

Shore to Shoreless

A Voyage Across the Ocean of Existence with Meher Baba



Professor J.S. Rathore

E-Book Edition

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**A Voyage across the Ocean of Existence with
Meher Baba**

By

Professor J.S. Rathore

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EBook Edition – 2008

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Acknowledgements

With deepest gratitude, I offer my salutations to Avatar Meher Baba for giving me an opportunity to write **Shore to Shoreless** and to serve Him by spreading His message of Love and Truth. It is with love that I place Shore to Shoreless on the lotus feet of my Divine Beloved – Avatar Meher Baba.

My first duty is to give acknowledgement to the Chairman of the Avatar Meher Baba Trust, Ahmednagar with sincere thanks for the use of some published writings of Avatar Meher Baba, the copyright of which is vested with the Trust. I wish to express my deep indebtedness to the authors all other sources – journals, books, articles and audiotapes – from where I have drawn upon much of the material in **Shore to Shoreless**. The bibliography and the index of quotations appended to the book enlist all such sources.

I am short of words to express my deep gratitude to Shri V.S. Kalchuri (our dearest Bhauji) Beloved Baba's close *mandali* and author of all time great books on Avatar Meher Baba who very kindly consented to release **Shore to Shoreless** at the Beloved's Samadhi. Bhauji and his writings have influenced and inspired me immensely. Shri Eruch Jessawal (our dearest Eruch), Shri Ali Akbar Shapurzaman (our dearest Aloba), Shri Bal Natu (our dearest Bal) – Beloved Baba's close mandali – have always been the source of constant encouragement and inspiration. My grateful, sincere and loving thanks to Bhau, Eruch, Aloba and Bal.

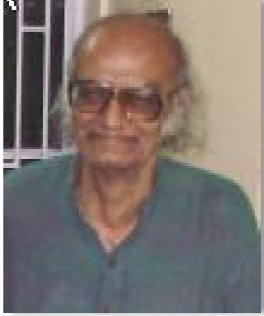
It was at Bhopal, sometime in the late 1950s, that I first heard about Avatar Meher Baba from Shri Dattatreya Yashwant Nafde. The entire Nafde family has helped me in all possible ways in writing this book. I sincerely and lovingly thank Shri Dattatreya Nafde, Shakuntala Nafde, Shri Kiran Nafde and Shri Pradeep Kumar Nafde. Grateful thanks are also due to Ms Heather Nadel, Meherabad, Ahmednagar, for making available the script of the play *How it all happened*; to Jamie Newell, Nashville, USA, for Malcolm Schloss's poem *First and Foremost*; to Dr. Saroj Mathur and Uday Mathur of Mumbai for her loving support and

encouragement; and to Mrs. Kalpana Nair of Mumbai for her collection of books on Meher Baba.

Shore to Shoreless, in reality, is a joint offering of love and gratitude from the entire Rathore family at the lotus feet of our Divine Beloved – Avatar Meher Baba. My dear wife Lata has always been my strength. Her deep love for Meher Baba is a constant source of inspiration for me. I am deeply indebted to her for her loving support and encouragement. My elder son Chinmaya has worked day and night on his computer for the final processing of this book. Having gone through the text meticulously, Chinmaya not only gave valuable suggestions, but also worked hard towards the final publication of the book. Chinmaya is a deep Baba lover and has undertaken this work as his love offering. My younger son Pranaya Singh, a noted film script writer, gifted me a PC for writing **Shore to Shoreless**. During the course of my writing, I was lovingly supported by my daughter-in-laws – Rajul and Indrani. My loving and grateful thanks to all of them. My loving and grateful thanks are also due to my grand children – Supriya, Divya, Ishita and Vikramaditya.

Professor J.S. Rathore

About The Author



Professor J S. Rathore is a renowned educationist, an award winning scientist and a former Vice-Chancellor from India. He has had a life-long interest in spiritual subjects and has written and lectured extensively on spiritual themes and Indian philosophy. In the early 1980's, he became deeply attracted to Avatar Meher Baba's life and cosmology and his coming to Meher Baba ended a life long spiritual quest. He has since been an ardent lover of Meher Baba studying, lecturing and writing about Meher Baba's life and work. He wrote 'Shore to Shoreless' in 1999 using a distinct narrative style trying to explore the overarching synergy between Meher Baba's cosmology and contemporary scientific paradigms.

Professor Rathore is currently leading the online Meher Spiritual University project which aims to provide free online courses on spiritual themes based on Meher Baba's teachings.

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Preface

Welcome to the E-Book edition of **Shore to Shoreless** that we lovingly release in 2008 in service of our Divine Beloved Meher Baba. **Shore to Shoreless** was originally published as a printed book in 1999. The text of this E-Book edition of **Shore to Shoreless** is entirely the the same as its earlier print edition except for some typographical & editorial corrections and inclusion of some additional material on the Martian terrain that became available after the landing of NASA's rovers on Mars in January 2004. We hope that you enjoy this E-Book edition.

Shore to Shoreless: A voyage across the Ocean of Existence is a book of a different kind. It is not a scholarly, comparative and interpretive presentation of what can be called as the 'thought' of Meher Baba. **Shore to Shoreless** is an account of a mystic voyage undertaken by five seekers of Love and Truth, with Meher Baba as the captain of their ship. They traverse the entire expanse of Existence going across the Ocean of Infinite Real Nothing, which appears falsely as the Everything, and reach the Shoreless Ocean of Infinite Real Everything. **Shore to Shoreless** reveals about the relative reality of the outer and inner worlds, about the reality of man, about the Cosmic Divine Plan and Program in operation, and about the profound spiritual significance of our lives.

