

# *Introduction*

AMONG THE AVATARS KNOWN TO HUMAN HISTORY—Zoroaster, Ram, Krishna, Buddha, Jesus, and Muhammad—none has bestowed a richer endowment upon the human understanding than has Avatar Meher Baba. His various messages, explanations, and discourses, given over a period of nearly fifty years, provide an account of God and creation that is simple, comprehensive, and profound. The most important of His statements in the so-called “philosophic” domain is *God Speaks*, an exposition that stands unparalleled in the world of spiritual literature. This book, along with *Discourses*; the central section of *Listen, Humanity; The Everything and The Nothing; Life at its Best; Beams from the Spiritual Panorama*; and various selected messages from the 1950s and 1960s, represent the heart of what (for lack of a better word) could be called His “teaching.” Yet in the last few years a body of manuscripts from a much earlier period has come to light—texts that, while reiterating many common themes, present several new perspectives and show a different pattern of emphasis than do the later “classic” writings. These records from the 1920s, while they in no way displace Meher Baba’s primary published works, do show that the framework of understanding that one can derive from them is far from complete (despite what one might be tempted to suppose) and that the universe of spirituality has dimensions and domains that until now have hardly even been hinted at.

This present volume constitutes an edition of one of these newly uncovered manuscripts, currently being cared for by the Avatar Meher Baba Trust in its Archives Collection. Actually, that manuscript fills the greater part of

two notebooks, which the editors have named the Intelligence Notebooks (Notebooks I and II); and the text of the manuscript divides into two segments: a longer, that runs to more than 200 notebook pages, and a shorter, that runs to forty-four. After much deliberation, the editors have concluded that these two segments most likely comprise separate though related treatises. Accordingly, the contents of this edition include two titles: *Infinite Intelligence as All in All*, and *Sadguru and the Light of Intelligence*. The identity of the manuscript's scribe has not yet been established, though clearly the handwriting is not Meher Baba's, nor that of certain key disciples from the period. Almost certainly the manuscript as we have it is not an original draft but a "fair-hand copy"—that is, a transcription from some original intended to serve as a readable, permanent record. At no point does the manuscript name its source or author. Nonetheless, the editors of this volume, as well as other readers who have closely studied the original manuscript, agree unanimously that the ultimate source and author must have been Meher Baba, whatever mediums and channels may have been involved in the recording and transcription process. For no one else connected with Baba's early ashrams composed material even remotely of this kind. This supposition is corroborated by the fact that several folios from the second segment of the manuscript in Notebook II reproduce a portion of Baba's handwritten text published in *In God's Hand*. A fuller discussion of all these questions of manuscript and authorship appears later in this book. But to state in brief, one feels confident in asserting that Meher Baba gave out the basic contents of the two notebooks, probably through dictation with chalk on slate that was subsequently written up by His mandali (His "companions" or disciples). In the course of this "writing up," these disciples most likely contributed to the manuscript's prose style and form of presentation.

For reasons that are, again, reviewed in detail elsewhere, the editors posit as the most likely date for the composition of the manuscript—or, more accurately, for the composition of the text recorded in the manuscript—sometime in early to mid-1926. Between 1925 and 1928, Meherabad was passing through its first great

efflorescence, and the ashram had become a veritable beehive of activity. On 10 July 1925, of course, Meher Baba began His long silence. Baba's handwritten manuscript reproduced in *In God's Hand* probably dates from this same year; during 1925–26 He wrote what is known as "The Book," whose manuscript is still missing; on 2 January 1927 He gave up writing with His own hand; and during 1926–28 He gave lectures, some to the mandali and some to the Meher Ashram boys, that were recorded in a manuscript entitled "Tiffin Lectures" and in another packet of loose-leaf typed pages. In various ways, then, this time frame and context seems best suited for Baba's having dictated the contents of *Infinite Intelligence*; and certain records from that period support this supposition. Nonetheless, although Baba clearly invested considerable effort in the composition of this work, nothing in the manuscript itself or in the biographical accounts of this period suggest that He had publication in prospect. Indeed, though the manuscript is clean and carefully produced, it was not edited into publishable form, as Baba arranged to do in later years with His various published books and messages. Had Bal Natu not found the two notebooks shortly after Meher Baba dropped His body in 1969, we would have no inkling that this manuscript existed, and so an entire chapter in the history of Meher Baba's early work would have remained closed to us.

