in those days. Terrible. To go into and out of the compartment you had to be pushed in through the windows or thrown out through the windows—it is a fact, no exaggeration. The compartments were so

* Darshan—literally means ‘sight of,’ but conveying the general meaning of the giving and receiving of love in the physical presence of the Master.

** Masts—men/women who are so intoxicated with love for God that they have lost completely or partially, normal consciousness.

full with people sitting on the floor that the doors could not be opened. Many a time Baba has gone in through the window. We just had to throw ourselves on the other passengers, and somehow or other create enough space for Baba and ourselves. We were very strong then, mind you. We would fight the crowd, an elbow here and there and gradually assert our right to a little space on the long cushionless bench. Then when we had our space, we would give it to Baba and so give him a little comfort. And we would stand perhaps.

At one big station, Baba was watching the people trying to enter the compartment. All of a sudden he sees an old man lifting up a small child and pleading with the passengers to at least take in the child and saying that he will get himself into some other compartment. He was pleading amidst that crowd and din, and Baba was watching for a little time. The old man became desperate: 'For God's sake take the child in.' At that, Baba through his gestures, said: 'Take the child in.' I had to be very alert with Baba. We could not allow Baba to be conspicuous, so we had to be very alert to Baba's eyes, his facial expressions, everything, and not just rely on his finger gestures. I said softly to Baba: 'Baba, it is too dangerous.' But Baba replied: 'Just have pity on the old man.' So of course Baba had his way, and I, trying to look very big and important, went near the window, and before the other occupants realized it, pulled the child in. Well, there was a great din from everyone. They shouted at us, abused us, and tried to obstruct us in every way possible. But I argued that we would have the child on our lap, we would see that he was not a burden, so they should not worry about the matter.

And I told the old man to quickly find a seat for himself in another compartment. But I said to Baba, ‘Baba, it is very dangerous. If we have the child, and the old man cannot find a seat what will happen to the child?’ Baba replied: ‘No, he will find a seat,’ and Baba put the child near him.

At the next station the old man again came to the window to see if the child was safe. He was a Mohammedan and had a long flowing white beard and looked aged. Baba signaled to me: ‘Tell him that he should not worry but go and sit in his compartment and not come here each time, otherwise he might miss the train.’ So I told him. He was very grateful, but again at the next station, he came to the compartment. And Baba said: ‘It is getting very dangerous now, Eruch. If he misses boarding the train you will have to see about the child.’ ‘But Baba, it is still more dangerous if I now bring the old man in. These people will not tolerate such action.’

Well, Baba insisted that somehow or the other I bring the old man inside our compartment. It was, you could say, an order. I leaned out of the window and spoke in the old man’s ear, so the other people could not hear me: ‘Look here, I am going to pull you inside the compartment. But come at once, don’t hesitate, you must help me whilst I pull you up.’ Somehow or other, I got him half inside. The people started to shout and the other mandali (disciples of Meher Baba) had to quickly help me. And the uproar! The din! They abused us, shouting and threatening. Nothing seemed to pacify them; they were very nasty. We said, ‘This child, we had to give him room. And this man, he is old and worried about his child. He might miss the train and all that.’ ‘But

why the hell did you take the child in the first place?’ and so forth. Gradually, things settled down. The old man took the child on his lap, and he was seated by Baba’s side.

All the time, as I have told you, Baba would be very active, even though he appeared to be so silent. He appeared unconcerned about the affairs of others, and yet always there would be the ‘wire pulling’ by him, and we had to be all the time on our toes, even while sitting down. Now Baba signals me to start chatting to the old man. And chatting meant trying to find out from the old man the names and whereabouts of men of God. This was Baba’s work at the time, seeking out and doing his own special work with the real lovers of God. Baba would have us ask people we came in contact with, perhaps the man at the bus stand, or shop-keepers, or train travelers, and so on, about masts and yet in such a way that they did not realize why we asked or for whom the information was needed.

I asked the old man if he was comfortable, and where he lived and of his family, and then had he visited the big shrine in his home town, Gulbarga. He answered ‘yes.’ ‘And do you know of any masts, men of God, at that shrine?’

At this he looked at me more sharply and said: ‘Oh, you are interested in masts? But you don’t look like a Hindu and you don’t seem to be a Mohammedan, how is it that you are interested in shrines and in masts?’

‘Oh! I have an interest to visit and pay my respects to the saints and masts.’

‘From where do you come?’ he asks me.

‘I come from Ahmednagar.’

At that, his expression completely changed. ‘You come from Ahmednagar; do you not know that the root of all saints and walis and pirs is there, the source of all, the pivot of the universe is there?’ He went on: ‘Are you a Zoroastrian?’

‘Yes,’ I replied, ‘I am Zoroastrian by birth.’

‘You are a Zoroastrian,’ he said, ‘and yet you don’t know that God has taken form on earth with the name of Meher Baba and that he lives in Ahmednagar? Oh! You foolish young man, going out seeking saints and masts, when God himself lives in your hometown!’ And the old man continued to admonish and exhort me and I kept quiet and let him go on. Then he calmed down again and said: ‘I have visited Ahmednagar thrice in my lifetime, just to pay my respects to Meher Baba. Such is my fate that each time Meher Baba was not there. I am a poor man, I go a long way to have Baba’s darshan, and I do not get it. And you, *you* fool, you live there, and you do not seek him out and stay by his side.’ (And, mind you, all the time, Meher Baba is sitting silently by his side.) Again I kept quiet and just listened. Then the old man asked if Meher Baba had gone abroad. Did I know if he was in Ahmednagar or was elsewhere? Although Baba wanted to remain incognito, he would not permit us to tell lies. We had to improvise on the spur of the moment. So I said, ‘He has not gone out of India. That much I know.’ And to change the subject, I hastened to add that when I returned to Ahmednagar I would make a point of seeing Baba.

Again the old man took up the refrain, ‘I am an old man now, I do not know how many years I have to live and I have not seen him even once. Once

in my lifetime I must have the satisfaction of seeing him. I will take my wife and children to him.’ He alternated between talking softly and admonishing me, exhorting me to catch hold of Meher Baba’s feet. Time passed and his station came. Many passengers got down at this major station of pilgrimage and the old man and his child were able to leave through the door.

Suddenly, after a while, Baba signaled to me: ‘Run and tell the old man that Meher Baba was sitting by his side.’

‘Baba,’ I said, ‘it will be very difficult for me to face him now.’

‘Go,’ said Baba, ‘run, run before the train starts. Just tell him and come back.’ Then he inquired whether any of us had a photo of Baba. No one had one. But I suddenly remembered a copy of the Meher Baba Journal in my bed-roll, and that it had a photo of Baba. I got it out, and Baba bowed down to his picture, as he always did when he blessed a photo for someone. ‘Now run,’ he said, ‘run and give this to him, and tell him that Meher Baba was by his side, that Meher Baba is very happy with his love, and that he knows everything about him, and that he need not worry.’

I ran, and came to him outside the station, just as he was about to get into a tonga. He thought at first I had got down from the train to pay my respects at the famous shrine at that place, and started telling me again to go instead to Meher Baba.

‘No, no,’ I said, ‘hear me please! Meher Baba has sent me.’

‘What! Meher Baba sent you? But where is Meher Baba?’

‘He was sitting by your side.’ You should have seen his expression then and heard the abuse he gave me. He not only abused me, but also my whole generation.

Well, I just gave him the picture, saying: ‘Baba has blessed this picture. Baba wants you not to worry. He knows everything. He is very happy with your love.’ Then I started to run back because the train whistle was sounding.

And the old man began to run after me, shouting all the way at me about my heartless treatment of him. As I got to the platform, the train started to move off slowly, and I could see Baba leaning half-way out of the compartment window. The old man had kept up with me, now searching for Baba amongst the faces, and as I grabbed a handle on the train, I said to him: ‘Here, here is Baba!’ The old man looked at Baba, then bent his head in reverence and Baba put his hand in blessing on his turbaned head. So this is how Meher Baba sometimes gives darshan.

I am happy to see you all; I am touched that many of you have come from distant parts at no small sacrifice to be in my presence for a few hours.

Devotees spend their lifetime savings and even risk life itself in pilgrimages to bow down before God in forms sanctified by tradition. And their rewards are according to tradition.

But you have journeyed to bow down before God who has taken human form because of love. And your reward will be according to love.

—*Meher Baba*

A Mast

He was the spiritual chargeman of Bangalore, and was known as Chaddar Baba.

Chaddar means a sheet. A mast is usually called by a nickname that epitomizes some peculiarity of habit or dress. His real name is either not known, or fails to satisfy public imagination, and local genius sooner or later begets a sobriquet that sticks to the mast as long as he stays in a particular vicinity. Chaddar Baba was a fine old man, with a head of short-cropped white hair, a small white beard and tattered clothes, and he always carried a sheet (chaddar) wherever he went. This sheet would be flung carelessly over one shoulder, or held in the hand by one corner, so that most of it trailed through the dust.

Like many famous masts, there were stories of miracles performed by Chaddar Baba, and one of the tales of his miracles concerned a taxi driver. One day, Chaddar Baba told this man to drive him to some village or other near Bangalore. The taxi driver protested that he had at that moment neither sufficient petrol in his tank, nor enough money in his pocket with which to buy even a gallon of petrol. Chaddar Baba thereupon gave him five annas and told him to go and buy a gallon. The driver pointed out that five annas was barely enough for a quarter gallon, but he was told to go to the pump and see what happened. He went to the pump, had a gallon of petrol run into his tank, put his hand in his pocket, and, to his astonishment, he found the coins in his palm to amount to just the sum needed for a gallon, no more and no less. That is the story, and whether

one dubs it a fairy tale, or believes it to be the truth, is of no great importance. Baba's teaching is that advanced souls, particularly those on the fourth plane, can do miracles, but that miracles don't matter.

Baba first sent Kaka with instructions to bring Chaddar Baba to 'The Links,' and Kaka, through the medium of an enterprising taxi driver, succeeded in having Chaddar Baba brought as far as the front door. The mast, however, flatly refused to get out of the car. The following day Adi and Kaka, after much trouble, managed to collect Chaddar Baba from the city bazaar, and this time he spontaneously got out of the car as soon as he reached 'The Links,' and made his way straight to Baba's room.

Baba was in the room at the time, and Chaddar Baba went to a chair where Baba's head shawls and alphabet board were lying, picked them up, turned them over in his hands, and looking at Baba, said suddenly, 'Now my account is closed.' He then walked through to the kitchen, and after looking around for a while, came back to Baba's room. Baba wanted to feed him, but he refused this, though he agreed to come the next day for a meal from Baba's hands. Baba thereupon gave instructions for him to be taken to the mandali's quarters, a big, rambling house, down a lane and round a corner, about a quarter of a mile away. He was taken there in the car, but declined to enter the house, and eventually, at his own request, was taken back to the city.

The next day, Kaka went to him in the bazaar and asked him to come to the house, but Chaddar Baba refused, hit Kaka, and spat on him. The same

evening, Baba sent Kaka to him again, and told him to remind Chaddar Baba of his promise to come and be fed. This also was of no avail, and Chaddar Baba this time gave Kaka a gentle kick, abused him, and told him to come before him naked. There the matter was left, and Chaddar Baba never again came to see Baba. Baba, however, explained that Chaddar Baba was on the sixth plane, and had come to him for the final spiritual push, and that he would shortly die.

Eighteen days later Chaddar Baba walked from the cantonment to the city, and took a cup of tea from his favorite tea shop. Half an hour later, in the open street, he pushed his fingers to the back of his throat, vomited the tea, and told a boy who was with him to make a comfortable place on the pavement for him to lie down, as he now wished to go to Paradise. He then lay down and died.

The news of his passing spread like fire through city and cantonment, where he was greatly revered. He used, in fact, to sit in the porch of the Prime Minister's office, and he was held in such esteem that no one dared dislodge him, and he went where he liked, and did what he liked, throughout Bangalore. It was natural, therefore, that one so revered should be claimed by both city and cantonment when his burial was discussed, and after much debate Chaddar Baba was buried within the boundaries of the cantonment, and a shrine erected in his memory.

Seat of a Qutub

Meher Baba's stay in Hyderabad could be termed a time of stirring more than outward working. During that period those of us with him felt as well as saw that he was preoccupied with internal spiritual work. However, for the first time, concrete plans were drawn up for the Master's future International Spiritual Centre. Daily conferences were held with various sympathetic State officials and blue-prints for the Centre were produced by a Swiss disciple who was a noted landscape architect. The possibilities of establishing the Centre in Hyderabad were discussed, and to this end trips were taken to various sites that might have been suitable for Baba's unique plans—plans interestingly unusual in their outer frame-work, but the full inner spiritual significance of which time would unfold.

One day Baba was on one of these trips with an official and several others, in search of a location. At a particular point, in quite wild land between two lakes, Baba indicated that this would be a suitable site for his intended Centre, commenting that it was 'rich in spiritual atmosphere.'

Upon returning to our dwelling, the official told one of the group that although the place which they had chanced to see that day was wild and rocky, he believed he knew why Baba had a preference for that particular site.

The official recalled a tradition that had been handed down from generation to generation in the locality, little-known other than to the few who lived thereabouts. The legend runs somewhat as follows:

Two thousand years ago there was a saint who was a disciple of Christ, and after the crucifixion this saint journeyed to the East, arriving eventually in the particular region seen that day and singled out by Baba. The ancient saint was the type of spiritual being known as a Qutub, and it is said that 'once a Qutub chooses his seat, he never changes'. The region at that time was a jungle that chanced to be the favorite hunting ground of the ruler, and word was sent out to the stranger to move on. But the saint refused to leave the seat he had chosen. The ruler, hearing this, became enraged and sent out armed guards to forcibly remove him; but still the saint refused to move, and disarmed the guards with his saintly words and demeanor. They reported the facts to the ruler and he sent other armed guards, because no one, be he holy or unholy, was allowed on his favorite hunting preserve. When the second time his men returned without being successful, and with the story that they dared not touch this saintly stranger, the ruler became curious; and the next time he went hunting he decided to see this man for himself. The legend runs that the ruler was so impressed that he gave word he could remain, and eventually the saint became his spiritual guide. It seems that Christ had given to this saint the holy gift of His own shirt which the saint always wore. After years of meditation in this jungle place it was time for the saint to leave his body. So he passed the shirt of Christ on to a young disciple with the explicit instructions that the holy relic should never leave the spot. Shortly after the saint died the ruler also died, and wars ensued in the district. So the young disciple left.

But remembering the words of his guru he first buried the holy shirt deep in the ground, beneath the seat where the saint had sat for so many years.

This brings to mind the words of Babajan, one of the five Perfect Masters of our present Avatar's time. When we were in Poona last month, Meher Baba told Mehera and myself one morning to visit the tomb of Babajan and place on it a 'sheet' of flowers. The tomb graces the shady 'neem' tree under which Babajan used to sit throughout all weathers, situated at the section where three busy roads meet. Later a shelter was built for her; and many devotees would gather there, particularly in the evenings, and this would often hold up traffic. Whenever Baba refers to her, he invariably uses the words 'Incomparable; matchless!' and once said: 'She came all the way from Baluchistan to settle in Poona for my destined meeting with her.' After we had paid our respects, Mehera and I stopped for a while at the Jessawalas and Eruch's little aunt told us of her first visit to Babajan years ago. Babajan asked her where she had come from and at the reply 'From Meher Baba' she exclaimed: 'From my Beloved Meher! My Son! Some day the whole world will call out Meher, Meher! All the trees will cry out Meher, all the birds will sing Meher!'

—*Manija S. Irani*
(from a letter 1957)

Tea Party

I am reminded of a tea party in a train during the war years. Travelling by train was very difficult during the war. The trains were literally overflowing with people. But somehow we had to do Meher Baba's bidding, and sometimes we had to fight with the passengers, sometimes plead, sometimes bow down to them, and sometimes give a blow.

It so happened at this time that the train was very full. There were some compartments reserved for military personnel and to our astonishment there was one with only half a dozen men in it. Somehow or other I melted the heart of one of the men in that compartment with my pleadings and he permitted us to get inside. Little did we realize what was in store for us.

We were very happy. We felt it was by Baba's grace that this had come about. The military men were friendly and helpful. They seemed to have taken a fancy to us. Baba was very cheerful and we all made ourselves comfortable on a bench at the far end of the compartment in a sort of an alcove reserved for servants of British families who travelled. We chatted with each other and everyone seemed happy.

It was at the next station that the trouble began. The station was crowded with military personnel and they started pouring into our compartment with their guns and luggage and paraphernalia. And more and more came in, far beyond its capacity. They pushed their way in and spread all over the compartment just as the train started. Because their comfort was disturbed, suddenly the military people

who were originally there started to pick a fight with the newcomers and there was a lot of shouting and abusing. Before we realized what was happening, it became a riot in that speeding train, a free-for-all, with hockey sticks and rifle butts beginning to be used. It was frightening and we looked on helpless.

Suddenly there was a clap. I looked round and saw Baba was standing on the bench, and had given a single clap of his hands. I don't know how it could have been heard in that raucous din, but the effect was instantaneous. All stopped and looked up at this man in a long white robe, with arms outspread and hands turned up in a gesture of 'Stop.' From the amazed look on their faces, he must have appeared to them as a heavenly vision. Then Baba gestured and I started to speak out, telling them that it was not good to fight amongst themselves, that their fighting would not solve anything, their fighting should be reserved only for the protection of their country, and so on. After a while Baba gestured, 'Sit down', and they all sat down calmly. Baba sat down and promised them a tea party at the next station; at this they cheered and started conversing amicably among themselves.

At the next station Baba had us order tea for all in the compartment, and with home-made sweets that my auntie had given before we started from Ahmednagar, Baba with his own hands distributed the prasad of sweets. And gradually the passengers became merry, enjoying the tea and sweets, and began talking happily with each other. As they got down at their destination they waved a salute to Baba and left together singing a national song. Baba, without speaking a word, had stopped a very difficult situation.

Seller of Firewood

There are many known instances of men of high spiritual status leading a life of daily crucifixion at the hands of worldly people. Outwardly, these lives of ignominy and suffering provide an object lesson to people in the spiritual qualities of patience, forbearance and tolerance. Yet from a spiritual standpoint, such lives are indeed difficult to understand. Sometimes, in fulfilling their duty in the material world, spiritual masters deliberately invite opposition and the discredit of people as individuals or *en masse*, as such opposition enables them to release proportionately their Divine Love for the well-being of mankind.

Meher Baba has said: 'All spiritual work is strengthened by opposition. It is like the shooting of an arrow from a bow: the more you pull the bow-string the further the arrow flies.'

An example of this is as follows: A disciple of Abdul Quddus of Gangoh was to visit Delhi and he asked his Master how to locate the spiritual charge-man of the city. The Master gave the disciple details of the saint and said: 'He sells firewood in the marketplace and invariably comes there in the evening with timber loaded on his head.'

The disciple reached Delhi, and in due time found the saint. He was occupied as it was said he would be, and the disciple was able to observe him from a distance.

A customer approached the firewood seller and asked him the price of the bundle of wood. On being told that the price was four annas and a few

paise, the customer asked him to bring the bundle to his home. On reaching the destination, however, the man gave the saint only four annas and refused to pay the extra few coins. A heated argument ensued, and finally the saint was severely man-handled and kicked off the property. The saint then went home and gave his wife the four annas. She demanded to know why it was only that amount, and when told that that was all he was able to earn, she flew into a rage and gave him a sound thrashing with hands and tongue.

The disciple, who had observed all this, was greatly mystified, and at a later opportunity said to the saint: ‘Sir, your spiritual status is very exalted among the saints of the day and yet you lead a distressful and harsh life. Will you please explain to me?’ The saint replied: ‘My achievement and position in the spiritual world are the outcome of the temperamental make-up of my wife. Before I go to the market, my wife fixes arbitrarily the price of the firewood, and if that is not obtained then she treats me as you have witnessed. Today’s amount was four annas and a few paise. In this I failed and as a result I suffered abuses and beatings at two places.’