Meher Baba, in His lifetime, had abandoned the use of the two mighty mediums of communication of our time -the spoken and the written word. Before commencing His mystic silence from 10 July 1925, Meher Baba had said, "**I have come not to teach, but to awaken**". About His mission on earth, Meher Baba says in His "Final Declaration":

"I have not come to establish anything new. I have come to put life into the old. I have not come to establish retreats or ashrams. I create them for the purpose of my universal work, only to repeatedly dissolve them once that purpose has been served.

"The universe is My ashram, and every heart is My house, but I manifest only in those hearts in which all, other than Me, ceases to live.

"When my universal religion of love is on the verge of fading into insignificance, I come to breathe life into it and to do away with the farce of dogmas that defile it in the name of religions and stifle it with ceremonies and rituals.

"The present universal confusion and unrest has filled the heart of man with greater lust for power and a greed for wealth and farce, bringing in its wake untold misery, hatred jealousy, frustration and fear. Suffering in the world is at its height, in spite of all the striving to spread peace and prosperity to bring about lasting happiness.

"For man to have a glimpse of lasting happiness, he has first to realize God, being in all, knows all; that God alone acts and reacts through all; that God, in the guise of countless animate and inanimate entities, experiences the innumerable varied phenomena of suffering and happiness. Thus, it is God who has brought suffering in human experience to its height, and God alone who will efface this illusory suffering and bring the illusory happiness to its height."

Superficial and exhibitionistic affirmations of religious faiths, creation of cultist groups or societies and holding of conferences and seminars are of no use. Meher Baba says:

"To affirm religious faiths, to establish societies, or to hold conferences will never bring about the feeling of unity and oneness in the life of mankind, now completely absorbed in the 'manyness' of illusion. Unity in the midst of diversity can be made to be felt only by touching the very core of the heart. That is the work for which I have come.

"I have come to sow the seed of love in your hearts so that, in spite of all superficial diversity which your life in illusion must experience and endure, the feeling of oneness, through love, is brought about amongst all the nations, creeds, sects and castes of the world."

Meher Baba rejects over-indulgence in the intellectual pursuits of God and points out the futility of the attempts to explain, interpret and understand God. Meher Baba says:

"God cannot be explained, He cannot be argued about, He cannot be theorized, nor can He be discussed. God can only be lived.

"Nevertheless, all that is said here and explained about God to appease the intellectual convulsions of the mind of man, still lacks many more words and further explanations because the TRUTH is that the Reality must be realized and the divinity of God must be attained and lived.

"To understand the infinite, eternal Reality is NOT the GOAL of individualized beings in the Illusion of Creation, because the Reality can never be understood; it is to be realized by conscious experience. Therefore, the GOAL is to realize the Reality and attain the 'I am God ' state in human form."

The above statement appeared as the conclusion of His book, "God Speaks". Millions of Meher Baba lovers, all over the world, strongly feel that through such utterances, and through repeated emphasis on His own role as the Divine Awakener, Meher Baba has revealed that now the conceptual is out and the experiential is in; and the world is all set to undertake the transition from the rational to the intuitional. About the emergence of a New Humanity, Meher Baba says:

"Humanity will attain a new mode of life through the free and unhampered interplay of pure love from heart to heart. The coming civilization of the New Humanity shall be ensouled not by dry intellectual doctrines but by living spiritual experience.

"The New Humanity will be freed from a life of limitations, allowing unhampered scope for the creative life of the spirit; and it will break the attachment to external forms and learn to subordinate them to the claims of the spirit.

"When it is recognized that there are no claims greater than the claims of the universal divine life which, without exception, includes everyone and everything, love will not only establish peace, harmony and happiness in social, national and international spheres, but it will shine in its purity and beauty."

For the author, **Shore to Shoreless** has a profound spiritual significance. It was November 1995, when the author had a massive heart attack at Manipal in the State of Karnatak, south of India. He was rushed to Bombay on 1st of December for an emergency open-heart surgery, which was performed successfully the next day. On 3 December, the author's condition became critical and un-controllable due to a sudden and alarming spurt in the rate of his heartbeats. Oblivious of his post-surgery complex condition, he assumed a cross-legged posture on his bed and tried to control the heartbeats through Yoga *Pranayam*. This, however, proved to be a futile effort. All the emergency medication, given at that time, failed to produce any appreciable change in his condition. Author's consciousness passed into the twilight zone of life and death. He saw his wife entering the ICCU, sobbing and crying. Holding a framed picture of Meher Baba in her hands, she sat in front of the monitors. Later, he learnt that in reality no body came in. In that body transcending state of consciousness, he saw various pictures of a smiling Meher Baba revolving in space. An inner voice instructed the author to lie down immediately and roll to his left side. The moment he did that, his condition became normal. The author sincerely believes that his life was saved because of a divine intervention. Whatever days, months, or years of life, those are given to him now, are for completing the tasks internally assigned to him by Meher Baba. This book was one of them.