The contents of the Intelligence Notebooks, though in some respects surveying familiar ground, will in other ways probably surprise many followers of Meher Baba and students of His later writings. For example, He characterizes God as "Intelligence," a God-term rarely seen in His various books and messages from the 1930s through the mid-1960s. In 1967, however, Baba dictated to His mandali Bhau Kalchuri material that was subsequently published as the 200-page essay "Infinite Intelligence" in Bhau's book *The Nothing and The Everything*. (Baba indicated to Bhau and several close disciples that the points He revealed in the course of that dictation constituted ten percent of the material in The Book.) The resemblances between this later "Infinite Intelligence" and the two treatises on that subject in this present volume are striking; it seems noteworthy that

Meher Baba, having given extensive material on this subject in the early years of His advent, returned to it two years before He dropped His body. During the four-decade interlude in between, however, Meher Baba usually discussed this aspect of God under such other terms as “consciousness” or “Knowledge.”

Regardless of differences in terminology, Baba’s philosophy has always maintained that the universe and all phenomena originate in, and are the manifestation of, consciousness (or, in the language of the Intelligence Notebooks, “thinking”). That is, while God’s Reality never changes, the appearance of change and difference in the world of forms is due to the different **states** of God which produce different experiences or “knowings.” Further, the key mechanism in the engendering of difference in knowing is the *sanskara* or impression, which acts as the limit on consciousness, the horizon by which consciousness is circumscribed. Limitation gives rise to what this book calls “false thinking.” This false thinking creates both the medium for and the necessity of the *jīvātmā*’s (individual soul’s) journey in consciousness (from unconsciousness through false consciousness to real Self-consciousness) that reveals the cosmic architecture of what *God Speaks* calls the “Ten States of God.” In short, the phenomenality that is the universe arises out of and is contained within consciousness, which emanates from the urge-to-know inherent in the nature of God.

One will find this fundamental theme at the core of *Infinite Intelligence*, as well as in most of Meher Baba’s metaphysical writings and messages. Much that this book presents, however, will be new to most readers. Nowhere else has Meher Baba so clearly correlated the three states of wakefulness, dreaming, and sound sleep with the tripartite division of creation into the gross, subtle, and fine spheres. Indeed, the “fine sphere” disappears from Meher Baba’s explanations after this time, and the term “subtle sphere,” as used in *Infinite Intelligence*, encompasses what He later characterizes as the subtle and mental spheres.

Also original to this book (though reappearing in Bhau’s *The Nothing and The Everything*) is the distinction between imagination and thinking—or, to use the parallel terms, between creation and realization. Creation, which occurs

in the domain of imagination only, is the act of Īshwar, while the realization of what Īshwar has created occurs through the thinking of Infinite Intelligence as the realizer, the *jīvātmā*, the *baṅdā* or “bound one.” *Infinite Intelligence* provides much new information about Īshwar, who corresponds to the third state of God in *God Speaks*. We learn, for example, that Īshwar’s functioning as Creator, Preserver, and Destroyer intimately relates to the daily human cycle of sleep, dream, and wakefulness. We also learn that Īshwar, though creating and imagining everything, though functioning as the Lord of the universe and Bestower of all worldly benefits, Himself realizes nothing. That is, He neither experiences the universe that He is the Lord of, nor does He realize Himself as *Paramātmā* (Oversoul). He is the agent of the infinite expansion, sustenance, and contraction of that originally most-infinitesimal point that is the imagination or universe, but Himself has no real standing in the actuality of universe experience or in the real state of God.

Another subject that *Infinite Intelligence* studies in depth, and in ways not found elsewhere in Meher Baba’s books and messages, involves *sanskaras* and the diverse methods of their annihilation. Series 11, a high point of the book, examines in some detail how *sanskaras* are eliminated under each of the four major *yogas*: *karma*, *dñyān*, *bhakti*, and *rāj*. It turns out that these various paths involve quite different techniques and processes. The extended analysis of *bhakti yoga* (or the *yoga* of devotion and love) in this chapter culminates in a powerful evocation of the Sadguru as God both with and without attributes—Īshwar (the Creator) standing at His left hand and *Parameshwar* (unconscious God) at His right. Though *Infinite Intelligence* itself is an exposition within the modality of knowledge or *dñyān*, this section of the book makes it clear that love is the most direct route to God and that the Sadguru (God as Man) is the supreme and ultimate Object of all worship, service, and devotion.