Nobody suffers in vain, for true freedom is spiritual freedom and suffering is a ladder towards it. Man unknowingly suffers for God, and God-Man knowingly suffers for man.

—*Meher Baba*

Air-Conditioning

Our travels with Meher Baba meant a great deal of hardship. Even though we are used to this summer heat, still we feel it greatly whilst in the open. And burdened with masses of luggage, under very trying conditions, we would go out with Baba. The journeys in third class train compartments, jam-packed with people, so that there were no spaces between any two people, and no fans, were ordeals. It was very difficult. But Baba would prefer to go third class.

Later some lovers of Meher Baba who could afford first class train travel, thought that particularly during the summer some comfort should be given to Baba, and they persuaded him to accept from them first class tickets. So Baba accepted and we had the luxury of sitting comfortably, but, because Baba did not like wind or even breeze at all, he would have all the windows shut and no fans on. At least we had sitting room, but otherwise the compartment was unbearably stifling.

So then these well-to-do lovers of Baba thought that Baba should have an air-conditioned compartment: there would be no fans, no air movement, but the temperature would be cool and pleasant for Baba. And again they persuaded Baba to accept the tickets for such travel. Baba was very happy and pleased with their love and thoughtfulness for him, and of course we were very happy that in the height of summer with temperatures around 115-120 degrees, we would be travelling in comfort.

I remember we were returning from a tiresome journey, we were returning home, and for the first

time an air-conditioned compartment had been reserved for us. We entered the compartment. It was very pleasant, cool and fine. We sat and we chatted as Meher Baba would have us do around him. He did not like or permit us to just sit quietly and gaze at him. He would like people buoyant, all the time saying something, doing something, making him laugh, and they laughing with him. He liked cheerfulness and good humor. Well, we were there together in the compartment, having a good chat, before the train had started, and suddenly Baba said: 'Don't you feel the temperature rather too low in this compartment?' We looked at each other; we agreed that it was cool, but for us it was pleasant. Still we said: 'Yes, Baba.' He said, 'Can you not regulate this temperature?' We replied: 'How do you want it Baba?' 'Just raise the temperature a wee bit more, it is too cold. You all might catch cold, and fall ill.' Again we looked at each other. Then he sent us out to speak to the guard, although by now the train was about to start. But the guard said the temperature was according to regulations and could not be altered. We returned, and as we did so, the train whistle sounded. We told Baba, and he was not happy over the whole matter.

Then it appeared there was a delay in the train starting, even though the whistle had been blown, and Baba said: 'Quick, can you not approach the guard again, and ask for the air-conditioner to be switched off? Can you not do that? Hurry! The train will start and it will be too cold for us all here.' So some of us rushed out, and said to the guard, 'We want the air-conditioner switched off. Can that be done?' And he switched it off.

Imagine the oven we were then in! The windows could not be raised. The carriage was sealed. There we were, perspiring like anything! And Baba looked at us and said: ‘Very good climate! Perfect!’ ‘But Baba, we are suffocating!’ ‘No, no! This is good,’ said Baba, ‘Perfect!’

It was the same when travelling by car with Baba. He did not like breeze or direct sunshine on him. But because we would look disturbed, he would allow us to lower the car window a fraction. That was more in recent years; in earlier years he was very strict with us. I remember once, a first class coupe had been arranged for Baba, and there was Baba and myself in it. Baba had all the windows completely shut. All my clothes were thoroughly drenched in perspiration, and I took them off. Baba was asleep. I went very quietly to the lavatory and lifted the lid of the toilet so that I could breathe through the hole which was open to the ground. Then I returned to be near Baba. But Baba was not only sleeping in that stifling heat, he was also covered with blankets. I don’t know how he could have been comfortable under such conditions.

. . . . [always] the mast would offer him a seat and sometimes say, ‘We play with You, we speak with You, we take food with You, and we make jokes with You, in our ignorance.’ When Baba sent the mast back to Rishikesh, he caressed Baba’s face in a very loving manner and said, ‘Please, surely call me in the coming life. I will also definitely come then at your call.’ And then again, ‘Please release me from this body.’ His last look at Baba was most touching....

—*Manija S. Irani*
(from a letter 1958)

Guidance

If the aspirant takes to any type of meditation on his own initiative and without having the benefit of the guidance and supervision of the Master, he may get into it so far that he loses his perspective and is unable to recover himself. It may be impossible for him to change over to some other complementary mode of meditation, even when it is absolutely necessary. This risk is avoided if the aspirant has taken to a line of meditation on the orders of his Master. When he is under the guidance and supervision of the Master, the Master not only can ask the aspirant to halt at the right time, but he can actually help him to get out of the grooves cut by his previous meditation.

In this connection there is an illustrative story of a man who was highly intelligent and who wanted to know from personal experience what it feels like for a man to be suffocated by being hung. He was not content merely with imagining what it would be like, but wanted to experience it himself. So he asked a friend to help him perform the experiment. He said that he would be hanged by a rope and would signal to his friend when the feeling of suffocation reached the danger limit. He further asked his friend not to relieve him from the gallows before he received the intended signal. His friend agreed to all this, and the man was hung by tying a rope round his own neck. But when he suffocated he became unconscious, and therefore he could not give his friend the promised signal. The friend, however, was wise, and finding that the suffocation

of the man had really reached the dangerous point, he went beyond the limits of his agreement and relieved the man just in time to save his life. The man could be saved not through his own thoughtfulness and precautions, but through the wise discretion of his friend. In the same way, it is safer for the aspirant to rely upon the Master than upon any provisions of his own making.

Befitting a fortunate slave carry out every command of the Master without any question of why and what.

About what you hear from the Master never say it is wrong because, my dear, the fault lies in your own incapacity to understand him.

I am a slave of my Master who has released me from ignorance; whatever my Master does is for the highest benefit to all concerned.

—Hafiz—quoted by *Meher Baba*

A Dream

A musical director of Radio Pakistan lived in Karachi, and although he had never met Meher Baba, he was attracted to him and always helped in Baba's Birthday or Silence Day celebrations. During the night of the 31st January 1969, the day on which Meher Baba dropped his physical body, the director had a dream. He dreamed that he saw Baba sitting in the chair on his verandah, and filled with joy he exclaimed, 'Oh Baba, you have come to my house!' He said that he knew it was Meher Baba because of course he had seen photos of him at the celebrations and it was unmistakably Meher Baba.

Baba answered his greeting in pure Urdu (a language of Pakistan), 'Yes, I have come to your house.'

Then the director said, 'But Baba, yesterday you were in India; how is it possible for you now to be in Pakistan?'

And Baba answered: 'Yesterday I was in India, but from today I have spread myself all over the world.'

The director did not know at the time that Meher Baba had dropped his physical body, and it was only two or three days later that we telephoned and told him the news. And he said at the time that as soon as the telephone rang and he was told that we were asking for him, he felt something within him, and he knew that there would be some 'bad' news.

Selfless Service

It happened in 1963 or '64. There was a severe drought in an area of Bihar and many people were dying. Each day there were reports in the papers of the drought and the famine that followed, and I would read these reports. After some time I read that one of the very wealthy industrialists of India had provided many free kitchens in the area and that he was giving free food to countless people. I thought what a good man the industrialist must be and how touching it was that he was doing such selfless service: God had given him wealth, and he was using the wealth in a really good way. I was thinking this during the day.

At night I went to Meher Baba and was with him, to see to his needs, for many hours. He asked me to press his feet, and as I was doing so, the thought suddenly came to mind: That man is really good. He is doing such selfless service. God has given him wealth and he knows how to utilize that wealth and save many lives. But we here cannot help, we cannot serve as he does. Baba said to me: 'What are you thinking?' 'Nothing, Baba,' I answered. Again Baba asked me what I was thinking. So then of course I answered: 'I was thinking of the drought in Bihar.'

'And then?' asked Baba.

'People have been dying, but now this wealthy man has provided many free kitchens and supplies food to so many.' I continued, 'He is doing such selfless service.'

'Selfless service! He is doing most selfish service.'

‘Selfish?’ I said to Baba. ‘How can that be, he is doing really good work.’

Baba answered: ‘Yes, he is doing good work, but the motive is selfish. Do you know why he is doing that work? The motive is to gain name and fame. And too, in doing such charity, he will save in taxation. His motives are selfish.’

‘You are here,’ continued Baba, ‘and you are serving me. In serving me, you are serving the universe, because the whole universe is within me. But that man, even if he becomes most selfless, cannot serve the universe through his money. Despite his good actions he remains bound; whereas you do not become bound in your service to me. You serve the whole universe through me, while he is doing most selfish service.’

‘My message is, love God to such an extent that you become God. That love is a gift from God. One of the means by which it can be won is selfless service—but the selfless service should be so sublime that you should not even have a thought that you are serving! You can love God. You can see God. He is not anywhere outside, but right *within* you. So you must seek Him within. Conviction through understanding is possible (by reading and contemplation etc.), but conviction by sight is the real conviction. After that, some rare one can achieve conviction by actual *becoming*—i.e., realizing God.’

—Meher Baba

False Knowledge

Once upon a time there was an absent-minded man who had no equal in forgetting things. He had an intelligent and trusted friend who wanted to help him to remember himself. This friend attached a pumpkin to his neck and said: 'Now listen, old man, one day you may completely lose yourself and not know who you are. Therefore, as a sign I tie this pumpkin around your neck, so that every morning when you wake up you will see the pumpkin and know that you are there.' Every day the absent-minded man saw the pumpkin after waking up in the morning and said to himself: 'I am not lost.' After some time, when the absent-minded man had become used to self-identification through the pumpkin, the friend asked a stranger to remain with the absent-minded man, take away the pumpkin from his neck during his sleep and tie it around his own neck. The stranger did this, and when the absent-minded man woke up in the morning, he did not see the pumpkin around his neck. So he said to himself: 'I am lost.' He saw the pumpkin on the other man's neck and said to him: 'You are me. But then who am I?'

This pumpkin story (referred to by the poet Jami in one of his couplets) offers an analogy to the different forms of false self-knowledge growing from identification with the body. To know oneself as the body is like knowing oneself by means of the pumpkin. The disturbance caused by non-identification with the gross, subtle or mental body is comparable to the confusion of the absent-minded

man when he could no longer see the pumpkin around his own neck. The beginnings of a dissolution of the sense of duality are equivalent to the absent-minded man's identification of himself as the stranger who wore his pumpkin. Further, if the absent-minded man in the story were to learn to know himself through himself independently of any external sign, his self-knowledge would be comparable to the true Self-knowledge of the soul which, after ceasing to identify with the three bodies, knows itself to be none other than infinite God. Arriving at such Self-knowledge is the very goal of creation.

Schools help sincere students to equip themselves with knowledge and to become worthy citizens of society. And those students are wise who take full advantage of educational institutions and their facilities.

But this knowledge is not the be-all and end-all of learning. And there comes a time when one longs to reach the source of knowledge. The journey to this source can only be undertaken when one learns to love in all simplicity and honesty the One whom the pride of intellect veils.

When mind soars in pursuit of the things conceived in space, it pursues emptiness; but when man dives deep within himself he experiences the fullness of existence.

—*Meher Baba*

The Intruder

When Baba went on his travels with his disciples, he liked whenever possible to have a compartment to himself, so that he could express himself freely through his gestures, and we could have meals in the compartment, be ourselves and relax. God had become man, and as man he sought privacy at times. It was but natural.

Now it so happened that one day when we were travelling we were lucky enough to have a small compartment to ourselves. We were all very happy and pleased, because Baba was happy and pleased. We were sitting back quietly and chatting amongst ourselves, just before the train left the station, when suddenly the door opened and a man jumped in. He was some politician, with white khadi cap and starched shirt and all that.

Baba signaled, 'What's this?' He was not at all pleased; it was an intrusion.

Well, we pleaded with the man:

'Sir, the next halt is only 10 or 15 minutes away; when that comes, would you please find a seat in another compartment? Please allow us to have the compartment to ourselves. We are travelling a long distance, and we can see from your. . . .

'What's the matter? Is this reserved?'

'Oh, no, it is not reserved, but we are just asking you to move to another compartment. You are not going far, but we are travelling a long distance, and we would like to spread ourselves out, and be comfortable. You will be equally comfortable there.'

It was a third-class compartment, mind you, no

cushions or anything.

He said, 'No! What do you mean by asking me to vacate this compartment? Have you paid for the whole compartment?' He was very arrogant.

Baba signaled to us: 'Look here, stop arguing with him. Just observe silence with him; don't talk to him; but converse with one another in silence. Laugh and do whatever you want to, but in sign language.' Baba appeared very displeased.

Now, Gustadji who had been silent on Baba's orders for many years was with us, and we all knew his sign language, so we began to laugh and chat using signs. Previously, Gustadji was not permitted to use gestures when travelling so as to avoid attracting attention. It becomes too obvious, you see, and people begin to ask, 'What's going on?' Gustadji was now released from this prohibition, and he began to laugh and chat, using his sign language, and I also started gesturing.

Then that fellow asked me, 'Where are you going to?'

As soon as he asked me, I just looked at him, and then turned my face away and ignored him. So he started asking Pendu, and Pendu too turned his face away. He asked us different questions many times, but we just turned away in silence. And then when he stopped asking, we began to laugh and to chat merrily again amongst ourselves, using Gustadji's sign language.

All this appeared very confusing to the man and he must have thought of us as a bunch of lunatics. At the next stop he hurried to get out of the compartment.

'Coolie, coolie, come here! Take this luggage!' He shouted.

And Baba said, ‘Thank him, help him get his luggage out.’ He made the sign for shaking hands. So we helped the man down with his trunks, and calling out a loud, cheerful ‘Thank you,’ we settled back for our journey with a sigh of relief.

Baba said, ‘That served him right!’

A Message to The Poona District Cricket Association

I am happy to present these trophies today. When I was a boy in school and college I played cricket. Now I play my divine universal game, which includes cricket, and so I am still fond of that game.

It is good to excel in whatever one takes up, so long as with excellence there is a feeling of humility; for this leads to love of God, and to love God as He should be loved is the best excellence.

I give you my blessing that one day each of you may have that love.

—*Meher Baba*

*Samadhi**

The aspirant's meditation, in its higher flights, often brings to him a sense of expansion and freedom, as well as the joy and illumination of the higher planes, but none of these are abiding because in most cases when the aspirant comes down from his exalted state of meditation he is again what he was, namely, an ordinary person who is held up in the unyielding shackles of sanskaric limitations.

The incompleteness of the different samadhis of the aspirant may be illustrated by the story of a yogi from Gwalior. This yogi was very greedy, but through yoga he had mastered the art of going into samadhi. One day he sat opposite the palace of the raja and, before going into samadhi, thought, 'I must have a thousand rupees from the raja.' Then he went into samadhi and remained in that state for seven full days. During this period he took no food or drink, but only sat in one place, completely wrapped up in trance-meditation. People took him to be a saint, and when the raja came to know about him he also went to have his darshan (blessing). The raja went near the yogi and happened to touch him on his luck. That light touch was sufficient to bring the yogi down from his samadhi, and as soon as he woke up from his trance-meditation he asked the raja for a thousand rupees.

* *Samadhi*—trance induced by spiritual meditation.

The Vision

There lived a man of God who had dedicated himself to a life of penance and austerities. After undergoing a long period of self-denial this holy man had a vision in which he was granted the fulfilment of any desire that was uppermost in his heart. The holy man was surprised by the proposition and could not immediately decide on his wish. He therefore begged for a stay of eight days so that he could consult someone wise in the spiritual path. The request was granted.

The ascetic approached a well-known sage and told him of his perplexity. But the sage said he could not guide him and referred him to a man of God who had been living all his life amongst people of ill-repute. This saint was the only one able to solve the problem, the sage said, but he might have to be coaxed into listening to the story.

The ascetic discovered the man of God in the most disreputable part of the city and related his story to him. The saint listened and told him to come the next morning for his answer.

On his return the following morning, he found the whole area seething with excitement and the crowds yelling and shrieking with indignation. On enquiry, he was shocked to find that the saint had been murdered overnight by some ruffians who were indiscriminately scattering his mutilated limbs in the gutters and latrines.

The murder was reported to the authorities concerned, but to the bewilderment of all, the official order was to drag the mutilated limbs through the streets of the city as an example to all those living an infamous

life. Thereafter the body was denied even a humble burial and it was eventually thrown outside the precincts of the city for the birds and beasts to devour.

The ascetic was dumbfounded and baffled that God should allow His friends and lovers to be treated that way. He wondered why the saint gave a false promise to him by asking him to come the next morning. But he knew that if the man was really a saint, his promise would never prove false.

Therefore he approached the severed head of the saint and reminded him of his promise of a reply that day; and the severed head began to talk: 'My dear man, the very reply to your question is in the sorry culmination of my earthly life and the treatment meted out to my bodily remains. God the Almighty loved me immensely and showered upon me His untold blessings. Yet throughout my life I have never had sufficient food nor decent clothes. A loincloth was my covering, and I was at the beck and call of the people with whom I lived. That was the picture of my life on earth and this is the plight of my body after death.

'And what a picture of utter disappointment and disintegration! Not a shroud to cover my dead body nor a corner of earth within which my body could be hidden from the birds and beasts! The head lying on a rubbish heap, the limbs and body scattered to the gutters! In life I had no bath, and no bath after death! I never observed the external formalities of religion during lifetime and consequently I have not understood the meaning of faith and life after death. No angels of retribution confronted me to assess my account of doings on earth and up to now I have not been able to fathom the mystery as to who is the chosen one and who the accursed and condemned.

‘To cut the matter short, this is how the lovers of God are honored and treated, as you have witnessed with your own eyes. So if you still wish to ask for something, as promised in your vision, then I would very strongly advise you to go after some spiritual grade or authoritative post but never, never, even through mistake, allow your mouth to utter the name of Love.’ Hearing this and pondering, the ascetic was much enlightened and said to himself, ‘If someone sincerely desires to give something then he will give it freely. When the moment of gift comes, divine blessings are showered without asking.’

So the ascetic ignored the vision and its allurements.

Meher Baba touched on the subject of ‘saints’ and ‘masters’ that abound everywhere. He said: ‘They are like seashells scattered on the beach, their superfluous glitter attracting the loiterers on the beach who pick them up and think they have gained the treasure of the sea. But it is a far cry from the Pearl ensconced in the deeps of the Ocean! And so it is that Hafiz says how foolish people are who compare pearls with seashells. The Real Pearl is here (Baba pointed to himself). Do not go after shells.’ The Perfect Master, Tukaram, spoke strongly of the hypocrites who set themselves up as spiritual teachers, and among the poetical compositions he left for posterity, one of Baba’s favorite ones was: ‘Wearing long matted hair and with ash-besmeared body, there are many frauds in varied guises. Tukaram says let their (dead) conscience get burnt—it is no sin to thrash them!’

—*Manija S. Irani*
(from a letter 1963)

The Sleep of Meher Baba

Yes, in our experience Meher Baba slept as any ordinary man would sleep; and yet again, it was quite different from human sleep. His was an 'awake' sleep. He would tell us to be around him, to keep watch while he slept; and he would order us not to move, not to create any noise, not even the noise of our clothes moving, let alone sneezing or coughing. So we had to just sit stationary. But then when Baba seemed to be in deep sleep and we would think we could make ourselves more comfortable, he would immediately remind us not to stir. 'Keep quiet,' Baba would say. Even when we found him snoring, if we tried to take advantage of his sleep it would be as though he were awake and seeing everything.

Let me tell you of one incident concerning Baba's sleep, and then Bhau will tell you another.