It was in June 1927 that Meher Baba had a cabin built for Him on Meherabad hill with bamboo matting and tin sheets. Meherabad of Ahmednagar, India, is the place where Meher Baba's Tomb-Shrine is located. In July, Meher Baba had a pit dugged inside the cabin. Baba then started staying in this cabin-crypt fasting, and giving spiritual discourses to young boys of His school that was started by Him to integrate spiritual curriculum with that of formal the education. Surprisingly, His discourses to those young boys were on highly complex and difficult to comprehend spiritual themes covering creation, stages of evolution, involution of

consciousness, subtle and mental inner planes. The effect of these discourses on those boys was magical, and quite a few of them passed through a phase of deep mystical experiences. Author of this book believes that by giving those discourses to children and working on their consciousness, Meher Baba had opened the floodgates of profound spiritual knowledge for the entire world without any reservation and distinction. **Shore to Shoreless** covers those very themes and endeavors to integrate them with the current scientific knowledge to create a new integrated world-view. Meher Baba says, "If science deals only with material advancement, then such science would be said to have nothing of spirituality. But when the same science is expressed to make the meaning of life clear, then it is also a branch of spirituality - just as art, if expressed rightly, is spiritual, if expressed wrongly, material."

What books and articles constituted the primary resource material for the presentation of Meher Baba's 'thought' in **Shore to Shoreless**? This question assumes special significance in the context of Meher Baba's prolonged silence covering a period of forty four years out of seventy four years of his life on earth. Expressions such as "Meher Baba said", "Meher Baba says", "Meher Baba explained," need be understood in this light and in relation to the particular mode of communication adopted by him in a given period of time.

There can be other questions as well. One may ask, whether the 'thought' of Meher Baba had undergone any evolution, modification and change? A recap of some of the major events of His life, particularly those related to the various modes of communication used by Him from time to time, would be of help in answering these questions.

Meher Baba was born of Persian parents in Poona, India, on 25 February 1894, and was given the name of Merwan Sheriar, the family name being Irani. In 1913 Merwan became God realized through a kiss on the forehead bestowed by the great Sufi Perfect Master or *Sadguru*, Hazrat Babajan, a woman of over hundred years. The most significant aspect of Meher Baba's life is His declaration that He is the Ancient One - the Avatar, the Buddha, the Christ, the Rasul - Who, in reality, is eternally one with God, but comes into the physical world in the

human form repeatedly. Avatar descends down with a veil, which must be removed, and His *avataric* consciousness be stabilized through a mystic process by the five Perfect Masters or Sadgurus. Hazrat Babajan, Sai Baba of Shirdi, Upasani Maharaj of Sakori, Narayan Maharaj of Kedgaon and Tajuddin Baba of Nagpur were the five Perfect Masters who worked on the *avataric* consciousness of Meher Baba. Hazrat Babajan, by her kiss, removed the veil; while Upasani Maharaj, in a period stretching from 1915 to 1921, worked to stabilize the *avataric* consciousness of Meher Baba.

During 1915-16, Meher Baba worked for a very short period as a schoolteacher in Nargol, Gujarat, in western India. It was in this period that Meher Baba had revealed the cosmic "Divine Theme" and visualized its presentation in the form of what is now known as the "Divine Theme Chart". "The Divine Theme", with its graphic presentations, has the unique distinction of being visualized by Meher Baba during a period of time when His *avataric* consciousness was still under the process of stabilization under the spiritual care of Upasani Maharaj. "The Divine Theme" can be regarded as the central dogma of the 'thought' of Meher Baba. It was later elaborated and explained in detail, but never modified or altered. "The Divine Theme" and the two charts were later published as a Supplement to Meher Baba's unique book "God Speaks". "The Divine Theme" describes the spiritual processes of evolution, re-incarnation and the involutionary path leading to God realization.

1921 to 1923 was the period in which Meher Baba created the first cluster of His close disciples. He took forty of them with Him to Dadar, Bombay. The group lived together in a spacious house named 'Manzil-e-Meem', meaning 'Abode of the Perfect Master'. This was the period when Meher Baba gave discourses on diverse spiritual themes. These discourses were not in the form of scholarly analytical and comparative presentations. These were the revelations, which He shared with His mandali or close disciples. Ramjoo (A.K.Abdulla) and Dr. Abdul Ghani (a Homeopathy practitioner) took care to note them down. In 1933, A. K. Abdulla published them in the form of a book with the title, "Shri Meher Baba, His Philosophy and Teachings: Compiled from His Own Dictations". Some portions of this book were later revised and enlarged by Dr. Abdul Ghani and appeared in

"Meher Baba Journal" in 1942. A. K. Abdulla's book was later serialized in "The Awakener" in 1954.

After commencing His silence, which lasted until the last day of His life, Meher Baba started communicating, first by using a slate and chalk stick. From 13 July 1925, Meher Baba started writing a book and this was completed by 1926 end. Mahatma Gandhi had the fortune of going through one of the chapters of this book in 1931. Meher Baba used to keep this book in a metal box with its key quite often tied to a string round His neck. The book contains spiritual secrets revealed never before. About the book, Meher Baba has said that it would be the Bible, Koran and Gita of humanity in future. Whereabouts of this Book are now not known, but Baba has assured that it will surface up at the preordained time. After completing the book, Meher Baba stopped writing from 2nd of January 1927, and started conveying through English alphabets from newspapers, and also through hand gestures. Later, a regular alphabet board replaced these.