These are just a few of the major themes and insights in this extraordinarily rich book. Undoubtedly scholars and lovers of God will mine this mountain of

treasure for centuries to come. At the same time, no book attributed to Meher Baba's authorship comes to us with more complexities and difficulties of every type. As already noted, the manuscript provides no sure information on authorship, date of composition, or how the text was written down. Further, the style of the original is highly idiosyncratic and often obscure; paragraphing and sectionalization is erratic; repetition abounds; the line of argument sometimes seems to meander; and we cannot even know with certitude whether the manuscript contains one literary work or two, or whether the content is complete or fragmentary.

On top of these literary problems, the text raises many philosophical questions as well. Its presentation of certain vast subjects—such as the relation between the universal and the individual, the nature of creation, and the modalities of mind and thinking—need integration into the larger body of Meher Baba's philosophic exposition. Scholars studying Meher Baba's explanations in relation to their Vedantic, Sufi, and Christian mystical backgrounds will find much here that significantly affects their overall approach. At the same time, this text uses certain key terms—such as “subtle,” “thinking,” and “Sadguru”—in ways that vary greatly with Meher Baba's other writings. The word “Sadguru,” for example, sometimes in this text strictly designates a Perfect Master (i.e., one established in Sahaj Samādhi and carrying duty towards creation), while at other times it refers to a God-realized individual of any type (including Majzūbs and *Jīvanmukta*-s). For all these and other reasons, persons coming to this book from a background of *God Speaks* and *Discourses* and without any further warning are liable at first to be confused and perplexed. Undoubtedly, *Infinite Intelligence* makes for a challenging read; but the rewards that it offers in the end more than compensate for the difficulties along the way.

To help readers in their encounters with this unusual text, the editors have created a variety of tools and expedients. First among these is the extended discussion entitled Essay on the Philosophy, Text, and Editorial Practice that follows the primary text. Readers are particularly urged to peruse the section of this Essay that addresses the text's philosophic content (pp. 458–94) where many

of the key ideas mentioned earlier receive fuller treatment. The Essay also provides a review of the text and manuscript, explains why this edition presents the text in the form of two distinct treatises, and surveys evidence relating to authorship. The last section of the Essay explains editorial philosophy and practice. This is an important topic, since the editors have found it necessary to revise the original prose considerably in order to make it intelligible to a general readership. Overall, the Essay comprises a significant part of the record of this edition and provides a necessary discussion of topics which, though crucially relevant to the text, the editors did not want to burden readers with in these opening pages.

Readers should also know that the chapter titles, section divisions and headings, marginal sidebars, and synopses have been introduced by the editors as textual aids; they do not appear in the original manuscript. The end matter—Glossary, Appendixes, Notes on the Figures, Endnotes, etc.—is meant for those who would like to study the text in depth. Meher Baba being who He is, His writings will attract every kind of interest and every kind of reader. Some will seek only to grasp essential content and will not want to embroil themselves in details of textual editing or philosophic nuance. Others, by contrast, will want to penetrate so far as possible back to the original sense of the manuscript and, beyond that, to that very Intelligence in Man-form—Avatar Meher Baba—who was the ultimate source of these explanations. This edition has been prepared with both types of readers in mind. On the one hand, it tries to be user-friendly and accessible. On the other hand, it makes available much in-depth information and offers aids to those whose studies are going to lead them, in due course, beyond the limits of what any edited text can provide.

While one cannot summarize in a few words the greater impact of a book this extraordinary, the editors would like to call attention, in closing, to the freedom of viewpoint from which it seems to arise. Naturally, and perhaps inevitably, the limited human mind tries to contain any articulation of Truth within the framework of some kind of orthodoxy of understanding. Even *God Speaks* can be domesticated in this way. Yet the contents of the Intelligence Notebooks in their raw form have the

untamed freshness of an expression that arises from the direct perception of Reality and that heeds no other law. Beyond any intellectual content that it may communicate, *Infinite Intelligence* has a power to evoke and spark. Ultimately God is not to be understood but to be seen and realized. The glimpses within the human intelligence that this book strikes and ignites are emanations from the Light of Intelligence that is the final Reality and Source of all phenomena.