We were in Bombay, staying in Nariman and Arnavaz's flat. One day Arnavaz developed a headache, and Baba told her to take an aspirin at 10 p.m. before retiring for the night. So she must take it. Baba had told her to. Baba retired early, and suddenly at about 9 p.m. she realized that her medicine chest was in the room where Baba was sleeping. She didn't know what to do. All the chemist shops were closed. We tried various sources by phone without success. She was very anxious not to disobey Baba, but what to do? So I said, 'Do not be concerned. I can enter Baba's room and get it. Now is the time because he is asleep.' I could hear him snoring, and thought it the right time. So very quietly I opened the door, and gestured 'silence' to the watchman

sitting in the room. Baba's face was turned away from me. I shut the door very quietly. Then on tiptoe I stealthily went to the medicine chest, opened it and took out the tablet from the box. As I did so, and whilst closing the cabinet, a passing thought came to mind: 'Wonderful, Eruch, you are wonderful. You can even commit theft right in the presence of God-Man, and he does not know it.' There was no ulterior motive, and it was done to help someone to obey Baba's order, but the mind is such that I was greatly delighted at the idea that something could be done without the knowledge of the God-Man. I shut the cabinet, and tiptoed to the door. Baba was undisturbed. I opened the door, and put one foot outside, then just as I crossed the threshold—Baba clapped. 'Who was inside the room now?' He called me back. 'What were you doing inside the room?' I told him the whole story, and he finished the incident with 'All right.'

Now Bhau, tell us of the time you were outside Baba's room.

It was in the year 1955. We were at Satara. Baba would ask the night watchman to sit outside the room and to the watchman he would repeat three instructions every day: keep awake, make no noise, and do not move.

Once it so happened that as soon as I went to him, he repeated these three instructions four or five times, and then told me to go and sit outside. According to his instructions I would close the window and the door, and would sit outside on the verandah. There were many mosquitoes, and it was always a relief when Baba called me and I could get up, stretch my limbs while going inside to him. Baba would usually

call me, say every 15-20 minutes. But this particular night, he did not clap. I sat there, just waiting for his clap, so that I could go inside and get away from the mosquitoes. I waited and waited. No clap. An hour, an hour and a half passed. I was very stiff by this time, and all my thoughts were on Baba's clap and why he didn't clap. After two hours Baba started snoring. I thought, now is my chance. At least I can change my position. I was sitting on a chair, and very slowly and silently I raised one leg. There was no noise, nothing. And he clapped.

I went inside. 'Why did you move?' I was so dumbfounded I could not say anything. Why did you move?' Then I said: 'I was sitting outside, the door was closed, there was no noise, and you were sleeping.' And Baba replied: 'Even while sleeping I see the whole universe: How could I not see you outside the door? How could I not see you so near to me?'

There are many stories of this kind about Meher Baba's 'awake' sleep. These are but two to show what happened so often with Baba.

Bhorwala Baba [a man of God] . . . said of Baba: 'Meher Baba has in him the whole universe, he is the Master of everyone, and he is within every disciple. He is this world, that which is above it, and below it; he is in me and in everyone. He is the saint of saints . . . in one glance he sees the whole continent of India.'

—*Dr. William Donkin*
(from *The Wayfarers*)

The Friend

He described himself as a terrible person, disregarding all moral and ethical codes even to the extent of spending a period in jail. His conduct alienated all his family and friends, and he was avoided like the plague by anyone who wanted to keep his own name clean.

As the years passed, he grew desperate in his misery, so much so that he finally resolved on suicide, and made all preparations.

Only a few hours before the time he had fixed for his suicide, a messenger came from Meher Baba saying that he, the man, was wanted at once at the place where Baba was staying. The message stirred his heart with affection for Meher Baba, but he lied to the messenger: I will come later. But the messenger would not go, saying he had been given strict instructions to accompany him to Baba. So the man thought how nice it would be to see his friend before the end, that anyway he had time, and he went with the messenger.

As he neared the destination, Meher Baba came out and running towards him with open arms, embraced and kissed him regardless of the people all round them.

The man was deeply moved and when Meher Baba allowed him to go only after making him promise to return on the morrow, he went home, all thoughts of suicide forgotten.

In later years the man would say: Did I, who could not evoke love in my own mother, deserve such love? His love filled the emptiness of my heart, and showed

me that true happiness is in giving, in self-control and in the sacrifice of desires. The alchemy of his love transformed me.

One extremely poor old couple of Amarpura, who lived in a hovel far outside the village, were determined to share in welcoming the Master, and built a small raised square in front of their hut. In spite of his wife's doubts that Meher Baba would come to their poor dwelling, and in spite of the fact that they also had not the courage to invite Baba, the old man was sure that his love would draw the Master to him.

The day of the program in the village being over, Baba and party proceeded the next morning to the adjacent town. But instead of taking the usual road, Baba insisted to everyone's surprise on taking a little used path in almost the opposite direction. After a time he had the car stopped, and getting down went straight to the home of the old couple. Amidst their tears of joy, Baba embraced them both and seated himself on the erected square to be garlanded. He had accepted their hearts' tribute.

—from *Mass Darshan of Meher Baba 1953*

Two Heaps of Grass

The difference between the comparative importance of theory and practice in the field of Sadhana (spiritual endeavor) may be brought out by means of a well-known story of an ass. An ass, who was plodding along a path for a long time and was very hungry, happened to see two heaps of grass—one at some distance on the right side of the path and the other at some distance on the left side of the path. Now the ass thought that it was of utmost importance to be absolutely certain which of the two heaps was clearly the better before he could intelligently decide to go to one heap rather than the other. If he decided without thorough thinking and without having sufficient grounds for his preference, that would be impulsive action and not intelligent action. So he first considered the distance at which the two heaps were respectively placed from the path which he was treading. Unfortunately for him, after elaborate consideration, he concluded that the heaps were equidistant from the path. So he wondered if there were some other considerations which might enable him to make a 'right' choice and speculated upon the respective sizes of the heaps. Even with this second attempt to be theoretically sure before acting his efforts were not crowned with success, because he concluded that both heaps were of equal size. Then, with the tenacity and patience of an ass, he considered other things such as the quality of the grass, but as fate would have it, in all the points of comparison which he could think of the two heaps turned out to be equally desirable.

Ultimately it happened that since the ass could not discover any deciding factor which would make his preference appear theoretically sound, he did not go to either of the two heaps of grass but went straight ahead hungry and tired as before and not a whit better off for having come upon two heaps of grass. If the ass had gone to one heap, without insisting upon the theoretical certainty of having chosen wisely, he may have gone to the heap which was not as good as the other; and despite any mistakes in his intellectual judgment he may have been infinitely better off from a practical point of view. In the spiritual life it is not necessary to have a complete map of the Path in order to begin travelling. On the contrary, insistence upon having such complete knowledge may actually hinder rather than help the onward march. The deeper secrets of spiritual life are unraveled to those who take risks and who make bold experiments with it. They are not meant for the idler who seeks guarantees for every step. He who speculates from the shore about the ocean shall know only its surface, but he who would know the depths of the ocean must be willing to plunge into it.

What one seeks with all one's heart one gets. When you say you sought and did not find, it means you did not seek as you ought to have sought.

—*Meher Baba*

The Judge

So often during our travels, our resting places would not be hotels or even houses. And I still remember, even during a visit to America, how we slept on the floor. Meher Baba's lovers in the West had booked a suite for Baba and his mandali in Holiday Lodge. And what happened? We all slept on the floor—Baba himself and we also. We did not use anything because the beds were so soft and springy. But it did not matter to us whether we were in a palace or on a railway station.

And that reminds me of a little story. We were on a station platform, spending the night there waiting for an early morning train. The end of the platform is always plain earth, and it was there that we spread our bedding. We first spread our things, placing Baba in the center and then the mandali lay down around Baba. And there would be one keeping watch. We were very exhausted and the watchman must have been drowsy, because all of a sudden I found Baba shaking me. I sat up from that sound sleep. Where was I? What's the matter? Who is there? What did I find?—in between Baba and myself there was a man sleeping. Using our own covering, the man had got down between us. I woke him up. Who are you? But as soon as I woke him he jumped up and started running. And as he did so, police started to sound their whistles. They had been on the watch. The man was a thief and had come there, seeking cover near us, and had hidden himself between us.

Meher Baba once spoke about himself as the Judge, and of the difference between himself as the Judge and the judges of the earth. He said: ‘The judges of the world bring guilt to the guilty and punish them; I bring guilt to the guilty and forgive them.’

Another story on this theme comes to mind:

During our mast-tours with Meher Baba, one of his companions would carry money for immediate requirements, and I would have a reserve fund as it were. On this occasion I had a wad of 10 rupee notes in one of my coat pockets. (You know, we had to have baggy clothes in travelling with Baba—pockets everywhere to carry and have handy all the things that Baba might need.) We were in the interior, in a village, and Baba was inside a room contacting a mast. We were standing outside, and we were not permitted to see what Baba was doing. It was the early hours of the morning. As we stood there, villagers began to gather around us, and as was our duty, we started to chat to them, seeking information on masts in different areas. We chatted, and a man, one hand paralyzed, stood close to me and put his hand lightly on my shoulder. Well, he was very friendly and we all talked together, and slowly, stealthily his hand reached down and pulled out a note from my pocket. I didn’t see it, but I heard the sound and quickly looked at him and he was holding the note.

I said nothing because of the crowd: just caught hold of his wrist and dragged him behind the room

where Baba was closeted with the mast. I was determined to give him a tight slap, and raised my hand to do so. Suddenly, as I was about to strike, my hand was caught by someone from behind and turning round I saw Baba. ‘What are you doing?’ asked Baba. ‘Baba,’ I said, ‘he pinched a 10 rupee note from my pocket.’ Baba looked at the man. ‘Did you do that?’ and he just pinched his ear like this and said, ‘Never do that again.’ Then he told me to give the man the note, saying, ‘This money is for those who are in need of it. Had he not the need why would he have done that? Give it to him.’ Baba again exhorted the man not to steal and then left. But if Baba had not come there, I would have given him two or three slaps for doing such things.

Love and understanding never condemn, but seek to help and encourage. Men and women have departed from the custom and laws of Truth and goodness, but God never condemns us or turns us from His door; so we should not condemn even those who condemn us. I bless you to try to understand and love those who are trying to help you to take your place in God’s Work through serving His humanity.

—*Meher Baba*

The Market for God

The world mostly fails to appreciate the value of the really important things in life. And even among these who do appreciate their value, most persons fail to derive benefit from their knowledge. This may be illustrated by means of a story.

After many years of devotion, a man became more restless than ever for the realization of God as Truth, and he approached a sage visiting his town: 'I have wandered as a pilgrim from place to place; I have visited many sages and saints. But I am no nearer the fulfilment of my desire, and now I approach you in full surrender to attain to that desire.'

The man said this in all sincerity, believing that he was ready to receive the highest spiritual experience, and not knowing that he was really unprepared for such an experience. He did not know what he was asking for. So, in order to bring home this fact to the devotee, the sage took out from his robe a precious stone which looked like a marble and gave it to the man saying: 'Bring from the market five pounds of vegetables in exchange for this stone.' The devotee, taking the precious stone to be an ordinary marble, hesitated to carry out the request. But the sage asked him not to bring in his own considerations, but simply to do exactly what was asked of him. The man did so.

When the devotee asked for five pounds of vegetables in exchange for the stone, everyone laughed at him, thinking the stone to be only a marble. One, however, offered four pounds for something which he thought would be a nice plaything for his child.

The devotee returned and told the sage what had happened. The sage now asked him to obtain five pounds of sweets for the stone.

Again everyone in the market-place laughed at this new request. However, there was one who wanted a precious stone for a ring but did not have the money for one. So he thought the marble could be used as an apparent jewel and offered to purchase it for four pounds of sweets. The devotee again returned to the sage.

The sage now asked him to obtain from a goldsmith one hundred rupees as a price for the stone. When he went to the market-place, everyone mocked except one goldsmith who thought the stone might be genuine but who offered only 90 rupees for it. The devotee was now coming to the end of his patience, and he requested the sage to please keep his stone since it seemed impossible to satisfy his requirements.

The sage however asked him to try once more, this time to sell the stone to a jeweler for 1000 rupees. So he went to a jeweler who immediately realized the stone to be a really valuable one, worth at least 20,000 rupees. Now he thought he would be able to exploit the devotee who obviously did not know the stone's true value, and in greed and desire offered only 800 rupees. Thus he too lost the real bargain.

The devotee lost all patience and throwing away the stone, returned to the sage, exclaiming: 'I came to you to realize the Truth, not to be harassed in such fruitless tasks. Either give me that for which I aspire or allow me to return to my usual work.' The sage replied: 'You can never attain to union

with God unless you have inexhaustible patience. If you cannot stand an ordinary trial like this, you will not be able to stand the severe ordeals which a real aspirant for the Truth must face. It is best you return to the world, but before doing so, learn from your efforts to sell the stone.'

The sage then continued: 'The dealer who offered four pounds of vegetables is like the multitude who know nothing of that divine immortality which is known as God. They do not even suspect that one day they must possess this inestimable treasure. The dealer in sweets, offering only four pounds, is like serious-minded or thoughtful persons, who sometimes become conscious that their mode of life needs to be changed, but who are content to accept another false thing for the false thing with which they are fed up. They are not keen about having something real; they simply want some change, because they are thoroughly dissatisfied with what they have been able to make of life.

'The goldsmith who offered 90 rupees is like the seeker who knows there is a higher life and wants to have it, but who does not have sufficient earnestness to make any real effort for it. And the jeweler, who knew the real value of the stone but offered only 800 rupees, is like an advanced soul: he knows the real worth of eternal life, but wants it without paying the necessary price which is the surrender of separative ego-life.'

The sage then closed as follows: 'And you are like one who refuses to learn from experience. You had ample opportunity to note that the stone was being valued at an increasingly higher rate, as you went to more and more thoughtful persons. But

you still clung to your initial belief that it had no value. And you even finally threw the really valuable stone away. You need more experience; return to me when you have had sufficient.’

In India everyone knows Saint Mira who lived some 300 years ago. She was very beautiful, the wife of a royal prince in North India. He later became king. Mira loved Krishna with all her heart. Her husband did not like the way she was going about on the streets for she was the queen and queens did not mix with the crowd. She would enter the huts of the poor, the name of Krishna on her lips as she sang. She suffered many trials and threats to test her love for Krishna: she was locked in a room, her food was poisoned, a cobra was concealed in a bouquet of flowers; she accepted all as a gift of her Lord Krishna and nothing happened, he protected her. She refused to have anything to do with anyone but her Lord Krishna. Finally the king drove her away. She said: ‘If the king drives me out I have a place, but if the Lord of the Universe is displeased, I have no place.’ The people turned against her. As years passed, she looked radiant in her rags. Then the king came and fell at her feet. . . because she was sincere. When she died all revered her, and now people repeat her bhajans (songs of devotion).

I am Krishna, I want all of you to love me as Mira loved me.

—Told by *Meher Baba* 1958

Sarmad

Meher Baba himself told us this story of the emperor Aurangzeb and Sarmad.

You must have heard of Aurangzeb—he was a noble king, very religiously minded and orthodox, who just wanted to follow in the footsteps of the Prophet Mohammed. He never touched the treasure of the land, and for his livelihood he would stitch prayer-caps or make copies of the Koran, and sell them. He sought always to glorify God, and to live in accordance with the laws laid down by the Prophet.

One day the emperor decided that all the people should come together to pray under one roof, so that there would be many heads with one heart praying to the Lord. So he created a great mosque, huge, and the area was divided into squares with one allotted to each worshipper. He himself would be there at the time of the prayer, with the people. After some time he enquired whether everyone attended the mosque. Were they all happy with the great mosque? Did they all come? He was told that all came except for one person who sat close by the mosque but would not attend the prayers. ‘Who is that person?’ asked the emperor. ‘Does he not know the law of the land—that I wish all should go there and pray?’ The emperor was told: ‘Yes, he knows, yet he just sits at the crossroads and will not budge.’

‘Tell him to go to the mosque.’

‘We have requested him, Sire, but he will not move from his seat.’

‘Then take him by force. He should pray, worship the Lord in the mosque.’

So it happened that one day the man was lifted bodily, manhandled, taken to the mosque, and made to stand on one of the squares. He stood there, and the people all around him bowed down, prostrated themselves in prayer. The emperor was present, and the mullah or priest recited the prayers very fervently in pin-drop silence. All of a sudden in the midst of the prayer the man shouted out: ‘Your damned God is under my foot!’ And he turned round and left the mosque. Who would dare say anything? The emperor was there, and it is considered blasphemy to disturb the prayers. So nothing was said or done.

But after the prayers were over the emperor turned to his ministers: ‘Who could say such a thing in the midst of prayers? He deserves the worst punishment, death. Execute him!’ So he was executed. But from that moment the emperor became very disturbed in his thoughts and feelings. He was inwardly uneasy and felt as though he had committed a heinous crime. Yet he did not know the reason; he did not connect his disturbance with the execution of the man. Then with time it gradually dawned on him that his condition seemed to have started with the incident in the mosque. The emperor was very sensible, very intelligent, and a good man. Finally he said to the ministers: ‘Let us go to the mosque. I would like to know where the man stood and try to understand why he should say such words. There must have been a reason behind them.’

They went, the emperor and his ministers, to the mosque. There he summoned the mullah to him:

‘Tell me the truth. Do not hesitate. While you were praying that day when the man shouted loudly and walked out, were your thoughts in the prayer, were you thinking of the Lord?’ The mullah answered: ‘Yes, for a time I was thinking of the Lord; but then the mind played tricks, becoming aware of the fervor with which I was saying the prayers, and saying: go on with even more fervor so that the emperor is pleased, and moved to give you the money you need for your daughter’s wedding.’

‘Oh,’ said the emperor, ‘Is that so? Now dig where the man was standing.’

They dug in that place and found a great treasure, and then the emperor knew why the man had shouted: ‘Your damned God is under my foot.’ Money was at that time the mullah’s ‘god.’

The emperor then realized that the man had been a man of God, a mast, and he was known from that time as Sarmad, the head of the masts. And Aurangzeb said: ‘With his death at my hands, there is no peace for me in the world now.’ So he made a will that his body on death should be divided into parts, and each part buried at the feet of a Master or great saint in the hope that, by their grace, he might find some sort of rest and peace. This was done and his tombs were plain and unadorned, just earth and a plant of rosemary.

Aurangzeb’s wife was also buried simply, although her son later built the Mini Taj to commemorate her. But Aurangzeb wanted her buried plainly because he said nothing in this world remains, it is all ephemeral, the great emperors come and go, empires are created, live awhile and fall: everything is passing, and nothing lasts.

The Final Step

Thirty-six years of fasting, penances and solitude by Hazrat Baba Farid found him no nearer his goal—Self-realization. He therefore came to Ajmer (India) to seek discipleship of Khawja Moenuddin Chisti, the Perfect Master of the time. As Baba Farid approached he saw the Master seated on the ground and leaning against a dry, leafless tree. He felt distressed that the Master of the age should be resting under such an unworthy tree, and with his psychic power made the tree green and leafy. The Master looked up at the tree and made it dry again. Again Baba Farid turned it green, and again Khawja returned it to its former state.

After this confusing duel, the Master stopped his well-meaning but misguided visitor and said: ‘Farid, have you come to learn perfection or to demonstrate cheap powers born of long asceticism? Divine nature wants the tree dry and leafless; who are you to interfere? Go to Delhi where Kutubuddin, my disciple, will teach you a lesson.’

Baba Farid went to Delhi as ordered and found Khawja Kutubuddin playing with children. Baba Farid was at this time very old, and he thought the Master Khawja Kutubuddin to be very much younger than himself. This thought was immediately read by the Master and he at once left the children and retired to his house. After a time he emerged completely transformed, robed, white-bearded and leaning on a long staff. He said: ‘Tell me, Farid, do I now look old enough to be your Master?’ The utterance of these words instantaneously im-

parted God-consciousness to Baba Farid. After a time, the Master bestowed upon Baba Farid the robe of discipleship and allowed him to depart.

This course of events highlights two points often emphasized by Meher Baba. The first is, however long and hard is one's self-imposed asceticism or yoga, the goal of Self-realization cannot be achieved without the Grace of a living Master. The second point is the question of connection or spiritual relationship, the result of past preparation. Here we have a Perfect Master, capable of giving Realization, but nevertheless directing the aspirant to another Master. Baba Farid had spiritual connection with Khawja Kutubuddin and not Khawja Moenuddin Chisti.