January 1929, marks the beginning of the first monthly journal named 'The Meher Message' that was devoted exclusively to Meher Baba. This journal published a series of articles bearing the name "His Divine Majesty Sadguru Meher Baba", and later "The Divine Lord, Shri Sadguru Meher Baba" as the author. In view of the fact that Meher Baba had abandoned writing from January 1927, it can be presumed that these articles were the compilations made from His direct and indirect dictations given to the close disciples. The first article was "What is God?" which appeared in February 1929, followed by "What is Love?" and by a series on "God, Creator and Creation" that was concluded in December. Later, Meher Baba elaborated these themes, by adding more details, but without any significant alteration.

"God Speaks" is the book that enjoys the unique distinction of being the one dictated by Meher Baba through an alphabet board before the abandonment of even this medium of communication by Him from 7 October 1954 onwards. The book was first published by Dodd Mead & Company, New York, in 1955 and contains ten sections or chapters, and an exhaustive Supplement. Out of its ten chapters, Meher Baba dictated first eight chapters in their entirety. Chapters IX

and X, "The Ten States of God" and "The Conclusion", were written by Eruch Jessawala, one of the closest disciples, in elaboration of notes dictated to him by Meher Baba. "God Speaks" is a unique, matchless, and authoritative Divine Statement on Spiritual Cosmology and Processes. Meher Baba gave great importance to this book.

"Discourses" and "The Everything and The Nothing" are two other most important books bearing the name of Meher Baba as the author. "Discourses" is a compilation of the talks of Meher Baba on a wide spectrum of spiritual themes given over a period of many years. Dr. C. D. Deshmukh, a Professor of Philosophy and a close disciple, was entrusted with the task of taking dictations and notes, and presenting the material in a coherently classified manner. "The Everything and The Nothing" is a compilation of some selected themes described and explained by Meher Baba. There are many other publications bearing the name of Meher Baba as the author which are the compilations from the direct (through the spoken word in pre-1925 phase) and indirect (through an alphabet board & hand gestures) dictations given by Him from time to time.

Having discarded the spoken and the written word, and also physical mediums of indirect communication such as the alphabet board, Meher Baba started communicating totally through His own language of gestures. A few of His close disciples were meticulously trained by Him to read and translate this language. It is interesting to note that the gestures Baba used for communication were not the alphabetical A B C D -the formation of fingers a silent person is apt to make use of. Nor they constituted some sort of a sign language as used by the deaf and dumb, but were free and easy and somewhat exaggerated gestures uniquely His own that described most vividly what He wished to convey.

In May 1967, at Guru Prasad Palace, Poona, India, Meher Baba called his close disciple Bhau Kalchuri and gestured: "You have to write one book titled 'The Nothing and The Everything'. 'The Everything and The Nothing' is already written and you made the translation interesting and expanded it with songs and a commentary. Now you will write 'The Nothing and The Everything'. This is an important book. I will give you ten percent of the Book I wrote in 1925 and 1926."

This dictation of points through gestures continued for about five months at Meherazad, Ahmednagar, between June and November of 1967. Two sections of this book namely, 'The Mischievous Chicken' and 'Two Kings' were given in their entirety. Remaining two sections, 'Infinite Intelligence' and 'Tales' were developed from the points given by Meher Baba. Manifestation, Inc., South Carolina in 1981 published this book. The book bears the name of Bhau Kalchuri as the author.

Shore to Shoreless relies primarily on the books bearing Meher Baba's name as the author in general and on serialized articles in 'The Meher Message' and 'Meher Baba Journal', 'God Speaks', 'Discourses', 'The Everything and The Nothing' and 'The Nothing and The Everything' in particular. It also makes use of those portions, in some of the books, which were directly or indirectly dictated by Meher Baba. For the biographical details, **Shore to Shoreless** has depended almost totally on Bhau Kalchuri's historic work, 'Meher Prabhu - Lord Meher: The Biography of the Avatar of the Age Meher Baba' published by Manifestation, Inc., U.S.A.

Table of Contents

Acknowledgements

About The Author

Preface

1. We Launch Ourselves	1
2. Not One Universe	16
3. Fire Without, Fire Within	29
4. Stairway to Big Bang	38
5. Chasing the Desire to its Source.....	56
6. Shadows of Shadows	74
7. Hall of Mirrors	107
8. Beginning of the Beginning.....	140
9. Sugar Dolls on a Diving Mission	190
10. Mary's Magic Mirror	255
11. Shores of Shoreless	296
12. Splashing Joy, Floating in Eternity	418

References

Table of Quotations



I and my wife Lata, dedicate this book at the lotus feet of our
divine beloved – Avatar Meher Baba whose Will is Law, whose Wish governs the
Law and whose Love sustains the Universe.

It was one of those rare and incomprehensible coincidences, which had brought me face to face with Ram, Mika, Rahim, Mary and Merwan. I was strolling rather restlessly on the promenade along the coast of the vast Arabian Sea. It was a moon-less night but the sky was studded with countless shining stars. Feeling immensely dwarfed against a never-ending ocean and limitless firmament, I started brooding over something which was tormenting me deeply. Reports about the possible cloning of human beings, test-tube babies, surrogate mothers and the trading of human organs were the cause of the highly agitated state of my mind. Somewhere in this maze of thoughts, my consciousness shifted to sub-conscious levels and I started dreaming and fantasizing. However, those visions turned out to be most horrible nightmare

In one of these nightmares, I saw myself surrounded by my own clones. My young, middle-aged and old-aged clone. They were pulling and pushing me, and beating me mercilessly. They were shouting and telling me that 'They are me and I am them ', while I was resisting and insisting, 'I am what I am.'

In another, I saw that some youngsters had pounced on me with huge surgical knives, scissors, scalpels and forceps. They laid me on the beach sand and tore apart my skin cutting my flesh into pieces. One of them scooped out my eyes and others took out my heart, liver, pancreas and kidneys. They then danced with great joy, cherishing the thought about the money, which they will make by selling those organs in the human organ market. Then they dragged my dead body and dumped it into the sea.

Another vision succeeded in which I saw my dead mother in rags with a big sticker stuck to her belly with the words, "I am penniless and hungry. My womb is for hire." Then I saw several boys and girls tossing huge test-tubes in their hands

and haggling with my mother, hurling abuses and saying, "Come here you old oven and bake these doughnuts."

And that night, on that promenade, I started running like a mad man shouting at the highest pitch of my voice soaked with pain, 'Stop. Stop this, please. I cannot stand it any more - this tyrant satanic monstrosity, the tyranny of this so-called modern world. This ruthless world is without moral, spiritual and human values and worships only the trinity of Money, Power and Lust. It follows only one dharma, the dharma of science based materialism.'

'This cannot be the same world, which gave birth to Zoroaster, Ram, Krishna, Buddha, Jesus and Mohammed. This surely cannot be that world for which our ancestors have toiled hard and sacrificed their lives.'

'This world is a bloody guillotine which has been created by some self-centred arrogant maniacs living in the garb of the clergy, scientists, technologists, politicians, industrialists and mafia dons to chop and mince all of us.'

Dreaming that night, I also saw a huge and strange contraption, which was making a deafening noise. It was a golden guillotine with a razor-sharp blade suspended very high in the air. Then I saw an endless queue of men, women and children moving slowly and steadily towards that guillotine to get themselves beheaded. I could see that the entire coast was littered with numerous heads and head-less torsos.

I started crying and my wails filled the air and reached distant skies. It was then that I discovered to my great relief that five young persons were standing by my side. One of them held my hands with great love and compassion, while the others caressed me with a softness, which reminded me of my mother.

They consoled me saying, 'Calm down. What is the matter with you? What makes you cry and wail? How can we help you?'

With tears in my eyes, I said, 'See how many men, women and children have been beheaded here. This world is stinking. It has totally dehumanized all of us. This guillotine of materialism is slicing our bodies, minds and souls into pieces. Jesus said, "For what shall it profit a man, if he shall gain the whole world and lose his own soul?"^{1.1}. However, something quite contrary is happening here. Our souls are being sucked and gobbled by this treacherous whirlpool of materialism. Is it not surprising and disgusting that all this is happening right in front of us and we can do nothing but watch helplessly. This helplessness is my agony. What can one do in a situation like this? Where is the way out of this vicious self-imposed necessity of self-destruction? '

Hearing this, one of them, who looked like an angel with a divinely radiant face, said, ' Ram, Rahim, Mika and Mary, look. Here is another which-leg-first syndrome victim.'

They all laughed with merriment, but without any trace of sarcasm. It appeared that something profound was spoken which only they understood and enjoyed together.

Merwan was the name of the one with the divinely radiant face. He was endowed with an out-of-the-world softness and naturalness. Merwan said, 'Stop crying. There are no heads and torsos here. There is also no trace of any guillotine. You are just imagining things. Look, it's a beautiful night illuminated by star-studded heavens. Listen to the music of the waves. Touch the sands and feel our sweet mother earth. My friends here - Ram, Rahim, Mary, Mika- had also come in the same frame of mind in which you are finding yourself now, feeling helpless and suffocated.'

'The outer world is just a projection of our inner world, which we have built and nurtured for ourselves. If this science-based materialism is enslaving the world, it is because we have allowed this to happen. If the world has become barren of love and compassion, it is because we have made our hearts barren of love and compassion. If the world has become insensitive and dehumanized, it is

because we have become insensitive and selfish. Love is a gift from God and we have rendered ourselves unworthy of receiving this gift.'

Listening to Merwan was like listening to soul soothing music. Merwan continued, 'But there is a brighter side to all this. The day when the world suddenly shows its ugliest face and fills our hearts with pain and concern, that is the day when a new dawn fills our minds with bright colors and fresh visions of the soul's beauty and splendour. That day becomes a turning point of our lives beseeching us to forget the past and lead life afresh.'

'This young girl is Mary, born of Christian parents. Mary graduated from Cambridge, England, where she has studied physics. She fell in love and got married, but the marriage proved to be a disappointing and painful affair. She divorced her husband whom she loved with great passion. Mary's parents had also separated when she was a child. There was very little to inspire or bring cheer in her life as a child.'

'The whole of the West is suffering from this cancer of broken marriages. Mary's parents worked like maniacs for their own selfish ends with very little time for each other and for their only child. Possessed by this madness of illusory material pursuits, the entire Christian world has made mockery of the words of Jesus. Jesus has said, "But in the beginning, at the time of creation God made them male and female, as the scripture says. And for this reason a man will leave his father and mother and unite with his wife, and the two will become one. Therefore, they are no longer two, but one. Man must not separate, then, what God has joined together."^{1,2} Also: "A man who divorces his wife and marries another woman commits adultery against his wife. In the same way, a woman who divorces her husband and marries another man commits adultery."^{1,3} Mary's parents, and Mary herself, did not listen to these words of wisdom. Mary's life became a tale of never ending misery. For a while she sought relief in psychedelic drugs but soon became aware of their dreadful consequences and luckily salvaged herself before it was too late. Mary then became interested in eastern philosophies and gurus, and came to India, on what she calls a spiritual

pilgrimage. However, this pilgrimage nearly turned into a nightmare when, in an ashram at Rishikesh, she barely escaped from being gang-raped. Mary now seeks pure love, which she failed to get from her parents, and which she failed to give to her husband and others.'