One day a Perfect Master told a disciple to take a job, to do some service. The next day he told him 'Don't do any work, don't take a job.' The third day the disciple was told to arrange to get married: on the fourth day the Master said 'Don't marry.' The disciple got confused and asked, 'But why do you keep wanting me to undo everything you order me to do?' The Master explained: 'What you understand as "doing" is in fact undoing. Everything that you do by your own will is undoing. Everything that you do and undo by My Will is the real doing.'

—Anecdote by *Meher Baba*

Three Stories on a Theme

I. The Yogi

In answering your question, I recall a story. It is about a lover who loves Meher Baba, and a seeker who is in search of Truth. Of course, Baba is Love personified, he is Truth personified, he is Everything. There is no difference between Truth and Love. But there is a difference between one who loves the God-Man and one who aspires for the Truth. The aspirations of the seeker of Truth will lead him through all sorts of byways and alley-ways, mountain passes and valleys. But for the one who loves the God-Man there is no wandering. He is simply in love with the God-Man, for him he is the Beloved, and he has one-pointed absorption in him. He simply loves his beloved Lord and is completely content with no aspirations whatsoever. He has no questions to ask and nothing to seek or to find. He is quite content in just loving the Beloved.

So in this story that I recall there was such a one. And there was another person who was a seeker, and in his seeking he observed all sorts of austerities. He underwent fasts, he meditated, he carried out many yogic exercises. He was told that in the course of his pursuit of Truth, he would gain many powers, such as raising the dead, causing death, curing the sick, and the blind and so on. He was charmed at the thought that through these things he would be able to help others, and he sought in right earnest to invoke the blessings of the Lord. Years passed by. He continued strenuously in his efforts on the various paths to Truth. And while doing so, he remained in

one place and was seated all the while on the same stone. He thought that by renouncing everything and remaining in the one place, God would be pleased with him.

And it so happened that after years of these practices, God was very pleased with his devotion. While seated on the same stone in the same place these many years, he heard God asking him what he wanted. He replied to the Lord: ‘Lord, you are the doer of justice and it is foolishness for me to ask anything else of you but justice. Please do justice to me.’

The Lord replied, ‘All these years you have been a burden on this stone, sitting here and invoking my blessing to gain powers. If I were to dispense justice, justice demands that you unburden the stone of its burden, and put the stone on your head and have it as a burden on you.’

That is the end of the story. You can guess whatever you want from it.

II. Another Yogi

That story reminds me of another, a sequel, you could say. It concerns a mast, whose life was spent wandering from village to village, from city to city. The world in general did not notice him, and he himself was all the time absorbed in his love of God. And so he wandered.

One day as he passed through a city, a certain yogi seated on the road-side saw him and was drawn by his God-absorbed personality. ‘Where are you going?’ he asked the mast. The mast, all the time in communion with God, replied: ‘Well, I am going to God.’ ‘You are going to God?’ ‘Yes.’ ‘Will you carry a message for me?’ ‘All right. What is the

message you want me to give?' 'Tell Him, my beloved Lord, that for forty years now I have been waiting, by His Grace and command, for my release, my emancipation. Forty long years I have passed in solitude, meditation, concentration, under all sorts of austerities, and there has been no sign from Him, no sign of His recognition of my devotions. Please ask my Lord how long must I wait? Will you convey this message to my Lord?' 'Of course, of course,' said the mast.

So he passed by, and the yogi again became absorbed in his austerities and meditations. The mast continued his wanderings, and in the course of time came to another city where lived a certain man who loved God in a most natural way. This man had a family, wife and children, worked for his livelihood, and in every way lived a simple natural life of love for God. He recognized the mast as a man of God and called to him as he passed: 'Where are you going?' 'I am going to God, to visit Him.' 'Is that so, is it true?' 'Yes.' So this lover of God said: 'Will you please carry a message to Him: ask Him how many more years, how many more life-times are there for me before I am emancipated and become one with Him, my Lord?' The mast accepted the message and departed.

Years pass by, and there is no sign of the mast. But then after many more years it so happens that this man of God again passes the yogi. The yogi is now old and weak, far advanced in years, but he recognizes the mast: 'Did you convey my message to my Lord?' 'Yes, I did.' 'And what did He say?' 'Despite all your efforts and austerities, your one-pointed devotion and practices, there are forty

more lives for you before realizing Me.’ The yogi burst out in despair: ‘Forty more life-times? I thought that in this very life-time I would be emancipated! Oh! forty more life-times!’ He was very sad at heart, but he continued with his practices.

The mast went his way, and again in the course of time came to the city where lived the house-holder lover of God. And again through Divine providence it so happens that the man sees the mast: ‘Have you come back from God?’ ‘Yes. I carried your message.’ ‘Did my Lord reply?’ ‘Yes. God replied that He is well-pleased with your love and that there are four hundred more lives for you before you become one with Him.’ ‘Did He say that? Did He actually send me a message? Oh, how wonderful it is that my Lord recognized the little fact that I love Him! What are four hundred lives? They are nothing into nothing! That God recognized my love, that He has given His attention to my love is all that matters. How wonderful is my Lord!’ With these thoughts, so lost in love did he become that in that instant he experienced God-realization.

While one man becomes confused at forty more life-times, the realization that the Lord has condescended to even recognize his love is sufficient for another man to drown and become one with the Ocean. It is all dependent on the pleasure of the Lord: and that thought leads to yet another story on this theme.

III. The Persistent Disciple

There was a Master who had several disciples, and one of them kept pestering the Master for God-realization. He kept on pestering and pestering; and the Master kept on saying patience, patience,

wait, wait. But still the disciple continued nagging at the Master, taking every opportunity to ask him for God-realization. So finally the Master decided to settle the matter. He said: ‘Tomorrow morning at 5 o’clock I shall give you God-realization. But you will have to stay awake all night, and at exactly 5 o’clock knock on my door, and with your knock I will give you Realization.’

The disciple was naturally delighted and excited. He began his vigil, and faithfully stayed awake the whole night until a few minutes before 5 a.m. At that point he fell asleep. But to the door of the Master’s room comes the milkman and knocks on the dot of 5 o’clock. He got God-realization.

What do you mean by ‘yoga’ and what do you aspire to attain through it? There is only one true ‘yoga’ and that is ‘you go’. I know of no other yoga than ‘you go.’ The meaning of yoga is as simple as that. You are your own curtain, and only when you go can You come. But the problem is how will you go—the only solution is love. When ‘you’ go (are annihilated) through love for God the Beloved, ‘you come’ (emerge) as You really are.

—*Meher Baba*

God Alone Is Real

Ghausali Shall Qalander related the experience of his friend Maulvi Mahboob Ali in contacting two spiritually advanced persons. The maulvi had returned from a pilgrimage to Mecca, and after midnight he visited a mosque in a city near Bombay, India. He found the muezzin (the professional announcer of the time for prayers) of the mosque deeply engrossed in the repetition of the Arabic words 'There is nothing besides God' (a mantra or zikr), and was dumbfounded to see the effect of the repetition. When the man uttered the word 'La' (nothing) he would become invisible to the physical eyes, and when he finished the sentence with 'Illillah' (but God) he would appear again in physical form.

Next morning when Maulvi Mahboob Ah came out of the mosque after prayers, he saw an almost naked mendicant seated on the steps of a brothel opposite. On seeing the maulvi, the faqir cried out: 'Maulvi sahib, you seem to have been greatly amazed at what you saw last night in the mosque. Well, I too shall entertain you in the mosque tonight if you care to come.'

That night, true to his word, the mendicant came to the mosque, and covering himself with a cloth, sat and repeated the same words spoken by the muezzin the previous night. In this case, however, the phenomenal changes effected by the words were even more wonderful. With the words 'La Ilaha,' the negative declaration of existence, the mendicant, mosque and everything in it including the maulvi, would cease to exist visibly; and with

the utterance of the positive assertion (asbat) of existence (Illillah) everything again would be visible. The faqir repeated the mantra several times, and then left the mosque, saying: ‘Oh maulvi, what you have seen is not true perfection. It is something like jugglery. Perfection is altogether different and cannot be described in words.’

The next day the maulvi saw the same mendicant seated as usual outside the brothel and suffering all sorts of indignities, insults and abuses, physical and verbal, from the prostitutes. On being asked by the maulvi for an explanation, the man of God said: ‘This sort of life is divinely ordained for me and more cannot be said.’

When one man asked why he was so unfortunate as to be blind, Meher Baba replied: ‘You do not know your good fortune. All are born blind, even those who think they can see. They do not see the real, any more than you, but you do not see the false either: it is your desire to do so that binds you. Do not ask for physical sight, but to be given the true Sight that will enable you to see the only thing that Is. Take my name all the time, think of me constantly—I give my love and blessings to you all.’

—*Manija S. Irani* (from a letter 1959)

Fate

Sometimes Meher Baba, while we travelled around India, would ask us to fast, perhaps one meal per day at a fixed time, or at no particular time, or to remain only on drinks like soft drinks, aerated water or similar. On one journey we arrived at a station at about 2:30 a.m. We had not eaten for 24 hours. Here we were to change trains, and although the train was standing at the platform, it was some hours before it was scheduled to start. Well, we washed our faces and hands, and settled ourselves quietly on board the train.

At about 4:30 a.m. Baba spotted a stall opening on the platform, and he said we could go there to buy some food. A boy was dusting the jars of pastry and sweets, and as we approached we saw a man praying in the stall. The stall was against one of the pillars of the station, and on the pillar was a large photograph. We could see that it was Meher Baba's photograph, before which the man was praying. Baba did not pay any attention, but simply said: 'Let's buy oranges.' I started asking the price of the oranges. The boy said an anna per orange. Then Baba somehow or other began to bargain with him, and through me, he said in signs: As we will be buying six oranges, the price should be reduced. (I had to be very adept in conversing with others while Baba was present, talking naturally and conveying what Baba wanted me to say, and yet in no way drawing attention to Baba who was incognito. I had to, as it were, look two ways at the same time.) So then I bargained with the young man, and eventually he agreed

and we paid five annas for the six oranges. And while we collected the oranges and walked back, we chatted happily, and told Baba that the man was praying before his photograph. But Baba didn't pay any heed.

We sat in the compartment. Baba with his own hands gave us each an orange, and I went to a water tap to wash Baba's fruit before cutting and serving it to him. But when I returned from the tap, the owner of the stall where we had bought the fruit suddenly came running from the stall and started arguing. 'You all are elderly people,' he addressed us, 'and early in the morning before I was ready for business you came and swindled my boy. I said: 'What is the matter with you? We have purchased the fruit. We bargained, no doubt, but your boy agreed.' 'You had no right to bargain with the boy. He was just preparing the stall for business. I cannot permit you to have the fruit that way. My prices are all fixed. I never sell at reduced prices.'

Now Baba said to him through me: 'Now the bargain is struck, it is the duty of the businessman not to go back on the deal.' But the man would not stop: 'No, nothing doing. My prices are all fixed. You cannot change this.' He continued fighting us. We knew that he was a Baba devotee, so I had some feeling for him. Again I tried: 'Look here, we have clinched the bargain. Why do you insist on a change? What will one anna matter?' And again I reminded him, prompted by Baba: 'Once the bargain is struck, it is the duty of the man who is involved to accept any loss there may be.' Amongst the Indians it is the custom to accept happily the first transaction of

the day so that the whole day passes off happily. Baba tried, through me, to tell him of such things. But the man fought with us: 'No, pay the extra.' And eventually he took back all the fruits from our hands and mouths, you may say, and returned, to his stall. I said to Baba: 'Shall I tell him it is you, Baba?' 'If he knows that, he will bring the whole stall here,' said Baba. 'What will that profit him? That he prayed before my photograph in my physical presence, that much is his lot in life, and no more.'

Speaking of surrender, Baba said: 'I do not mean the kind of surrender offered by a man who came to Meherabad years ago and said he wished to surrender everything to me. When I asked what the "everything" was, he replied, "myself, my wife and four children!"' Baba continued: 'God is not fooled by any outward show. He is completely deaf to ceremonial prayers and ringing of church bells and chanting of mantras—He is never taken in by such superficial veneer, never ensnared by such blandishments. Love alone can move Him—Love alone can conquer Him. Without that, nothing is to any avail.'

—*Manija S. Irani*
(from a letter 1963)

The Spark that Kindled the Flame

Hazrat Mohiyuddin Ibnularabi relates that one of his kith and kin, by name Yahya bin Yaghan, was the king of Tilmsan. In his kingdom there lived a great soul known as Abu Abdulla Tonsi who having renounced the world was leading an ascetic life far removed from the haunts of men.

One day the king Yahya with his retinue happened to pass by the place where Abu Abdulla lived, and as they did so one of his men described the Master to the king and pointed to his place of seclusion. The king inquisitively headed his horse in that direction, and finding himself before the saint, bowed reverentially.

Conscious of being draped as he was in rich and costly garments, the king asked the saint, 'Sir, is the worship of God permissible in these clothes?' The saint laughed aloud in reply and on being pressed by the king to give the reason for his laughter, explained, 'I laughed at your lack of understanding. Your case is that of a dog who having feasted himself on a carcass and being smeared with blood from top to toe, yet takes particularly good care whilst urinating to raise one leg to save being polluted by stray drops. Your belly is stuffed daily with things that are unlawful, you are overloaded with acts of atrocity and injustice to people, and yet you are anxious to know what style of dress is best pleasing to God.'

The words of the saint did not miss the mark, and the message cut deep into the heart of the king. He immediately renounced his throne and kingdom

and asked that he be allowed to serve the saint. He was accepted.

After three days of hospitality the saint reminded the king, 'A guest is welcome for three days. After this period his allowance may be said to be derived from the poor tax. You have to work now for your living. Here is a piece of rope; go to the forest, cut down firewood and sell it in the market.' The king Yahya willingly submitted to the orders. He began to bring loads of firewood from the jungles, and from the price of their sale he would keep just enough for his sustenance and the remainder he would give away to the poor.

To the end of his days Yahya plied his trade in the very city of which he had been the king. People seeing him in this plight used to shed tears of pity and regret for him. But if any one approached Abu Abdulla for his spiritual help in their worldly difficulties and desires, the saint would invariably direct them to the ex-king saying, 'It is better you induce Yahya to pray for you. His prayers for you will be more effective since he has renounced his kingship for God. Who knows I may have failed in such an ordeal!'

In loving my Beloved I have become like an ant under the foot of an elephant—safe and secure, but helpless to move.

—Hafiz—quoted by *Meher Baba*

The Ring

Meher Baba himself gave us this story of a king, his ring and his slave Ayaz. It is a beautiful story, and Baba repeated it many times.

The king was a spiritually advanced being; you could call him a saint or a spiritual master. He had a slave Ayaz, and this slave was so perfect a slave that he was even equivalent to his master. So close was he to the master, the king, that in all matters to do with the kingdom he had the final word. The king would ask his ministers for their opinions and then before a decision was made would seek the advice of his slave. The ministers became more and more unhappy about this, until the king decided that they must have an explanation. So one day in court, the king shows his signet ring and points out that ring is used as a seal to all orders and laws of the land. He puts the ring on the table before him, and asks all his ministers and courtiers, 'What is the ring's worth? Tell me what is the ring's value?'

So the ministers and the courtiers express their ideas on its value; even jewelers are called to help in making estimates. After all have had their say, the king turns to Ayaz and asks him the ring's worth. Ayaz says: 'As long as the ring is on the table it is worthless; no sooner is it on the finger of my lord it is priceless.'

After the story, Baba would say: As long as you hold fast to me, you are priceless, even though no one knows your worth; no sooner your hold on me is lost, you are worthless, no matter what your greatness or wealth in the world.

Detachment

Sometimes a person is greatly moved by an unusually strong experience, such as seeing a corpse being carried to the burial ground, or seeing the corpse being buried or burnt. Such experiences are thought-provoking and they initiate long trains of ideas about the futility and emptiness of worldly existence. Under the pressure of such experiences the person realizes that one day he must die and take leave of all the worldly objects so dear to him. But such thoughts, as well as the detachment born thereof, are short-lived. They are soon forgotten and the person resumes his attachment to the world and its alluring objects. The temporary and passing mood of detachment is known as *smashan-vairagya*, because it usually arises in the burial ground and stays in mind only in the presence of the, corpse. Such a mood of detachment is as temporary as it is sudden. It seems to be strong and effective while it lasts, but it is only sustained by the vividness of some experience, and when the experience vanishes, the mood of detachment also quickly flitters away, without seriously affecting the general attitude towards life.

The passing mood of detachment may be illustrated by the story of a person who once saw at the theatre, a spiritual drama about Gopichanda. The drama impressed him so deeply that, disregarding all his duties to his family, he joined a band of *bairagis* (wandering ascetics) belonging to the cult of Gopichanda. Renouncing all his former modes of life he dressed as a *bairagi*, shaved his head and sat under a tree, as advised by the other members of the group.

At first he plunged into deep meditation, but as the heat of the sun grew stronger his enthusiasm for meditation began to cool. As the day went on he began to feel hungry and thirsty and became very restless and miserable. When the members of his family noticed his absence from home they became worried about him. After some searching they found him sitting under the tree in this miserable plight. He had grown haggard and was plainly unhappy. His wife seeing him in this strange condition was furious and rushed to upbraid him. His mood of detachment had flitted away, and as he was thoroughly tired of his new life, he took her approach as a boon from heaven. So, silencing her quickly, he put on his pagri and ordinary clothes and meekly followed her home.

Only Dnyan (Self-knowledge) can make you realize that I am nearer to you than what you are to your own self. Nearest to your vision are your eyes, with which you see everything around you. Yet the eyes, that are instrumental in seeing everything, do not see themselves. You have to hold a mirror before you in order to see your eyes. Thus to see your inner Self you have to hold the mirror of Dnyan before you—and only Baba can give you that mirror.

—*Meher Baba*

The Buddha

There are two stories of the Buddha that I remember very well. They made a deep impression on me. Shall I tell them to you?

It was in the beginning of his ministry. He was sitting in one of the parks, doing nothing, sitting quietly, and while he was doing so, a group of people clustered around him, drawn by the news that he was the Enlightened One. As is natural amongst people, there had already been criticism, rejection, derision of him. They considered him, in short, an impostor. Now as they gathered around the Buddha in the park, they began to voice their criticism, saying: 'he is simply a person seeking fame and name with the masses'; 'he sits silently there trying to impress others'; 'one who is enlightened should give enlightenment and he is doing nothing,' and so on. At first they spoke in whispers and then as Buddha continued to take no notice, they spoke more loudly and their criticism and rejection became stronger. The volume of their voices increased and they began to openly abuse him. They abused and abused and abused until they grew tired, and finally having exhausted themselves, they turned to depart.

Just then the Buddha spoke for the first time: 'Stop awhile, and pay heed. When a friend, a long-lost friend, returns to your midst, you wish to give him presents. But suppose your friend does not accept your gifts, to whom do they belong? What happens to them?' The crowd laughed and said: 'The presents are still ours and we keep them accordingly.'

‘What you have said is correct,’ agreed the Buddha. ‘And so is it with your presents. The words you have used and the expressions you have displayed, I do not accept and I return them to you. You have wasted your breath and energy, and you will now carry them back with you.’

That story made a strong impression. When the abuse, or the filth you could say, that can gush forth from a person is not accepted by the other, then that filth is reflected back to the abuser. So Buddha’s first teaching was, ‘Beware of what you say.’

The second story is this.

During the Buddha’s wanderings with his band of disciples, he would beg for food from householders, and it is related what happened on one occasion when he approached a very wealthy farmer. The farmer came from his house in response to the Buddha’s call for food and looked at the sturdy figures of Buddha and his disciples. He studied them for a time and then said: ‘You have come to beg food at my door, and it is true that I am a very wealthy farmer. My barns are full with grain and my fields are fertile. But do you suppose that the grain just falls from the heavens? I have to labor, to toil for long hours with great difficulty in order to fill my barns, and you come here just spreading your hands and asking that they be filled. Is the fruit of such labor to be thrown away like that? Why don’t you labor in the same way and so earn your livelihood?’