`Ram was born a Hindu in an orthodox Brahmin family. He was brought up in an overwhelming atmosphere of dry rituals, ceremonies and pompous religiosity and morality. Ram became a schizophrenic. This was most unfortunate. Adi Shankaracharya, the greatest among Hindu monks and acharyas, regards the Supreme Self to be beyond religion, economics, sex and even the idea of liberation from the cycle of birth and rebirth. But Ram's family believed only in do's and don'ts of their religion and never looked beyond.'

`Ram studied comparative philosophy at the university level but empty words and concepts brought no solace to him. He became addicted to television and was drowned in the world of images, fantasies and high-pitched sounds that distorted his equilibrium with the outer world and reality. Ram suffered a nervous breakdown because a serious guilt complex, born out of his indulgence in sensual fantasies, clashed with his puritan upbringing. He experimented with Yoga and various meditation practices, and found them not of much use. Ram is now seeking purity and peace of mind.'

`Rahim was born of Muslim parents. All members of his family had western education and adopted western ways of living. This enraged the conservative Muslim clergy who ruled the country of Rahim's birth and in an encounter, they massacred his parents, brothers and sisters. This was most unfortunate because the family was deeply religious and believed that there is no God but Allah and Mohammed is His prophet. At that time Rahim was pursuing higher studies in Biology at an American University.'

`Rahim developed a deep aversion to organized religions and religious clergy. He became interested in the philosophy of J. Krishnamurti and got associated with a group in Ojai. A critic of reductionistic sciences, Rahim appreciates the holistic

vision of ecology. Rahim awaits the advent of a new man and a new humanity based on love, brotherhood and spiritual knowledge.'

`Mika Obayashi was born of Japanese parents. Brought up in an atmosphere of opulence, with religion only as an ornamental frill, Mika was born with a diamond studded golden spoon in his mouth. His father was a billionaire and reigned over a vast global industrial empire. Mika's mother was an American by birth and worked in a casino before her marriage to Mika's father. A sharp value conflict developed between Mika and his parents. Mika got disgusted with his home environment of greed, crime and lust. He renounced the world and joined a Buddhist Zen Monastery as a monk. The Monastery trained him in esoteric meditation practices to silence his mind and go beyond words and concepts. However, the lives of some senior monks were totally mundane, full of deceit and hypocrisy. Disillusioned, Mika came to India in search of inner peace and silence.'

I asked, 'What about you Merwan? What is your story?'

Merwan did not reply. Rahim took me aside and said, 'Merwan never answers that question. When we asked him the same question, he told us only his name and nothing more. Mary persisted and was confident that she will be able to draw him out and would learn more about him. However, she also failed. At times, Merwan talks very strangely. Once he said, "There is nothing like chance or coincidence in the cosmos. Past, present and future events are all contained in the Eternal Now. There is no distance of space and time between the beginning and the end. Happenings appear as chance only because we look at them locally in a restricted manner and lack the capacity to view them integrally. For example, all of you can think that it was just a chance that has brought us together. However, in reality, this is not true. I knew that all of us would assemble here, and awaited your arrival." At times, Merwan gives the impression of a highly impulsive and volatile individual. But sometimes he enters into long spells of silence in which he behaves like a somnambulist, totally disconnected with the external world and completely withdrawn.'

After listening about their lives, Merwan, Ram, Rahim, Mika, Mary stopped appearing strangers to me. I started feeling that I had a deeper connection with them. I could also feel that somewhere our destinies were converging, and that we had been brought together for some special purpose.

Breaking the silence, I asked, 'What was that joke about the which-leg-first syndrome victim, Merwan? '

On this, they all laughed again. Merwan said, 'Better ask Mika about it. Mika, why don't you tell that story, please.'

Mika narrated, ' That's a well-known poem by Ogden Nash about a centipede. This centipede was living happily in a lush green garden. Eating, strolling and lying lazily around, it grew fatter and fatter because of a contented and happy life until a toad jokingly asked him a question:

The centipede was happy quite,
Until a toad in fun
Said: "Pray, which leg goes after which?"
This worked his mind to such a pitch,
He lay distracted in a ditch,
Considering how to run.^{1.4}

Intervening Mika, Merwan said, 'This worry about the world has made each one of you that philosopher centipede. That is why I have planned things in a different way for all of you.'

'We have assembled here to undertake a mystic voyage across the ocean of Infinite Real Nothing, which appears as Everything, and misleads all of us. Our destination, however, is the shoreless ocean of Infinite Real Everything. We will be traversing astronomical distances without actually moving out from our place.'

`But Merwan, we all are seeking things which are real, not abstractions. Moreover, we seek those things in our own world and for our own world. We do not seek them in an imaginary distant and strange world,' I asked.

`I agree with you that all of you are seekers of things which are real', Merwan said. `Mary seeks real love. Ram seeks real purity. Rahim seeks real freedom and brotherhood. Mika seeks real silence and peace. And you professor, are seeking real knowledge and power to transform your world which you call your own on one hand, and that which stinks on the other. If the world of yours is really having all those real things, which you all are seeking, then why don't you go back to that world, and get them there? '

Merwan slowly walked away, and excepting me, everyone else followed him. Silence prevailed. Silence, which made me uncomfortable. In that brief lonely moment, I mused at the fact that Merwan called me Professor. How did he know that I was a teacher?