The Buddha quietly answered: ‘Sir, what you say is so true. No man can amass grain or wealth of any form, without use of hands and brains. You are perfectly justified in what you say. But know now my story and how hard I labor. Yes, you labor hard. You plough your fields, sow your seeds, nurture your seedlings, and then harvest your crops, and the cycle is completed within the period of one year or less. Then you store your crops and you become a rich farmer. I on the other hand work even more than yourself, yet I am poor, because the fruits of my sowing are gathered after many, many incarnations. My toiling is far more difficult and laborious than yours. I sow the seed, and I have to wait; I nurture the seed and it takes many incarnations for the seed to grow into a seedling and then to bear fruit. Then with great difficulty I take the fruit and store it in my barns. Your cycle of labor is completed within the year, whereas mine takes many generations and many incarnations.’

So the Buddha gave an inkling of how he looks after his children and how he gives enlightenment to them. His words penetrated the heart of that farmer and he and his whole family became the Buddha’s followers. As Meher Baba said: ‘Words that proceed from the Source of Truth have real meaning,’ and he went on to say: ‘but when men speak these words as their own, the words become meaningless.’

Superstition

The power of superstition may be illustrated by means of a ghost story. Of the different realms of human thought there is perhaps none as abounding in superstitions as that connected with ghosts who, according to popular belief, are supposed to harass and torture their victims in curious ways. Once upon a time, during the Moghul rule in India, a highly educated man, who was very skeptical of the stories about ghosts, made up his mind to verify them from personal experience. He had been warned against visiting a certain graveyard on the night of amavasya (the darkest night of the month), for it was reported to be the habitation of a very dreadful ghost who unfailingly made his appearance whenever an iron nail was hammered into the ground within the limits of the graveyard. With a hammer in one hand and a nail in the other, he walked straight into the graveyard on the night of amavasya and chose a spot bare of grass to drive in a nail. The ground was dark, and his loosely-hanging cloak was equally dark. When he sat on the ground and tried to hammer in the nail, an end of his cloak lay between the nail and the ground and was pinned down. He finished hammering and felt that he was successful with the experiment without encountering the ghost. But, as he tried to rise in order to depart from the spot, he felt a strong pull towards the ground and he became panic-stricken. Owing to the operation of previous impressions, he could not think of anything except the ghost who, he thought, had caught him at last. The shock of the thought was so great that the poor man died of

heart-failure. This story illustrates the tremendous power which sometimes resides in the impressions created by superstition.

Once an inquisitive and doubtful man went to Bayazid (the Perfect Master) and said: 'You, being Perfect, ought to know the thoughts of others. What am I thinking of just now?' Bayazid replied: 'You are thinking that which you ought not to have thought of, and asking that which you ought not to have asked. Had you come with an open mind and curbed tongue, you would have received that which you ought to have received, instead of this well-deserved rebuke.'

—Anecdote told by *Meher Baba*

Tek Chand

Tek Chand, an ardent Baba-lover from Delhi who is in the army, was home recently on a few days' leave and gave a talk at the Delhi Baba-Centre on his experiences during the recent Chinese invasion. These we have gathered as follows from a Baba-lover's letters: Tek Chand who is with the frontier road-building set-up, was deep in the Subansiri division on 9th November together with 700 non-combatants without arms, when the Chinese began encircling them. They received orders to withdraw immediately, leaving everything behind. Panic seized them as they had no food and no arms! Tek Chand instilled hope and courage into his men by assuring them they had nothing to fear because the living God, Avatar Meher Baba, was with them, and so no harm would come to them and they would get back safely. His men were visibly cheered by this, and Tek Chand told them more about Baba. Taking the help of some hill tribesmen Tek Chand with the 700 men trekked back through the jungles. They trekked for seven days and nights, through unfamiliar terrain, without food and without protective clothing, in biting cold and rain and slush—Tek Chand singing bhajans in praise of beloved Baba, with the men joining in and taking Baba's name. They encountered breathtaking hardships on the way. Some of the men had to swim across the turbulent waters of a river when the temporary bridge gave way under their weight, but they managed to get across safely. Others, overcome with hunger, ate D.D.T. that they found at an abandoned post, mistaking it for flour! How-

ever, they were violently sick and brought up the poison, and their brothers helped them to carry on. Through it all, there was the constant fear of being spied by the Chinese. At last the incredible journey was over and the men returned to their post in Assam, famished and looking terribly emaciated in their tattered clothes, but without a single casualty. In fact not one of them suffered frost-bite or any lung infection despite hopelessly inadequate protection from the cruel cold. Thus did Tek Chand return from the frontier, instrumental in bringing back his 700 men to safety through Baba's Love.

In another crowded gathering during the same stay, there was a mother having trouble with two boisterous children. No one supposed that Meher Baba had even noticed her, occupied as he was with receiving a long line of visitors and being garlanded. But when the woman finally reached Baba, he asked: 'Do these kids trouble you?'

'Yes Baba, indeed they do!' she answered feelingly. 'If only two children can make your life a hell,' Baba asked her, 'can you imagine my plight who has billions of children?'

—*Manija S. Irani*
(from a letter 1965)

The True Disciple

Swami Ramdas had many disciples, but his favorite was Kalyan. Other disciples did not quite understand why Kalyan should be dearer to the Master than the others. Once Swami Ramdas tested the devotion of his disciples. He asked them all to come to him and pretended to be so sick as to be on the point

of death. He had placed a mango on the joint of his knee and bound it up by means of a bandage so that it looked like a huge swelling. Swami Ramdas pointed to this swelling and told the disciples that it was a malignant tumor and that there was no chance of his living unless someone sucked the poison from the joint of his knee. At the same time he made it clear to all that whoever sucked out the poison would die instantaneously. Then he asked whether any disciple was prepared to suck out the poison from the swelling at the cost of life. All the disciples hesitated except Kalyan who arose immediately and began to suck from the swelling. To his surprise Kalyan found sweet mango juice and not poison and Swami Ramdas praised his unswerving faith and self-denying love. To be willing to die for the happiness of the Beloved is true love. Such implicit faith, unfaltering love and undivided loyalty as that of Kalyan can come to the disciple only through the grace of the Master.

The Priest

You remind me of the time Meher Baba asked me to find a priest who would bless him. What a priest he must be—to bless the Lord!

You know, we witnessed many, many facets of Baba's ministry through being by his side, but we never gave thought to whatever he wanted done. It seems that that is why we were by his side: if we had given thought to why this or why that, we would have been thrown out. But now we can narrate these anecdotes and give delight to the heart.

So, at this time, we were passing through Aurangabad and Baba said to me: 'Can you find a priest who will bless me?' 'Well, Baba,' I said, 'I will try.'

We went in search, Baba with us, in a tonga. He told me that the priest should be a venerable-looking person, one that the heart should immediately feel was worthy to give a blessing. I noted and accepted what Baba conveyed, and said: 'All right. Nothing is impossible.' If we found such a priest, well and good; and if we did not, well and good. Our duty was simply to carry out this search.

So in right earnest we went from church to church, from quarters to quarters, to many places. We saw many priests, but not once did the heart say, 'this is the man'. After some time, the tonga driver became curious about our movements and asked what we were in search of. 'We are in search of very old, venerable priests,' we told him.

'Is that so,' the driver said. 'There is a special bungalow for old priests. They live there in retirement. Why didn't you tell me? I would have taken you to it in the beginning.'

Well, we went there, and leaving Baba as usual in the tonga, I went up the steps of the bungalow, and on the verandah an aged priest came towards me. He was short, dressed in a robe, and from his pronunciation it was obvious he was continental, perhaps French or Italian. He said: 'Yes, my son, what do you want?' Immediately my heart said, that this was the one we were seeking. So I said: 'Father, will you give blessings to my elder brother?'

'Yes. Where is he?'

'He is waiting outside in the tonga.'

'Bring him inside,' said the priest.

I turned round to descend the stairs, and what did I find? For the first time since we began the search, Baba himself had got down from the tonga and come to the bungalow. I said, 'Here is my brother.'

Baba came up the stairs, knelt before the priest and the priest blessed him. Through me, Baba said: 'Thank you, Father,' and began to leave. The priest turned to me: 'Son, do you wish for my blessings?' 'No, Father,' I answered. Then we left.

That is the story. Such an incident happened only once.

By serving the abandoned you are serving Jesus the Christ because He too was abandoned by all, even by His own apostles. The emblem of abandonment is the Cross. Hence, to serve the abandoned is to serve the Christ—and I am He, undoubtedly.

—*Meher Baba*

Story of a Deer

There is a beautiful story of a *kasturi-mriga* (a deer whose navel yields musk) which brings out the nature of all spiritual *sadhana* (discipline). Once, while roaming about and frolicking among hills and dales, the *kasturi-mriga* was suddenly aware of an exquisitely beautiful scent, the like of which it had never known. The scent stirred the inner depths of its soul so profoundly that it determined to find its source. So keen was its longing that notwithstanding the severity of cold or the intensity of scorching heat, by day as well as by night, it carried on its desperate search for the source of the sweet scent. It knew no fear or hesitation but undaunted went on its elusive search until, at last, happening to lose its foothold on a cliff, it had a precipitous fall resulting in a fatal injury. While breathing its last the deer found that the scent which had ravished its heart and inspired all these efforts came from its own navel. This last moment of the deer's life was its happiest, and there was on its face inexpressible peace.

All spiritual *sadhana* of the aspirant is like the efforts of the *kasturi-mriga*. The final fructification of *sadhana* involves the termination of the ego-life of the aspirant. At that moment there is the realization that he himself has, in a sense, been the object of all his search and endeavor, that all that he suffered and enjoyed—all his risks and adventures, all his sacrifices and desperate strivings—were intended for having true Self-knowledge in which he loses his limited individuality, only to discover that he is really identical with God Who is in everything.

Humility

There lived a saint Syed Hasan Rasul-mema who was well-known as an adept in giving spiritual aspirants a vision of the Prophet Mohammed. His wife once requested him to give her, too, such a vision. The saint agreed and asked her to prepare herself by bathing and adorning herself with beautiful garments and jewelry as befitting a bridal occasion. The wife was delighted and busied herself accordingly.

In the meanwhile, her brother came to the house and the saint said to him: 'Go and see what your sister is doing. Is it befitting her age that she occupies herself thus? I have become old now and indifferent to such enticements. Is she thinking of marrying again?'

The brother was shocked to find his sister in fact dressed like a bride and taunted her: 'Are you in your proper senses? What is the meaning of making yourself up as a bride at your age? You must be surely mad. Or perhaps your husband is right and you are thinking of a second marriage.'

The saint's wife crumpled up completely at being made to look such a fool, and in a fit of anger and intense disappointment, she shattered her bangles, tore her clothes and burst into uncontrollable tears and wails. After a time, she became exhausted and fell into sleep, and in that sleep she had a vision of the Prophet Mohammed.

She woke very cheerful and happy, and told her husband of the experience. But she asked him why he had treated her as he did. He replied: 'You had pride in your heart. You never really believed that I was capable of giving to anyone a vision of the

Prophet. In the situation I created, you were humiliated, and as soon as that occurred, the vision was granted. In the same way the aspirant never achieves the Goal as long as the ego is active within him in any form.'

During a qavali singing program, Meher Baba would explain to us some lines from the ghazals. One of them was: The lover says to the Beloved; 'I experience the parched desert of separation as an ocean of water, for I have grown so much in love that I quench my thirst by thirst itself!' Another line was; 'Only those eyes which have intense longing for a sight of the Beloved, can have some inkling of the secret of that intoxication which the Beloved's eyes impart.' Baba then said: 'See the irony of it. In spite of the prevailing law of prohibition in the country, there are many people who continue to drink. Now, where the "wine" of Divine Love is concerned, there is no prohibition. It is abundant and free for any and all who may wish to have it, and yet there is rarely a one who wants to drink it or craves for it—that is the humor of it!'

—*Manija S. Irani*
(from a letter 1963)

Faith

The Master uses maya (ignorance) to take the disciple out of maya, and as he is himself beyond good and evil he may often require things which are unacceptable and even shocking to the ordinary good sense of his disciples. The best thing for the disciple to do is to follow the instructions of the Master with implicit faith, without bringing them to the bar of his

limited capacity of judgment. The following famous instances illustrate this point.

There is the Koranic story of Abraham being called upon to sacrifice his beloved son Ismael to the Lord. When Abraham, firm in his resolve and faith was about to slaughter his son and Abraham's knife was already pointing at his throat, Ismael was miraculously saved by being replaced by a goat.

Shams-e-Tabriz ordered Maulana Rumi, his disciple, to fetch wine for him from a pub, which he unflinchingly complied with in order to please and win the grace of his Master. At the time Maulana commanded a large following of Muslim divines on account of his reputation as a great theologian of the Islamic world, and wine is religiously prohibited (Haram) to the Muslims. Hence it was a crucial test for Maulana to carry a jar of wine on his shoulders through the streets, but he did it.

Ghousali Shah was asked by one of his Masters, who lived in a hut by the side of the river Ganges, to get a vessel full of water only from mid-stream, for drinking. It was about midnight and the river Ganges was in heavy flood because of the monsoon. The disciple hesitated at first but finally gathered courage to

attempt the impossible, believing in the omniscience of the Master. No sooner had he stepped into the angry waters of the Ganges than he witnessed a wonderful transformation of the scene. Instead of the surging waves and the floods, the river turned into a thin stream and the vessel to be filled almost touched the river bed. The disciple nearly crossed the river to the opposite bank in search of the mid-stream. While thus occupied, the Master appeared on the scene and asked him the reason for his delay. When Ghousali explained that the mid-current could not be located, the Master allowed him to fill the vessel by handfuls and himself helped in the process. The Master then left the disciple on some pretext, asking him to follow immediately after filling the vessel. When Ghousali Shah returned to the hut with the vessel full of water, he was bewildered to learn from other disciples that the Master had never left the hut for a minute during his absence, but was talking to them all the while about him.

These stories show how the Master may use his occult powers on rare occasions.

All talk about the Path and the Goal is as a lantern carried by a blind man! A blind man needs a staff in his hand; the seeker needs his hand in God-Man's.

—*Meher Baba*

Knowledge

Narad was a disciple of Lord Krishna. He was a dedicated disciple, and he lived with Krishna for many, many years. But then one day Narad had the feeling that, despite these many years in close association with the Lord, he had remained just as he had been and that there was no intrinsic change in him. He became very sad, felt that he had lost his youth, his manhood and much of his life and that he had not achieved anything by being with the Lord. He was depressed and miserable. He lost his normal cheerful mood and so finally Krishna enquired: 'Narad, what is the matter with you? What has happened all of a sudden?' Narad answered: 'Nothing has happened to me. But I feel myself unworthy of being by your side.'

Why do you say that?'

'Well, I find myself the same as when I first joined you.'

'You do not realize,' Krishna replied, 'how blessed you are by being near me.'

'It is your pleasure to say that,' said Narad. 'But I know who I am.'

Then Krishna said: 'I know you more than you know yourself, and you are really blessed. You are indeed blessed, and not only yourself, but all who live by my side.' And the Lord continued: 'Look, I will give you proof of how blessed you are. Tomorrow, go to the grove of mango trees near the well some miles from the ashram. Go there and you will get proof.'

So Narad of course obeyed, because the most

important thing to do, living by the side of the God-Man, is to obey him. He went there the next day, and walked through the grove of trees hither and thither, looking around him and not knowing what form the proof would take. He thought he might hear a voice, or that angels might appear. He waited and waited. As he waited, his eyes became focused on a particularly large heap of shit amongst the many piles scattered around the grove—and suddenly from that pile emerged a worm. It seemed to him that the worm and he looked at each other, and no sooner did that happen than the worm collapsed and died. But he dismissed the incident as childish imagination. After a long time and still no sign, no proof, Narad returned to the ashram.

Krishna did not ask Narad what had happened. He acted as though he had forgotten the matter. But after quite some time, suddenly, he asked Narad: ‘Did you find proof when I sent you to the grove of trees?’ ‘No, my Lord, there was nothing to be seen or heard.’ And Krishna said: ‘You saw nothing? No proof whatsoever? Did you see anything at all?’ Narad in his dejection just said: ‘Nothing but shit!’ Krishna smiled: ‘No, that cannot be. You are really blessed.’ He continued: ‘Now, do one thing. Do you remember our visit to a certain orchard and a big mango tree there that I sat under? There is a hollow in that tree, and from that hollow you will get the sign. I will definitely give you proof of who you are, what has become of you by being near me.’ Narad went there the following morning, found the mango tree and stood watching the hollow in the tree-trunk. There was nothing, no sign, nothing. After some time he heard the approach of birds and a

small parakeet landed near the hollow. Narad looked at the bird and no sooner did he do so than the bird fell dead. 'Oh!' said Narad. 'This is the great humor of the Lord. I recall now how I looked at the worm and it died. He has given me the sign of my unworthiness, that even these creatures on whom my sight falls die.' He was completely dejected. But Krishna, when Narad returned, acted as though nothing had happened. Krishna appeared to have forgotten the whole matter.

Time passed by. Then one day Krishna said: 'Narad, you should not feel dejected. I tell you, you are most blessed to be here by my side. You are very worthy, very blessed.' But Narad answered: 'My Lord, I received the proof of how unworthy I am of being near you.' 'No,' said Krishna, 'You are mistaken.'

Again there was silence on the subject, and again time passed. At this time, a king from a neighboring kingdom came to Krishna for his blessings. He told Krishna of his marriage and of the birth of a son and begged Krishna to come to his palace and bless the child. But Krishna said that it was not possible for him to come, so occupied was he with his work, and instead he would send one of his disciples. Narad was very apprehensive on hearing this, lest Krishna should ask him to go. What will happen, thought Narad, if I am selected and my eye meets the child's and the child dies? But perhaps this is the Lord's way of getting rid of me because of my unworthiness: I will be held responsible for the death and my life will be taken.

Indeed Krishna did select Narad as his representative. So Narad went with the king, and he was treated

with great respect and honor because he was the representative of the Lord Himself. The day after his arrival at the palace Narad was taken to the bedchamber of the queen to see and bless the child. But he was determined not to look at the child, and he turned his head aside, muttered the words Krishna had given him to say, and so half-heartedly discharged his duty.

All were present in the bedchamber—the king,, the queen lying in bed, and the prince in a cradle,—and as Narad finished his blessings, he heard a voice: ‘Narad, why are you so upset with me? What makes you turn your gaze from mine? Please look at me. Narad, how blessed you are! Do you remember the day I was a worm, your gaze fell on me and I became a parrot. How blessed you are to have close company with the God-Man! No sooner your sight fell on me as a parrot, I died and became a prince. If ever you see me again, let your gaze be upon me, so that I may die and become one with the Lord. Oh, Narad, do it!’

Narad was now ashamed of his attitude towards Krishna, and bowing in humility begged to be allowed to depart. When he came again to the ashram, Krishna of course acted as though he knew nothing, and asked Narad about his journey and all that had happened. When Narad had given the report, Krishna said: ‘Didn’t I tell you? Do you remember? I told you how blessed you were and you felt so dejected and unhappy and miserable. But how could you know? Had you known, you would be useless to me. Had you known who you were, you would be useless to me in my work. You all are my instruments. How blessed you all are to be by my side.’

The Way of a Master

The Master has his own way of dealing with an advanced aspirant and he can bring him round to any unpalatable move.

This is very well illustrated in the story of a famous wali named Ganjay Shakkar (Baba Fariduddin). Much before he could get illumination this wali could not close his eyes, which were always open, dazed and glassy; and he could not eat as he was in Hairat and completely enchanted in that state. His Master, the Khwaja of Ajmer, wanted him to keep away from this state of enchantment and come down, but he found it difficult to obey his Master. Then the Master turned the key and brought him round in the following manner. He inwardly inspired five thieves to come near the place of this wali. They sat within five paces of this wali and began to share the plunder which they had stolen. Soon they began quarrelling with each other and two of them killed the other three. These two, who were successful in the quarrel, divided the loot between them and ran away. But while running away they passed by the place where the wali was sitting. As soon as they came near the wali he regained normal consciousness. The proximity of these criminals was sufficient crude stimulus to bring him down to consciousness. The first thing that he saw was some sparrows and his first impulse was to try his nascent powers on them. He said, 'O sparrows, die,' and the sparrows fell down dead. Then he said, 'Sparrows, rise up,' and they rose. The two thieves who saw this were amazed and they requested the wali to raise the three thieves

whom they had killed in a moment of anger. On this the wali addressed himself to the three dead thieves and said, 'Rise up,' but they did not rise. He was aghast at the thought that he had lost his powers, and repenting for the frivolous use of his powers, he went crying to his Master. When he came near the Master he saw that those three thieves were massaging the feet of his Master. The wali then went back to his original place, indifferent to food or drink. He became lean and remained stationed in the same spot for ten years until white ants began to eat up his body. People used to come to the wali and place near his body large quantities of sugar which the ants ate. Since his body was always surrounded by heaps of sugar he came to be known as Ganjay Shakkar, or the treasury of sugar. His story shows how even the most advanced aspirants need the help of the Master if they are to proceed further on the way to realization.

To be with a Perfect Master for one moment is equal to a hundred years of sincere prayer with all one's heart and soul.

—Hafiz—quoted by *Meher Baba*

A Good Trick

This story happened just after the partition of India and Pakistan. The partition itself was bloodless, but after it, there was tremendous slaughter on both sides with Mohammedans killing Hindus and Hindus killing Mohammedans. But Meher Baba continued his work, whether it was world war or racial riots and killings. He would take us from one place to another, with the women disciples and mountains of luggage and paraphernalia. Those were the days when people would not budge from their houses; yet Baba would have the whole family, as it were, with him and ask us to locate houses for three, four or five days to stay in as if everything was normal. Those were the days when trains were loaded with corpses; they were picked up from the rail tracks, thrown into compartments and taken, en masse, for burial or burning. The people knew no God, no saint, no compassion, there was but a fury in their heads—and yet they respected the dead bodies.

Well, we knew of this respect, it was one of the tricks of journeying, and if we were able to get seats in a compartment where there were corpses, then we might have a comfortable journey.

One day we were lucky enough to get a very tiny compartment next to the engine. We were happy. Baba was with us, and there were six or seven of us. And we chatted and whiled away our time between stations. For some time, no new passengers approached our compartment, situated as it was right at the beginning of the train. Baba would have us watch the influx of passengers at each station.

‘How is the crowd on the station? Are they coming towards us?’ ‘No, Baba.’ ‘Very good,’ Baba would say. But then in time the train became full, and the people started seeking room towards our compartment. We said, ‘Baba, now is the time we should roll up our bedding and prepare ourselves for the rush.’ But Baba said, ‘Don’t worry, I will lie down like this.’ And Baba pulled a white sheet over himself and lay down full-length, just like a corpse. We remained seated. When the people came, and saw that, they went away again. The train started, and then Baba sat up and said, ‘That was a good trick!’

I enjoy games, chiefly cricket, playing marbles, flying kites and also listening to music, although I can do so only on rare occasions. From time immemorial, I have been playing with the Mayavic universe and this enjoyment of playing still persists. I sometimes see motion pictures (mostly humorous ones), and enjoy my real state of being the eternal Producer of the vast, ever-changing, never-ending film called the universe. I also find relaxation in listening to humorous stories, all the time being aware of the humor that lies in the aspect of the soul, which is the source of infinite power and glory, being made to feel so helpless in its human bondage of ignorance arising from its various forms of duality. . . .

—*Meher Baba*

Kingship

Once Sultan Mahmud of Gazia was on a visit to Khargan to see the famous saint Hazrat Abul Hasan Khargani. He sent a message to the saint saying that he had come all the way from Gazia and it was but proper that the saint should come out of his hermitage some distance to receive him. In case of refusal by the saint the messenger was instructed to quote the Koranic injunction: 'Obedience to God, obedience to the Prophet and obedience to the ruler amongst them.'

In reply to the king's message the saint excused himself saying: 'I am so much absorbed and drowned in the state of "Obedience to God" that I am ashamed of my lapse in the matter of "Obedience to the Prophet." I have therefore completely forgotten where the sultan comes into the picture.'

With this disconcerting reply the sultan decided on a subterfuge to test the saint. He made one of his slaves take his place as the sultan, and he became a slave. But on arrival at the saint's ashram, the saint treated the royal retinue with scant respect with no formalities befitting the occasion, nor any recognition of either the false or the real sultan. The king, admitting defeat, very humbly offered a bag of gold as a token of his reverence for the saint. But the saint gave the king a piece of dry bread to eat and when the king had difficulty swallowing it, said: 'Just as this dry, stale bread is unpalatable to you, so is your gold unpalatable to me. I have divorced it from my life long, long ago. Please take it away.'

When the king was about to depart, the saint

stood up to bid him goodbye. Seeing this the king was puzzled and asked why the same thing had not occurred when he arrived, and the saint replied: 'When you came, you were full of pride and conscious only of your kingship, and you sought to test me. Now you are quieter, more humble and self-effacing, and I pay heed to such desirable qualities of the spiritual path. My rising from my seat is not in recognition of your kingship, but in tribute to the tinge of spirituality which you now carry with you.'

God does not listen to the language of the tongue and its japs, mantras, devotional songs and so on. He does not listen to the language of the mind and its routine meditations, concentrations and thoughts about God. He only listens to the language of the heart and its message of love, which needs no ceremony or show, only silent devotion for the Beloved.

—*Meher Baba*

Anecdotes from the Life of the Prophet Mohammed

The Prophet Mohammed was sitting with his disciples when an old woman came to him with salutations and said, 'Oh Apostle of God, I pray that you intercede for me with God, that my sins may be forgiven and I may be admitted into Paradise.' The Prophet looked at her: 'Do you not know that old women are not admitted into Paradise?'

At that the old woman began to cry and lament, and then the Lord added with a smile, 'Because old women are first changed, into young maidens.'

It so happened that a woman came to see the Prophet Mohammed, and he asked her the name of her husband. She replied so and so.

'Oh! the man with the whiteness in his eyes!' said the Prophet as a joke.

'Oh no, my husband has no such defect,' replied the woman.

'But he has,' said Mohammed.

So the woman, on returning home, began to look long and searchingly into the eyes of her husband, and he asked the reason. 'The Prophet has said there is a whiteness in your eyes.'

The husband laughed and said, 'It is the truth. See, the white portion of my eyes even occupies a larger sphere than the black portion.'

It is said that the Prophet Mohammed was approached by a man with a request to be provided with an animal to ride on. 'My legs are very weak,' said the man, 'and I am unable to walk much.'

The Prophet replied that he would give the man the offspring of a camel.

'Oh Apostle of God!' said the man, 'how can the young one of a camel bear the load of a big man like me? Please give me one of the camels that I see before me.'

'And is not each of them the offspring of a camel?' said the Prophet with a smile.

Resting one day under a palm tree Mohammed suddenly found an enemy named Duthur standing over him with a drawn sword.

'O Mohammed, who is there now to save you?' cried the man.

'God,' answered Mohammed.

Duthur dropped his sword. Mohammed seized it, and cried in turn: 'O Duthur, who is there now to save you?'

'No one,' replied Duthur.

'Then learn from me to be merciful,' said Mohammed, and handed him back the weapon. Duthur became one of his firmest lovers.

The Touch of Love

Meher Baba arrived by car at Eluru (Andhra Pradesh, India) on February 22nd, 1954 at 11 p.m. His host in that town had made all arrangements for the accommodation of Baba and his disciples, and the people had been informed (through the press and the distribution of handbills containing a photo of Baba) of his presence and of his willingness to see visitors. One of the handbills was seen by a 4-year-old boy whilst returning home from school on the afternoon of the 23rd, and he asked his parents to please take him to see Baba. However, they were a strictly orthodox Brahmin family, and the parents were not at all interested in visiting one whom they thought to be a Parsi saint. They tried at first to distract the child, but he persisted, and the father then caned him in exasperation. The child, continued in his quest and next refused to have dinner unless the father relented and took him to see Baba. So of course the boy then went to bed hungry, crying his heart out with his handbill tucked under his pillow.

The next morning, still heartbroken, he went to school. He now despaired of seeing Baba but continued longing to do so. On that day, the 24th, Meher Baba's program was to visit certain schools and organizations, and the homes of Baba followers. As he was thus travelling, Baba suddenly altered the arranged schedule and ordered the car to stop at the boy's school. Baba walked from the car straight into the classroom where the boy was sitting. The child looked for a moment in wonder at Baba standing there—and then rushed to fling himself into Baba's waiting

arms. Before the teacher and the other students realized what was happening, Meher Baba had picked up the little boy and folded him in his warm embrace. The boy dissolved in tears of joy and Baba then left the school.

When the boy returned home that afternoon and told with wide-eyed joy what had happened, the father was touched with Baba's love for the child. That evening the whole family went to the house where Baba was staying, had Baba's darshan, and the father asked that Baba forgive him.

To penetrate into the essence of all being and significance, and to release the fragrance of that inner attainment for the guidance and benefit of others, by expressing in the world of forms, truth, love, purity and beauty—this is the sole game which has any intrinsic and absolute worth. All other happenings, incidents and attainments in themselves can have no lasting importance.

—*Meher Baba*

Meditation

A story of Baso and his Master Nangsku Yejo (Nan Yusa Huaijang, 677-714).

When at Demboin as a spiritual aspirant, Baso used to sit cross-legged all day and meditate. His Master saw him and asked, 'What do you seek sitting cross-legged like this?'

Baso answered, 'My desire is to become a Buddha (enlightened one).'

Thereupon the Master Nangsku Yejo took up a piece of brick and began to polish it hard on the stone nearby.

'What work are you doing, Oh Master?' asked Baso.

'I am trying to turn this into a mirror.'

'No amount of polishing will make a brick into a mirror, Master.'

'Likewise no amount of sitting cross-legged as you are doing will make you a Buddha,' said the Master. 'What shall I have to do then?'

'It is like driving a cart; when it does not move will you whip the cart or the ox?'

Baso made no answer.

The Master continued, 'Do you practice thus sitting cross-legged in order to attain dnyana (knowledge) or to attain Buddhahood? If it is dnyana, dnyana does not consist in sitting or lying. If it is Buddhahood, the Buddha has no fixed forms, as he has no abiding place anywhere. No one can take hold of him, nor can he be let go. If you seek Buddhahood by sitting cross-legged, you murder him. So long as you do not free yourself from sitting so, you will never come to the Truth.'

Steps of the Journey

During one of Meher Baba's journeys through India, he travelled by car from Masulipatnam to Eluru via Gudivada. His car was followed by a bus full of disciples and a truck with the luggage. In the middle of Gudivada were cross-roads, and on reaching these, Baba suddenly asked that the convoy stop. The stop was unscheduled and no one had any idea of the reason for it. But after a wait of about 15 minutes, a party of men, women and children were sighted walking towards them.

They were poor villagers who had heard of Meher Baba as the Avatar, and they had planned to be at the cross-roads in order to have at least a glimpse of Baba as he passed. They had come a distance of some miles and were overjoyed to find Baba waiting there. And when they learnt that Baba had even waited 15 minutes for them to arrive, their tears of love for the compassionate one flowed more than ever.

At the cross-roads was a small stall selling aerated drinks. Baba asked one of the disciples to enquire if the stall-owner had drinks for eighty people, and the owner replied that he may have just that number. Baba then asked that the drinks be distributed to everyone.

The stall-owner was intrigued by Meher Baba and asked a disciple: 'Who is this man who commands so much love and respect from so many?' The disciple replied: 'He is Rama come back as Meher Baba.' And the owner set to with a will in distributing the drinks and praying that there would be sufficient for this one who had captured his heart even in a

moment. As the bottles were opened and brought to Baba, Baba himself distributed them to each of the villagers. Finally everyone in the entire party was served, and there was not a single bottle left in the stall. It was a time of great joy for all including the stall-owner; and when Baba asked a disciple to pay for the drinks, the payment was refused. The owner said that it was his good fortune to serve the God-Man, the Avatar, and that was sufficient. But the vendor was a poor man, and Baba insisted that he should be paid the money; and the vendor insisted in turn that he would not accept. Finally Baba gave him the money, saying: 'This is not payment but my *prasad* (gift) to you.' Then the vendor accepted the money with love and joy.

Soon after this the convoy proceeded on the journey to Eluru. And in the years that followed the stall-owner became a well-to-do person.

A mast [God-intoxicated man] was brought to Meher Baba's house, and when he reached the gate, said, 'We have come to the garden of Paradise.' Baba came out of the house and he gazed at Baba's face, laughed with tears of joy in his eyes, and embraced Baba. Pointing to Baba, he then said to those standing by, 'Look at this man's face and forehead. They shine as if the sun were there; can't you recognize who he is?'

—*Dr. William Donkin*
(from *The Wayfarers*)

Ayaz and the Diamond

In real spiritual service the disciple has to be prepared for all eventualities. In his work for God he must learn to adjust himself to all types of circumstances, favorable or otherwise. Others may pay no heed to him or may treat him with contempt or slander, but that should not mar his understanding or sincerity. He should remain unmoved by all this and resist the onslaught of worldly opposition with true humility. When met with aggression he should be like the football that is kicked, for the very kicking raises it aloft and propels it onward till the goal is reached.

For the disciple, failure lies in betraying the Truth, not in accepting worldly abuse. Unwavering loyalty to the Truth of his search leads him on to the higher sphere of the unlimited divine life of real fulfilment. True humility is strength, not weakness. It disarms antagonism and ultimately conquers it. It must and always will prevail against ignorant pride. The disciple prepares himself through unassuming humility and untiring adaptability without being disgruntled under the severest of ordeals.

The Master may test the faith and surrender of his disciple through ordeals and trials which only the true lovers can face. This may be brought out by means of the story of Sultan Mahmud. All the courtiers of the durbar pretended that their obedience to the shah was unquestioning. They made much ado about their assumed loyalty. But the shah knew better. He alone knew that only one in his court had truly unswerving faith in him. This man was Ayaz,

one of his slaves. To bring this home to his courtiers, the shah devised a test. He called all those claiming to have faith in him to his durbar. Placing the most precious diamond from his crown on the table, he asked first his vizier to break it into pieces. The vizier knew how the diamond had been won through many wars; he had participated in them. He argued that it would be unwise to break the pride of the entire kingdom, since the very prestige of the royal dynasty depended on possession of that diamond. Then the shah asked other courtiers to break the diamond. But all of them refused and argued that such an act would completely undo the sacrifice of the many people killed in securing it for the kingdom. The shah then asked Ayaz to break it. Without any argument or hesitation, Ayaz broke that most precious diamond which was coveted by all the other kings of the world.

The courtiers were angered at his rashness. They asked Ayaz why, instead of giving wise counsel to the sultan, he had rushed into that foolish deed. Ayaz then, with all humility, replied: 'It is not for me to question why, when an order is given by the shah himself. He must have very sound reasons for asking us to break this diamond. It would be sheer impudence on my part to ask him to explain the reasons. However, I frankly think that whatever has been done here today is for the real good and happiness of the people of our kingdom. The precious diamond, coveted by all the neighboring kingdoms, was sure to invite invasions, thus breaking the peace of the land. I would any day shatter a precious stone if it meant preserving the peace of our beloved land.'

The shah thus demonstrated why he loved Ayaz

more even than himself, saying, 'I cannot escape being a slave of my own slave. He has complete faith in me; and his surrender is unaffected by any other considerations.'

What the shah said about Ayaz is applicable to the Master and his disciple. When the faith and surrender of a disciple are complete, the Master has to do his duty towards him. He cannot escape it, even if the disciple is spiritually unprepared.

Do not get disheartened or alarmed when adversity, calamity or misfortunes pour upon you. Thank God, for He has thereby given you the opportunity of acquiring forbearance and fortitude. One who has acquired the power of bearing with adversity can easily enter upon the Spiritual Path.

—*Meher Baba*

*A Car Accident**

On our way to Poona from Satara we passed by the spot of the accident—it was incredible to visualize such a bad accident at such a place! There seemed to be no outward excuse whatever for the accident. The road was good, the ‘ditch’ not more than a foot deep of sloping ground, the stone culverts were very low, the car had been in good order, the driver was our experienced and cautious Eruch, the speed under forty miles an hour, the road was clear with no obstruction of any kind (pedestrians, animals, hens or other such constant life on Indian roads); there was no puncture or skidding and it happened, as Vishnu and Eruch said, in the twinkling of an eye. Eruch later said that the driving wheel seemed suddenly and inexplicably to stop coordinating and the car swerved straight towards the culvert and that is all he remembers till he came to.

By the way, it happened just opposite the grounds under the mango trees where Baba and a number of close disciples (some of them called expressly from Bombay, Poona, Ahmednagar etc., for the occasion) had played cricket a short time before Baba left for the West in July '56. This was most unexpected as Baba was in seclusion, but it was his express wish; and the day and time and spot were chosen accordingly. Meherjee tells us the game was played unusually seriously (for a game with Baba) leaving the players

* On Sunday, the 2nd of December 1956 Meher Baba and his disciples Eruch, Pendu, Vishnu and Nilu were involved in a car accident. All were injured and Nilu died of his injuries without regaining consciousness.

with stiff and aching muscles for days. There were ten players on each side, and Baba (the 11th) played on both sides—the score was equal. After that, every time Baba passed the spot he would point it out and ask the others if they remembered how they had played cricket there. That again happened on the 2nd of December as they were returning from Poona, and it was the last thing they were talking about before the accident occurred.

Vishnu had face injuries and a broken rib, and was the least hurt of the lot. He says the whole thing happened in the flash of an eye, and when he came to, he found himself the only one in the back of the car. He sat down and went to the front to see how Baba was and saw him reclining in the front scat, with blood on his clothes and face. Vishnu told us, ‘through it I saw Baba and never in my life have I seen such utter radiance and luster as was on Baba’s face then! He was like a King, a victorious King who had won a great battle. Lord Krishna must have looked like that in His chariot on the victorious battlefield. The radiance was blinding. I could see nothing else, not the car nor the surroundings, only Baba’s face in glorious triumph.’ After some moments (or eternity) of that, he came to earth and asked Baba if he was much hurt. Baba nodded, pointing to his mouth and leg, but gestured to Vishnu to first see how the others were (the three had been thrown out). Nilu was unconscious, Pendu in agony, and Eruch managed with super-human effort to stand up and lean against the car and talk to Baba. Then a car came along, and brought Baba and Vishnu to Grafton. Soon after, an open truck going by brought the others to Rosewood. Before they were

taken to hospital Baba's permission was obtained about their being allowed to drink water etc., as on that day the men were on a complete fast. . .

During the drive to Satara, Baba had changed places with Nilu and only about 15 minutes before the accident Baba changed places again, sitting once more in his original seat by Eruch. We remember Nilu remarking more than once, that when it was his turn to die he would want it to be instantaneous and Baba would tease him about it but smilingly nod. So it was as Nilu wanted it, and in the company of his Beloved.

Some days before the accident, Baba smilingly told the mandali, 'We may all die in a few days.' Then turning to Nilu, he said: 'Don't worry about anything. Keep thinking of me constantly. I am the only One that exists, the only One that matters.'

Ordinary man suffers for himself, Masters suffer for humanity, whereas the Avatar suffers for one and all beings and things.

—*Meher Baba*

The Prophecy of Baghdad

Hazrat Najmuddin Kubra, the Master of the time, had a favorite disciple who also happened to be the spiritual guide to the Caliph of Baghdad. This disciple, while lecturing to a gathering, used the simile of a hen hatching eggs, in order to explain the spiritual relationship between a Master and his disciple. He said: 'A spiritual Master looks after the spiritual well-being of all types of disciples under his care, similar to a hen hatching a variety of eggs. Once hatched the different varieties of eggs will show the different characteristics inherent in them. The canary birds will fly in the air, the hen chickens will scramble about on land, and the ducklings will naturally take to swimming in water. I too am a spiritual duckling swimming everlastingly on the ocean of divinity.'