`Merwan, Mary, Ram, Rahim, Mika, come back. Do not leave me alone, please,' I said.

Hearing my call, Merwan came back and with him came Ram, Rahim, Mika and Mary. One by one they all hugged and kissed me with love and affection. It was a moment of great ecstasy for me. Cherishing the beauty of this ecstatic moment, I could not stop thinking how the world, in which we live, has enforced upon us a regime of cultivated behavior and mannerism. The training, which it gives in the name of etiquette, trains us to hide our emotions and mask our feelings. We are taught to express our love, affection, care and concern only through words and guarded expressions which are full of hypocrisy. We have now started to touch, caress, embrace and hug only through this wordy remote panel. I swayed in my thoughts thinking how telephone, e-mail and Internet have accelerated this process of total deprivation of physical proximity and touch.

The happiness and the sudden release of tension, which I got from those hugs and kisses, transported me to an altogether different world. A world overflowing with human warmth and compassion.

Merwan said softly, 'Real love, real values and purity, real freedom and goodwill, real silence and peace, real knowledge and power -all are things of the Ocean of Infinite Real Everything. This world, which is a part of the Ocean of Infinite Real Nothing, has none of them.'

'But we want these things for our sake and for the sake of others of our world; howsoever illusory it may appear to be', I said.

'But Professor, we find things only where they really exist. Once found, they can be taken anywhere. It is one God, who has become all this. All things are states of one God, who alone exists. Love is a cosmic reality, only because in reality I, you and we are not many, but One. The feeling of multiplicity and separateness is the creation of the alluring ocean of 'Infinite Real Nothing', which appears as 'Everything'. This myth of separateness is to be exploded first. That is why this voyage across the ocean of Nothing is necessary before we reach the shoreless ocean of 'Everything', Merwan said.

'Merwan, how can an ocean be an ocean, and still be without a shore? Moreover, Merwan, I think that this word "God" has become very much polluted. Would it not be better, if we avoid using this word?' I asked.

Merwan answered: 'The Ocean of Infinite Real Everything is shoreless because it contains within itself the Eternal Now. Because all things are states of one God, this Ocean of Everything is the supreme container of all these states of God. God is not a concept. God is not a meaningless word, which can be interpreted according to our whims and fancies. Only those, who have become one with God, have the authority to talk about God and explain. No wiser definition of God has ever been formulated, than the one Meher Baba gave spontaneously while travelling across the United States of America in 1956. Meher Baba said, "Philosophers, atheists and others may affirm or refute the existence of God, but

as long as they do not deny the very existence of their own being, they continue to testify to their belief in God - for I tell you with divine authority, that God is Existence, eternal and infinite. He is 'Everything'." ^{1.5}

'Existence of what?' I asked.

Merwan answered, 'God is Existence and the beyond. God is Consciousness and the beyond. The message is clear. Existence is Consciousness, and Consciousness is Existence. They are the same. All things are the states of Consciousness, because God is Consciousness and the beyond. This also means that the universe is structured in Consciousness. Consciousness includes the "conscious" as well as the "un-conscious". In 1929, Meher Baba, while explaining the nature of the Almighty *Paramatman* or *Parameshwar* or *Khuda*, had said, "He is One, not in the sense of half of two, but the One that remains forever One, without a second. He was always infinite, is infinite, and will always remain infinite. He is the shoreless ocean of Truth. He is beyond time and space, cause and effect. He is beyond instinct, intellect and inspiration." ^{1.6} In 1967, Meher Baba dictated the following to his close disciple, Bhau Kalchuri:

There is an Ocean, which has no shore.

That Ocean is so shoreless that there is no shore

Even to its shorelessness.

That Ocean is so infinite

That there is no end to Its Infinity.

That Infinite and Shoreless Ocean

is eternally calm and still.

That Ocean is the Ocean of Knowledge.

The basis of the Existence of this Divine Infinite Knowledge

Is knowledge itself, intelligence itself.

This Infinite Knowledge is totally natural and self-existent.

In this Infinite Knowledge is immersed Infinite Ignorance.

The existence of Infinite Ignorance is based on Infinite

knowledge, for the Existence of Infinite Knowledge

is not based on Infinite Ignorance.

Infinite knowledge is completely and absolutely still and calm

in the original state of the Ocean.

But in that Ocean all opposites are One;

In that Divine Ocean

Infinite Knowledge is infinitely Infinite Ignorance

and Infinite Ignorance is infinitely Infinite Knowledge.

That is, Consciousness and Unconsciousness are One.

Knowledge is Everything and Ignorance is Nothing;

Therefore in the original state of the Ocean -

The Beyond-Beyond of God,

Everything is Nothing and Nothing is Everything.^{1.7}

`Brain-washed by the reductionistic sciences, which are the products of the application of the conscious mind to explore the reality of the unconscious physical objects and processes, we are always too willing to accept a physical

interpretation of the ultimate reality. Theories like the one, which presents ultimate reality as a quadruped entity composed of gravitational, electromagnetic, strong and weak forces, attract us immensely. However, the spiritual wisdom, which puts Consciousness at the center-stage, does not appear to make any sense at all. The irony of the situation is that all these theories and postulations are the outcome of the application of the human mind, which is one of the components of Consciousness. This obsession with the physical is sheer fanatic madness.'