Someone reported the lecture to Hazrat Najmuddin and said: 'Your disciple compared you—a Master—to a hatching hen.' The Master replied: 'My disciple surely has been very indiscreet in the choice of a simile; he shall pay for it by being drowned in water.'

Being as he was the spiritual tutor to the Caliph of Baghdad, the disciple had free access at all times to the palace of the king. One day on a visit to the palace the disciple learned that the caliph was away and might return after a while. He decided to wait for him, and in the meantime strolled into the king's bedchamber and made himself comfortable on the bed. The extraordinary comfort of the royal bed soon sent the disciple into a sweet slumber.

The favorite wife of the caliph happened to enter the bedchamber for an afternoon nap and mistaking the occupant of the bed for the king himself, laid herself down quietly by his side.

A little later the caliph returned and was enraged to find the two in such an incriminating situation. He decided on vengeance for the misuse of his faith and trust in the disciple, and ordered his courtiers to take the disciple—his spiritual guide—for an outing in a river-boat and to drown him in mid-stream. The royal orders were carried out and the innocent disciple met his watery death, true to the prophecy of his Master Hazrat Najmuddin.

But later when the queen was tackled on the subject she confessed her unhappy mistake and vouched for the innocence of the disciple. At this the caliph was greatly distressed, and repenting his hasty action he approached Hazrat Najmuddin and laying before him a large sum of money and a sword, said: 'Here is the blood-money for the unmerited murder of your disciple or my head instead, whichever you please.'

Hazrat Najmuddin was in a state of jalal (divine glory) at the time. He gave vent to his wrath saying: 'Do you think my disciple's life was so cheap as to be exchanged for gold or your head? No, his murder can only be avenged by my head first, then your head, then the heads of all the notables, sages and saints of the time!' These names he began to recount one after another, until he named even Fariduddin Attar, the spiritual charginan of Baghdad. When Hazrat Najmuddin had uttered only the first syllable (Bagh) of the word Baghdad a disciple close, by interrupted him by patting his hand across his mouth

saying: 'Please do not destroy Baghdad, the city of our revered saints.'

In the course of time every word of this prophecy came true. Genghis Khan, the Mongolian warrior, swept through Central Asia with his hordes, over-running Persia, Arabia and Asia Minor. He was responsible for incredible slaughter and pillage, and he took the lives of all the saints, sages and notables listed by Hazrat Najmuddin.

When laying siege to the City of Baghdad, Genghis Khan's armies made repeated onslaughts but every time they retired unsuccessful. The reason for this has been given as follows: When the spiritual charge-man of Baghdad, Fariduddin Attar, heard of an impending attack by the invaders he would turn his wooden drinking bowl upside down, and this act made the City of Baghdad invisible to the eyes of the invading army. Genghis Khan finally decided to lead the army himself and vowed that he would never return without sacking the city once and for all. This time also Fariduddin Attar, in order to make the city invisible, was on the point of upturning his wooden bowl when the immortal Iliyas (Prophet Khizr) prevented him from doing so by catching hold of his arms saying: 'The destruction of this city is divinely decreed and not even your miracle can do anything to stop it. You are also expected to prepare yourself for laying down your head.' Fariduddin Attar resigned himself to the divine decree. Genghis Khan's armies destroyed nearly half the City of Baghdad and even took the head of the Master Fariduddin Attar—thus fulfilling the prophecy of Hazrat Najmuddin Kubra.

Intoxication

Let us talk about how Meher Baba himself would deal with people. It will help to answer your question about the value of techniques of modern psychology.

A drunkard comes to Baba—and I have in mind a particular instance amongst many—he is very drunk and behaving in the way one would expect. But Baba does not discard him or ask him to leave. Baba finds him a seat close by, and then makes him come even closer and sit near his feet. He slaps the man's back, pats him, and he quickly feels at home. But we would be wondering and afraid that he might be violent or misbehave with Baba. Yet Baba would be with the man in such a way that in the early stages we would be embarrassed—it would seem that Baba and he were both good drinkers! Baba would become one with the drunkard as it were, saying, 'None of these people here have ever tasted the joys of drink, and they scoff at the person who drinks. But if they were to take drink, they would realize the pleasure to be gained. What forgetfulness! The intoxication is such that the world becomes beautiful!'

So the drunkard gains confidence in Baba. Being an alcoholic, he thought he would be, as usual, discarded, or at best merely tolerated; but Baba treats him as though the alcoholism did not matter at all.

Then Baba would continue with the program, ask people to sing, or he would give a discourse, and the drunkard continues to sit there near Baba, and Baba now and then would pat him and just say,

‘Do you follow that?’ or something else as casual. After a time Baba says, ‘How did you come to me?’ ‘Oh! I heard of you, Baba, from relatives or friends.’ ‘That is good. I am really very happy to see you, very happy. When will you come again?’ He answers, ‘I’ll try to come’, or perhaps ‘I don’t know.’ Baba says: ‘Do come again when you have time. Do so. Don’t feel concerned about those who talk of your drinking. How much do you take, by the way? Do you have a full bottle each day?’ ‘Yes, I do.’ ‘Take it, it does not matter. But stick to the bottle, that much, and don’t let it become more than a bottle.’ Then Baba embraces him, and he leaves—but leaves with the feeling that he is one of Meher Baba’s own, and he is upright and confident. This is the beginning.

So it happens that when Baba is in the mood to have people around him, Baba sends his men to try and inspire the drunkard to come again to Baba. He does come again, and Baba is very happy to see him. ‘But what is the matter with you?’ says Baba. ‘Today you are different. Are you not friends with your bottle?’ The man whispers: ‘No, Baba. I heard that there was a program today, so how could I drink?’ It is the first indication that some change is taking place. Baba says: ‘I am very happy. It does not matter about the drink.’ And Baba may go on and say: ‘I too have to behave here. Do you know that I cannot relieve myself with all these people here. We have to behave ourselves.’ So Baba helps the change to take place.

Then during the singing program, when there is reference to wine (although it is that spiritual wine of divine love) Baba will touch the man and

say; 'Look, they are singing of wine. That's our subject!' and the man laughs and is happy. Later, at an opportune moment, Baba stops the singing and gives a small discourse on the intoxication of liquor that does not last and leads to futility, disgust and ridicule, and the intoxication of love that lasts and leads to freedom and self-sufficiency. In this way Baba gives direction to the change in the man.

When the program is over, and all the people have gone and only the mandali are present, Baba stops the man: 'Sit down, are you in a hurry to go home? Are you thirsty for it?'

'No, Baba. I am very happy.'

'I hope you are not taking more than one bottle.'

'No, Baba. I remember what you told me.'

'That's very good of you, very good. Remember that. Otherwise it will affect your health, your well-being.'

The man comes again, and then again, and after a time Baba says to him: 'Do you love me?'

'Yes, Baba, I love you.'

'You remember me a little? But perhaps you remember me only when you take drink, eh?'

'No, I remember you. Every so often you come into my thoughts.'

'I am very happy. See,' he tells his mandali, 'see how he remembers me.' Turning again to the man, Baba says: 'Well, will you do something for me?' 'Yes, what can I do?'

'You are still taking a full bottle. Now take three-quarters. Never more. Will you do that?'

'Yes, Baba.'

After a month, or two, or even six months, another chance comes, and the drink is reduced to half a

bottle. Again, later, it is reduced to a quarter, and so after a long period, the man gives up the drink altogether, and comes very proudly to Baba: 'Baba, I have given it up because I love you.'

We learnt from these times with Baba. We learnt that one must be very painstaking and patient. There can be no half-way measure in any activity you undertake. Never think that others are dullards, learn from each one, and tell them about the Master Psychologist. Bring Meher Baba to the hearts of others, give the warmth of his love, if need be in very small measures, but give until they are really eager for more and more of that Divine stock.

Pir Fazl Shah [a man of God] told Baba, 'No one, until you came has touched my heart with the arrow of Divine Love. You have the power to destroy and flood the whole world. No one fully knows the limits of your greatness; you are the spiritual authority of the time, and if I were to die I would take another body to be close to you.'

—*Dr. William Donkin*
(from *The Wayfarers*)

Occult Power

Some yogis can perform miracles such as creating gold out of lead or iron. Others, if they wish, can even shake the whole world. But they are not perfect. Such yogis, because they are really far from perfection, get caught up in their own unmanageable powers. And they become like deer for a real Master to hunt.

The Master of perfection hunts them in the woods as it were in which they roam about, wandering hither and thither and generally whiling away their time in ignorant pursuits. And when the hunted ones pray for the right path, the Master shows it to them, thus saving them from rounds and rounds of lives which they would otherwise require in order to arrive at the further stages of the inner path. The Master can subdue and guide these yogis because his powers, unlike the powers of the yogis, are unlimited, though he seldom uses them. He is interested, not in the exercise of powers, but in the imparting of spiritual knowledge which is far more difficult and is the only thing of real value.

There was once a yogi who had acquired great occult powers. One day he went to a town and offered food out of a small bowl to the inhabitants. Thousands and thousands of persons partook of the rice given from his small bowl; but the bowl never emptied. And those who were amazed at his extraordinary powers began to admire and follow him. As this yogi was thus misleading the people through his miraculous powers, a Perfect Master approached him and begged food from his well-renowned bowl. Now the yogi according to practice was determined

to give food to this newcomer until he was satisfied. But as he went on giving food the Master went on eating, never coming to a stop, until at last the yogi became tired of giving. The yogi then intuitively knew that he was now face to face with one who was spiritually much greater than himself. And as he realized this he was humbled, and surrendered himself to the Master, beseeching him to give him true spiritual insight. It was through this humility that he won the redeeming grace of the Master.

In the Master, man sees his own ideal realized; the Master is what his own deeper self would rather be. He sees in the Master the reflection of the best in himself which is yet to be, but which he will surely one day attain. Faith in the Master therefore becomes the chief motive-power for realizing the divinity which is latent in man.

—*Meher Baba*

About Meher Baba

Short Biography

The Avatar (Christ, Rasool) is God-Man, the total manifestation of God in human form, when God knows Himself as God whilst living the life of a man amongst men. God is one, without a second, and He as the Avatar or Christ is always one and the same, but the manifestation is repeated from time to time, 'in different cycles, adopting different names and different human forms, in different places, to reveal Truth in different garbs and different languages.' He comes as Zoroaster, Rama, Krishna, Buddha, Jesus, Mohammed, whenever 'the spiritual law has been lost sight of and materiality is rampant.' In his life as man, the Avatar lives as other men, as a king, or a carpenter or a charioteer—but within the particular circumstances which he chooses as the arena for his work, he continually, openly and subtly, demonstrates a meaningful way of life which is applicable to everyone irrespective of their station in the world.

'When God becomes man it is due to His love for His beings'; and so 'it is possible through love for man to become God.'

Meher Baba has further stated: 'Irrespective of doubts and convictions, and for the infinite love I bear one and all, I continue to come as the Avatar and am judged time and again by humanity in its ignorance, in order to help man distinguish the Real from the false. I have only one message to give and I repeat it age after age to one and all: love God.'

Meher Baba, by name Meherwan Sheriar Irani, was born in Poona, India, on the 25th of February, 1894, to a middle-class Zoroastrian family of Persian origin. His father Sheriar Mundegar, born in Persia, was an ardent seeker from his youth, and his thirst for spiritual enlightenment brought him to India where he spent years of arduous wandering in search of Truth. One day in a vision it was revealed to Sheriar that the goal he was seeking would be attained in the son who would be born to him; as a result of this he finally settled down in Poona and married the daughter of a Persian merchant who had migrated to India with his family. In his son Meherwan, Sheriar recognized the declaration and promise of the vision, the fruit of his search for God.

Meherwan's was a happy normal boyhood. Kind, fun-loving, dutiful, he was a bright student, and shone both in class as well as on the sports field. He was fluent in a number of languages, and was a keen reader of classical literature as well as detective fiction. He was a lover of poetry and assiduously read the works of great poets in English, Indian, and Persian languages. In the course of his education in Poona, Meherwan (Merwan as he was usually called) attended Sardar Dastur School, St. Vincent's High School, and Deccan College.

It was during his college period that he was awakened to the knowledge of his divinity and the profound mission of his life. It happened one evening in May 1913. Merwan was cycling home from college and as usual passed by the end of Malcolm Tank Road where, under the shade of a neem tree, sat an ancient Mohammedan woman known as Hazrat Babajan. She was reputed to be 110 years old, and was

venerated by the local people as a great holy personage. Whenever Merwan cycled by, he saw her surrounded by a group of people. On this particular day he felt a strong curiosity regarding her, and leaving his bicycle he cautiously approached. When he met her eyes she beckoned to him, and he went up to her. She then arose and kissed him on the forehead. No word was spoken. That silent kiss (as Meher Baba told us) was for him the rending of the veil of illusion and simultaneously Self-Realization (or God-Realization). From that moment he lost consciousness of the worlds of form, and for nine months remained oblivious to his surroundings. For some days he was in a total coma, while his anxious parents brought in the best doctors to treat him. Later on he appeared to recover to the extent of moving about normally, but to all appearances his actions were those of an automaton. He constantly visited Hazrat Babajan, who referred to him as her child. One day in January of 1914 Babajan pointed a commanding finger at Merwan and declared to the gathering around her: 'This child of mine will create a great sensation in the world and do immense good to humanity.' Our earth is blessed to have, at all times, five Perfect Masters (Sadgurus), who have attained God-Realization and regained consciousness of the worlds of form. They are thus the Perfect Masters or Guides who can lead others out of the 'sanskritic' morass of illusion. At the ordained Avataric time, it becomes the function of the then living Perfect Masters to bring about the advent of the Avatar, or God-Man, who is none other than God in human form. The five Perfect Masters who brought about the advent of the present Avatar, were Hazrat Baba-

jan of Poona, Sai Baba of Shirdi, Upasni Maharaj of Sakori, Tajuddin Baba of Nagpur, and Narayan Maharaj of Kedgaon.

It was in the same year, 1914, that Merwan met the rest of the Perfect Masters. His first contact was with Hazrat Sai Baba of Shirdi. At the time when Merwan approached him, Sai Baba was walking in a procession of his devotees. Merwan went to him and prostrated himself at his feet. Sai Baba looked at him and loudly called out: 'Parvardigar' (which means: Almighty God, the Sustainer).

His next spiritual Master was Sadguru Upasni Maharaj of Sakori, to whom he was inwardly directed by Sai Baba. Upasni Maharaj was then living in the Khandoba Temple, and as Merwan approached him he picked up a stone and flung it, hitting Merwan in the middle of the forehead at the spot where Babajan had kissed him. The symbolic action was to help Merwan regain consciousness of the worlds of form, which would in no way affect the God-consciousness he experienced without a break. It was a process that covered some years, and at its completion Upasni Maharaj declared before his followers: 'Merwan, you are the Ancient One, Avatar!'

Merwan's next visit was to Hazrat Tajuddin Baba of Nagpur, and finally to Sadguru Narayan Maharaj of Kedgaon, thus completing the circle of contacting the five Perfect Masters who were responsible for this Advent of God on earth.

Years later Merwan, as Meher Baba, was to tell his followers: 'Babajan gave me Divine Bliss. Sai Baba gave me Divine Power, and Upasni Maharaj gave me Divine Knowledge. I am Infinite Power,

Knowledge and Bliss. I am the Ancient One, come to redeem the modern world.'

Merwan's mission as Avatar began in 1921, when he drew to him the first group of disciples. These included Zoroastrians, Hindus, Mohammedans, who recognized in him their spiritual Guide and gave him their lives to mold. It was they who gave him the name by which he has since been known: Meher Baba, meaning Compassionate Father. As time went by more and more disciples joined him, men and women who ultimately left their all to stay with the Master, leading a life of the strictest discipline and service. In 1923 Meher Baba established a colony on the outskirts of Arangaon, a village some six miles from the town of Ahmednagar (Maharashtra). It was named Meherabad. For many years Meherabad remained the headquarters of the Master, where the most varied and active phases of his work were unfolded. These included a free school for boys of all castes and creeds; a free hospital and dispensary; shelters for the poor; a boarding school named 'Prem Ashram' where scholastic and spiritual education was imparted to the boys under Meher Baba's direct and personal guidance; and an ashram for the God-intoxicated individuals known in India as masts (pronounced musts)—they are so literally intoxicated with love for God, that they have lost all consciousness of the world.

This vast field of activities proved a continual training ground for his men and women disciples in practicing a life of love for God: selfless service, perfect obedience, moral discipline and love and tolerance towards one another. Meher Baba who was both Master and Servant, performed the most

menial jobs in his love for the children and the masts. He would brook no distinction between the high castes and the untouchables, and this proved a hard lesson for the high caste disciples who had to serve without prejudice. They learned through the love of their Master, who himself washed the clothes of the untouchables and cleaned their latrines. He was always the supreme example, and his disciples' love for him was the moving spirit of their every endeavor.

Meher Baba's work was not confined to one place. He made numerous tours all over India and Ceylon in search of masts, contacting these spiritually advanced souls to help them progress further on the spiritual path. During the arduous mast-tours Baba covered thousands of miles by all manner of transport: car, tonga, train, bullock cart, mule, camel, horseback, and on foot. An equally extensive and important part of his work was with the poor and the lepers—bathing them, feeding them, washing their feet, bowing down to them by placing his forehead on their feet, giving them clothes and money. Many a needy middle-class family, struck by some sudden calamity such as famine or flood and too proud to seek help through organized channels, received a gift from Baba in person. Baba did not touch money except when giving it to the needy. His giving them money was not an act of charity in the usual sense of the word: it served as a medium for the immeasurable spiritual blessing he bestowed on them. During these many travels, Baba always remained incognito and the men accompanying him were ordered not to disclose his identity.

In contrast to such incognito tours, Meher Baba travelled to all parts of India openly giving his

‘darshan’ to the masses—as many as one hundred thousand came in a day to pay their respects to him and receive his blessing.

Meher Baba observed complete silence for 44 years. His silence began on July 10th 1925 and continued till the dropping of his body on January 31st 1969, without a break. His many spiritual discourses and messages were dictated by means of an alphabet board. In 1954 he discontinued the use of the board, reducing all communication to hand gestures which were unique in expressiveness.

Meher Baba travelled to the Western world thirteen times, his first visit being in 1931 when he contacted his early Western disciples, and the last in 1958. At the invitation of his followers, he went a number of times to America, England, Iran, Australia and Europe.

For reasons of his inner work for the spiritual benefit of mankind, Meher Baba often retired into long periods of seclusion when none could visit him. From 1965 on he was in strict seclusion which continued till he dropped his physical body in 1969.

Meher Baba cannot be contained within the scope of any familiar categories, and ordinary experience cannot account for him. He must be accepted on his own terms. To be in his presence is to know that he knows what is to be known. To be with him inwardly is to know that world is nothing into nothing and that he is the only Reality. He does not need to speak. He is the Master of one Knowledge, but that Knowledge includes all other knowledges. He is God-Man.

As Meher Baba has explained, his work is neither to teach nor to found a new religion, but to awaken

man to the consciousness of his Real Self which is God. He says, 'I have come not to teach but to awaken.' He leaves his followers free to follow their religious beliefs and customs. He gives no 'initiation', prescribes no disciplines such as 'pooja,' 'mantra,' 'japa,' or 'yoga.' He says that the only true yoga is 'you go'—i.e., the annihilating of one's ego or self-interest. The only 'sadhana' he prescribes is LOVE—as the constant guiding influence of one's every thought, word, and deed, while leading a normal life of the world and fulfilling one's duties and responsibilities. It is through the power of utterly selfless Love that Meher Baba awakens in others the true understanding of the purpose of life, which is to realize the Godhood that is inherent in each.

Meher Baba says: 'My personal religion is my being the Ancient Infinite One, and the religion I impart to all is Love for God, which is the truth of all religions. This love can belong to all, high and low, rich and poor. Everyone, of every caste and creed, can love God. The one and only God who resides equally in all, is approachable by each one through love.'

Meher Baba Is

Meher Baba takes upon himself a form. Does that mean that when he drops the form, he is not? He continues to be. He takes form and becomes our companion, making us feel his love, his compassion, and his existence more tangibly. When he drops the form, he wants us to become his companions. He comes down in form in order to become our companion. Now he wants us to become his companions. And we can be his companions if we lead a natural life, being ourselves as we naturally are, innocent, loving, kind, honest, becoming more and more childlike. This can happen. And to top it all, he wants us to become his companions by remembering him, by having him by our side all the time, in our thoughts, in our hearts. He said you can do it. And when you keep his company, make him your companion, let him feel pleased. How will you please him? Speak words that you would not hesitate to speak in his presence, think thoughts that you would not hesitate to think in his presence, do acts that you would not hesitate to do in his presence. If you do that, you will please your companion, and keep him as a companion.

Baba wants us to hold fast to his daaman, that is, the hem of his robe. To hold his daaman all the time, means becoming more and more childlike, and that leads to our becoming more dependent on him. But that does not mean throwing the whole burden of our life on him, doing whatever we feel like doing, and just sitting back saying that Meher Baba will do everything for us and see to everything.

We should be as children are, very active, carefree, jumping and playing, roaming about with friends, doing their duties, but having at the back of their minds the support, the comfort, the strength of the mother, of the parents.

Baba has given us another figure to show what holding fast to his daaman means. When a child is first taken into a big city or to a fair, the child is confused and bewildered with all the sights and noises and people and automatically holds even more strongly to the skirt of the mother, and so feels secure. Likewise, in the midst of intense activity he wants us to remember him and so hold fast to his daaman. Depend on him, do your utmost constantly to turn to and depend on him, and he will always be there to support you.

We ask how we should live after Baba has dropped the body? But being without a body is his natural state. It is most unnatural of him to have adopted a body. He puts himself in a coffin for our sake. That is his death although we think of it as his life. He confines himself in this little coffin of his human form, so that mankind can have the tangible experience of his being, of his love, of his kindness, mercy, compassion. When he drops this form, we say he has gone. But on the contrary, he is all the more with us: because he is then in his most natural state.

A Question Answered

Meher Baba answers the question:

Is there an infallible method for a spiritual aspirant to recognize a Perfect Master?

One is not able to distinguish satisfactorily between those who are spiritually advanced and those who are stationed on the various planes of consciousness. All who are on the first to the sixth planes of consciousness come under the general category of 'advanced souls.' But when one is fortunate enough to come in contact with Perfection, there are unmistakable signs for the patient and sincere seeker of Truth.

There are three important factors characteristic of the state of Perfection. First, Perfection is not only 'Oneness with God' but the continued and uninterrupted experience of Oneness with everything. A Perfect Master continuously experiences or realizes his own Self as the Self in all. This inner experience objectively manifests itself in the spontaneity of Love that such a one feels or expresses towards all creation. To him nothing is attractive or repulsive: good, bad; saint, sinner: beauty, ugliness; wisdom, idiocy; health, disease; these are all different modes and moods of his own manifestation. When a Perfect Master loves, fondles, feeds any living creature, he feels and enjoys as if he is loving, fondling and feeding his own Self. In this state no vestige of 'otherness' is left.

The second point is the undeniable atmosphere of bliss which a Perfect Master radiates in his immediate

vicinity and which a visitor cannot help feeling or noticing. A Perfect Master not only enjoys infinite bliss, but also experiences universal suffering. The poignancy of suffering, however, is nullified and subdued by the overwhelming joy or feeling of bliss. Hence, a Perfect Master outwardly always appears blissfully calm and unperturbed in the face of every kind of pain, persecution and poverty.

The third most outstanding characteristic of Perfection is its power to adapt itself to any level or class of humanity. A perfect Master is as nonchalant on a throne as he is indifferent and undisturbed in a gutter. He is poor with the poor, rich with the rich, lordly with kings, wise with the learned, and naively simple and innocent with the illiterate and ignorant. Just as a master of arts delivers or teaches English to a beginner in a different way than to an undergraduate, similarly a Perfect Master adapts himself to the level of the one whom he wants to uplift spiritually. The actions of the Perfect Master fit perfectly the need and aptitude of each and every one.

Behind the Anecdotes

Thus, when any mast-tour has been planned, Baba first chooses his time, and then selects a group of disciples to accompany him, a group that is never less than two, and often more than this. He then orders one expert, to wit, Baidul, Kaka or Eruch, to reconnoiter certain cities or districts, to inquire about, meet, and select likely souls, and to return to him at his base camp before 'D day,' or meet him on the station of the first town on the projected program. In the account of Chatti Baba in Chapter Two, I have described one of these reconnaissance journeys, and although that one was perhaps more trying than most, every reconnaissance expedition is done under the pressing hand of time, and is a difficult and arduous thing. If you corner Baidul or Kaka in moments of expansiveness, and provoke them to describe some of these journeys, you will hear tales of tramping on foot across arid sands, through dark forests, or over mountain and valley; of riding on camels, mules, ponies and asses; of bumping over mile after mile of purgatorial tracks in bullock carts and tongas; of enduring nights and days in the dusty and sweaty turmoil of overcrowded third class railway carriages; in short, you will hear of every disease of travel, endured in the mere preliminary reconnaissance of almost every one of Baba's mast-tours.

These preliminary expeditions are, of course, planned and executed in order to save Baba's valuable time, for masts do not emerge mysteriously from behind every bush, nor are they found docketed and

labelled in every city. A good mast is a rare jewel, and even Baidul, Kaka, and Eruch, make errors of judgment in their selection from time to time, and produce candidates for Baba's contact who may have a local reputation as great masts, but whom Baba rejects as mad, or God-mad, or as masts of insignificant merits.

So much, then, for the reconnaissance expeditions, and now what about the 75,000 miles of journeys with Baba, and the 20,000 odd contacts, for which all these preliminary labors have been endured?

I have tried to give an idea of the trials and hardships of the reconnaissance journeys, but these are leisurely and frivolous holidays in comparison with the final tours with Baba, when the real work is done. Travel can be fun, and hardships have something stimulating about them, if one is allowed to renew one's physical and nervous forces by adequate food and sleep. But this one can rarely do on a mast-journey with Baba. After two or three days of work from dawn to dusk with little or no food, and after two or three nights with little or no sleep, the world simply becomes unreal, and one lives a kind of reflex life in which the parts of one's body move and work; but the zest of living, and that sense of well-being, dependent, one supposes, upon a nervous system refreshed by sleep, and upon tissues nourished by adequate food, are simply no longer there. But mast-tours do not last just two or three days, they go on for two or three weeks, and this tempo of work goes on and on, Baba ever spurring those with him to the very limits of their powers. On one of the tours in 1946, Baidul estimated that, in eight days, they had a *total* of fourteen hours'

sleep, which is an average of about two hours' sleep a day. Finally, add to all these things the infliction of a tropical climate, and the drain on one's vitality through constant perspiration, and you will get an approximate answer of what a mast-tour is like.

So few of Baba's devotees, outside the circle of his intimate disciples, realize the tremendous hardships that Baba imposes upon himself and upon those with him, and one wonders how many would recognize their weary and travel-stained Master on these great journeys. As the leader and Master on these tours he has the power and authority to set the pace, and of his own will, or for his own spiritual reasons, he sets it at this almost incredible rate.

Thus, you see Baba and three or four disciples set out on a mast-tour, looking strong and fresh, and when they enter the garden gate two or three weeks later, you go to welcome them back and help bring their luggage into the house; and you see their tired, unshaven faces, and Baba's face; and their tired eyes, and Baba's eyes; and you see their clothes, and Baba's clothes too, dirty, with dirt worked into the fabric of the cloth, and fixed there by days of perspiration; and you see places where the clothes are torn, memorials and little outer signs of the weird days and nights of moving and working, working and moving—days and nights when the Master submits himself to the sordid limitations of physical existence, not for his own sake, but for mankind.

And in the evening, after a shave, a bath, a meal, and a few hours of rest, you see Baba join the mandali, and you listen to the witty and fascinating review of the tour just completed. It is now that you hear

of the incredible hardships; of the sleepless nights; of the tedious vigils in trains, tongas, and bullock carts; of the rides upon camels, ponies and asses (and once, to cross a river, of a ride upon an elephant!); of the treks on foot over leagues of dust or mud; of the vicissitudes of rain and sun, cold and heat—in short, you hear something at least of what Baba and his men went through, and of the qualities and oddities of the best of the masts whom they met, word pictures of the brief encounters between Baba and these strange, God-intoxicated souls.

And when the mandali who went with him add their tribute of description, you hear how, throughout all these hardships, Baba remained the freshest of all, and how, after each contact with a really good mast, he seemed particularly radiant, as if some great work had been achieved, or some heavy burden lifted.

Suffering of Avatar

About his suffering, Baba explained: ‘Why and how can I suffer when I am the Ocean of Power, Knowledge and Bliss? God has infinite Power, infinite Knowledge and infinite Bliss. The Avatar is God Himself incarnate on earth as man. During his ministry as Avatar, he uses only infinite Knowledge. He does not make use of his infinite Power and infinite Bliss. This is because God incarnates as man and goes through universal suffering and helplessness in order to emancipate mankind from its ignorance of suffering and helplessness. If the Avatar were to use his infinite Power, how could he experience helplessness? If the Avatar were to use his infinite Bliss, how could he suffer? He therefore does not use either his infinite Bliss or his infinite Power. Such is his infinite Love and Compassion for his creation! Jesus Christ who had infinite Power, let himself become helpless and suffered the humiliation of letting the people spit on him and jeer at him. He suffered crucifixion, but even while on the cross did not help himself from the Power and Bliss that were his. Instead he cried, “Father, why hast Thou forsaken me!” He said it to himself of course, for he and the Father are One.

‘Again and again, God takes human form to suffer for His creation. I am that One. Like you I have a body and mind and so I feel hunger and thirst, etc. But I also have universal body and universal mind, and therefore your individual suffering is as nothing compared to my eternal, universal suffering! I have infinite Knowledge. I do not have to use my

mind in order to know—I just know. I use my infinite Knowledge. But although I have infinite Bliss and infinite Power, I do not make use of them. If I were to make use of the Bliss that is at my beck and call, how could my suffering be “suffering”? And of what benefit would it be to mankind? I also do not use my infinite Power. If I were to use it, how would I remain helpless? I remain infinitely helpless because while having infinite Power at my command, I do not use it! I shall use it only when I break my silence to give a universal spiritual awakening; and when I drop this body I shall use my Bliss for 700 years till my next advent.

‘Hold fast to me so that I will take you where I go, otherwise you will be lost. I am the emperor. If you belong to me, you will have access to the infinite treasure that is mine. But if, instead, you go after the guards and servants of the palace (the saints and sadhus) it is sheer folly on your part!

‘I suffer physically and mentally. My physical suffering can be seen. My mental suffering is much more intense than the physical, and is due to the anti-God element that is at its height, and the universal prevalence of hypocrisy—specially of those who profess themselves to be saints and spiritual personalities. I suffer spiritually because although in me I am free, in you I see and feel myself bound by your ignorance; and so I suffer infinitely. In no previous Avataric period have I disclosed these secrets, because the time was not ripe for it then. At present science has advanced by leaps and bounds; and the anti-God element is at its maximum; why then should not spirituality also be at its maximum! Blessed is he who holds fast to my daaman (the hem of my garment).’

Work

While one naturally tends to think of working for Meher Baba as work associated with spreading his name and message, Meher Baba has said that ‘any work undertaken with honest intent and love for God is Baba’s work,’ and therefore the points listed here can be applicable to all activity.

1. Meher Baba alone does his work. It is his compassion that he permits us to do his work.
2. Doing work for Baba is our opportunity to grow closer in love for him and to please him.
3. To please Baba is to please him as the center of everything: without him everything is nothing.
4. Activity undertaken for Baba has its thorn that extracts the thorn of ignorance.
5. All activity is a preparation for one who longs to serve the God-Man especially during the Advents.
6. Apply yourself wholeheartedly to work with Baba’s name, and leave the fruits of your labor to him.
7. Never force Meher Baba’s name and his love down anyone’s throat.
8. Never leave a job which Baba has given you to do, unless and until he takes it from you.
9. Take no thought of your own or of the world’s assessment of the work—the motive is the key to its real value.
10. The extent to which you get yourself out of the way and let Baba be present determines the real value of the work.
11. The habit of steady application to Baba’s work quietens the mind.

12. Baba says: Mind at work is heart at rest and mind at rest is heart at work.
13. Baba says: The moment you seek appreciation, work is undone.
14. Wait for Baba to bring about results in his time: and remember that nothing worthwhile comes overnight.
15. Don't try to be other than what you are, nor seek to know more than you need to know.
16. Let your heart grow big—be courageous, strong and generous.
17. Depend upon anyone or anything and the work suffers.
18. Baba says: When the work does not go right you have put yourself between it and its accomplishment.
19. Choose your work carefully, having chosen it, 'stay with God in the shape He shapes you,' and do it to the very best of your ability.
20. Let his will be your pleasure—never force a situation into the shape of your likes to escape responsibility.
21. Dedicate your day to Baba, then throw yourself into the work, leaving the outcome to him. But as soon as your rhythm becomes disturbed or the natural flow of your energy flags, then turn inwardly to him to renew your commitment to him.
22. Service without love is blind, deaf and dumb: it has no flavor or fragrance of Meher Baba.
23. Baba says: The way of my work is the way of effacement, which is the way of strength, not of weakness: and through it you become mature in my love.

A Short Bibliography

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Baba said it contains food for the brain and a feast for the heart.'

HOW A MASTER WORKS, by Ivy O. Duce, Sufism Reoriented Inc., U.S.A., 1975. Many accounts of different phases of Meher Baba's life are given in the course of Mrs. Duce's autobiography, and much previously unpublished material is used, particularly in the 250-page Supplement.

MUCH SILENCE by Tom and Dorothy Hopkins. London, Victor Gollancz 1974. A fine readable biography of Meher Baba.

TALES FROM THE NEW LIFE WITH MEHER BABA Narrated by Eruch, Mehera, Mani and Meheru, The Beguine Library, California, U. S. A.

THE MASTERY OF CONSCIOUSNESS as given by Meher Baba. Compiled and Edited by Allen Cohen. Harper Colophon, 1977.

NOT WE BUT ONE. Edited by William Le Page. Sydney, Australia. Meher Baba Foundation. Statements by Meher Baba and disciples, on Life, Living and Love.

THE SILENT WORD by Francis Brabazon. Sydney, Australia. Meher Baba Foundation. Being some chapters of the Life and Time of Avatar Meher Baba.

Centers for Information

Information on Meher Baba can be obtained from the following:

AVATAR MEHER BABA TRUST
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**Register of Editorial Alterations in the
Online Edition of *It So Happened***

Online Edition Text	Print Edition Text	Page Number	Paragraph Number	Line Number
CENTERS	CENTRES	x	10	1
mouth.’	mouth’.	1 of Foreword (unnum- bered)	3	9
flavor	flavour	2 of Foreword (unnum- bered)	1	3
humor	humour	2 of Foreword (unnum- bered)	2	4
<i>Discourses</i>	Discourses	Acknow- ledgements (unnum- bered)	1	2
<i>Meher Baba Journal</i>	Meher Baba Journal	Acknow- ledgements	1	3
<i>The Wayferers</i>	The Wayfarers	Acknow- ledgements	1	3-4
<i>82 Family Letters</i>	82 Family Letters	Acknow- ledgements	1	4-5
<i>Sparks of Truth</i>	Sparks of Truth	Acknow- ledgements	1	8

<i>The Compassionate Father</i>	The Compassionate Father	Acknowledgements	1	8-9
<i>ocher- colored</i>	<i>ochre- coloured</i>	4	5	3
<i>honored</i>	<i>honoured</i>	9 (unnumbered)	2	9
favorable	favourable	12	1	15
‘no.’	‘no’.	13	1	8
labor	labour	14	2	7
labored	laboured	15	3	18
‘o.’	‘o’.	16	2	10
of,’	of’.	17	4	1
signaled	signalled	19	2	4
travelers	travellers	20	2	13
hometown!’	home- town!’	21	3	5
signaled	signalled	22	2	1
epitomizes	epitomises	24 (unnumbered)	2	2
Links,’	Links’.	25	2	2
Links,’	Links’.	25	2	9
favorite	favourite	26	2	3
atmos- phere.’	atmos- phere’.	27 (unnumbered)	2	6
changes.’	changes’.	28	1	7
favorite	favourite	28	1	8

demeanor	demeanour	28	1	14
favorite	favourite	28	1	16
‘Stop.’	‘Stop’.	31	2	7
humor	humour	35	1	8
Baba.’	Baba’.	35	1	14
signaled	signalled	44 (unnum- bered)	3	1
signaled	signalled	45	3	1
honored	honoured	50	1	2
favorite	favourite	50	3	13
program	programme	55	3	1
endeavor)	endeavour)	56 (unnum- bered)	1	3
unraveled	unravelled	57	1	17
center	centre	58 (unnum- bered)	2	5
paralyzed	paralysed	59	3	15
closeted	closetted	60	1	1
jeweler	jeweller	62	4	2
jeweler	jeweller	62	4	3
jeweler	jeweller	63	3	4
mullah	mulla	66	2	6
mullah	mulla	66	4	2
mullah	mulla	67	1	4
fervor	fervour	67	1	6
fervor	fervour	67	1	8
mullah’s ‘god.’	mulla’s ‘god’.	67	3	4

go.'	go'.	74	3	3
Ilaha,'	Ilaha',	75 (unnumbered)	3	5
zikr	zihr	75	1	8
2:30	2.30	79	1	5
4:30	4.30	79	2	1
carcass	carcase	80	2	8
jewelers	jewellers	82	3	2
nothing,'	nothing',	85 (unnumbered)	2	13
labor	labour	86	4	12
labor	labour	86	4	16
labor	labour	86	4	17
labor	labour	87	1	5
labor	labour	87	1	5
skeptical	sceptical	89	1	8
favorite	favourite	91	1	1
tumor	tumour	92 (unnumbered)	1	11
endeavor	endeavour	95 (unnumbered)	2	6
jewelery	jewellery	96 (unnumbered)	1	7
program	programme	97	2	1
humor	humour	97	2	17
judgment	judgement	98 (unnumbered)	1	8

humor	humour	102	1	3
neighboring	neighboring	102	3	2
honor	honour	103	1	1
humorous	humourous	107	2	10
humor	humour	107	2	11
program	programme	112	2	4
practice	practise	114 (unnumbered)	11	1
favorable	favourable	117	1	4
neighboring	neighbouring	118	2	12
coordinating	co-ordinating	120 (unnumbered)	1	15
Meherjee	Meherji	120 (unnumbered)	2	9
luster	lustre	121	2	9
favorite	favourite	123 (unnumbered)	1	2
favorite	favourite	124	1	1
Genghis	Changiz	125	2	2
Genghis	Changiz	125	3	1
Genghis	Changiz	125	3	9
Genghis	Changiz	125	3	21

		126		
program	programme	(unnum- bered)	4	1
program	programme	127	2	8
program	programme	127	3	1
program	programme	128	2	1
mold	mould	136	2	5
Meherabad	Meher- abad	136	2	14
practicing	practising	136	3	3
endeavor	endeavour	137	1	9
‘pooja,’ ‘mantra,’ ‘japa,’ or ‘yoga.’	‘pooja’, ‘mantra’, ‘japa’, or ‘yoga’.	139	1	5-6
i.e.,	i.e.	139	1	7
		142		
‘souls.’	‘souls’.	(unnum- bered)	2	6
		144		
reconnoiter	reconnoitre	(unnum- bered)	1	6
		144		
day,’	day’,	(unnumb- ered)	1	7
		144		
program	programme	(unnum- bered)	1	10
judgment	judgement	145	1	3
labors	labours	145	2	4

center	centre	150 (unnumbered)	4	1
labor	labour	150 (unnumbered)	7	2
you,'	you',	151	8	2
flavor	flavour	151	11	2
<i>Centers</i>	<i>Centres</i>	154 (unnumbered)	head- ing	1
CENTER	CENTRE	154 (unnumbered)	4	1