'We all agree with you, Merwan. We are now ready to undertake this voyage across the Ocean of Infinite Real Nothing. Nevertheless, we will need a spacious and strong boat, and a competent guide or Captain Familiar with the way across this ocean. Our journey would indeed be arduous and tortuous, as the distances would be astronomical. This is what you have told us ', I said.

All the while Ram, Rahim, Mary and Mika enjoyed my prolonged conversation with Merwan.

Merwan now gave the details of the journey: 'There is no doubt that first we would be covering distances in light years sailing across the visible universe. Then we will enter the world of microcosm, which is the world of sub-atomic particles, the building blocks of all things in the universe. We will collect galaxies, stars, planets with their satellites, asteroids, electrons, protons, neutrons, quarks and others in our cloth bags which we will carry with us.'

'We will board the mystic boat of our collective "Samkalpa" or Imagination or Ideation. Meher Baba would be with us as our guide and Captain. In 1956, while sitting on the shore of Myrtle Beach, South Carolina, U.S.A., Meher Baba said, "This Ocean has a shore. I am the Shoreless Ocean." ^{1.8} In the same visit, he also said, "I have crossed the limited earthly oceans to bring to you all, the limitless and shoreless Ocean of Divine Love. Those who do not dare to love me, seek safety on the shores." ^{1.9} Meher Baba is no longer in his physical form. He had dropped his body on 31st of January 1969. He alone knows the way across the Oceans of Nothing and Everything. All things, about this unprecedented mystic

journey, would become clear the moment we reach the shoreless ocean of Infinite Real Everything. Till then, there should be no more questions, please.'

`OM MEHER OM .OM MEHER OM .OM MEHER OM'

`This would be our song and mantra. I will play it on my flute in my mind, and you will repeat it in your mind. Mary would love to carry her guitar, and Rahim his harmonica. Dholuk, the Indian drum, would also be a useful article. God loves music and humor.'

And then almost suddenly, Merwan started playing OM MEHER OM on the flute of his mind. OM MEHER OM, OM MEHER OM, OM MEHER OM, OM MEHER OM. We repeated this prayer-song in our minds. And as our minds became one, chanting OM MEHER OM. OM MEHER OM, we found ourselves in a transparent glass like spacious cabin.

We saw a full size picture of Meher Baba placed on the glass wall against the outline of a window. We found ourselves seated on the floor in front of this picture of Meher Baba. Merwan with a flute. Mary with a guitar. Rahim with a harmonica. A dholak, the Indian drum, was also there in a corner. There was also a pile of cloth bags. Merwan had said that we would need them to collect some of the galaxies, stars and planets as souvenirs. Our voyage had commenced, almost instantaneously.

Merwan started playing the dholak and said, `Come on every body. We would be singing an *arati*, which is very dear to Meher Baba. Meher Baba wrote this arati himself. It is in Gujarati, which is one of the prominent languages of India. We would be singing its translation in English. I would sing it in its original tune.'

Arati is a prayer with a difference. *Arati* sings the glory of God. A form of God is necessary for visual concentration and emotional identification. We concentrated on the form of Meher Baba, which was right in front of all of us. Singing the arati was sheer joy, with Merwan leading and playing the dholak; Mary, her guitar; and Rahim, his harmonica.

O God command that the fire of our
Ignorance be extinguished
Your lovers yearn for you to bestow
Upon them the light of faith
O Murshed Meher Baba we lay our
Heads at your feet
O Meher Baba You have made yourself
Perfectly aware of your Godhood
You are the Lord of Truth, You are the
Lover and the Beloved in one
Being the torrent of infinite knowledge
You are the ocean of oneness
O Master, bestow upon us wayfarers
The knowledge of Ezad (the only one worthy of worship)
For You, O Parmatma, are omniscient
And are Divine knowledge itself
Give us to drink of the cup of God's love
That we become intoxicated
O Saki, we offer our lives in sacrifice to
You, give us this draught
Only if you steer our ship while in mid-
Ocean can we remain afloat
O Meher Baba, the Captain of our ship

You are our protector

O Meher Baba, the Captain of our ship

You are our protector^{1.10}

The whole atmosphere, in our lovely cabin, became serene and surcharged with devotional fervor. All of us were full of joy and enthusiasm. Mary was in a singing mood.

Only those return to Eternity

Who on earth seek out Eternity.^{1.11}

We had launched ourselves.

In the awe inspiring darkness of space, with no proximate object, it was impossible to know whether we were moving or were stationary! Distant stars and constellations appeared much more like patches on a gigantic collage and much less as real entities. A feeling of eerie emptiness permeated our awareness. It was only occasionally, that some brightly burning or mildly luminous forms that would whiz past us at a relative nearness, reminded us of our motion. Merwan had said that we would be journeying across the ocean of Infinite Real Nothing, and truly, this dark expanse of space was really proving to be nothing; even in spite of countless shining stars adorning its backdrop.

Every thing appeared as part of a dream, but somehow, the ambient dreaminess of this dream rendered the eerie feeling of emptiness, not so eerie. Mary appeared to be humming something.

'Mary sing out loudly, please ', pleaded Ram.

'I am humming an interesting version of a nursery rhyme which sums up my feelings about the juggling of words so repeatedly indulged in by Merwan. Merwan appears to be obsessed with "Nothing" appearing as "Everything" and "Everything" appearing as "Nothing," Mary said jokingly. 'Now listen, everybody '.

Yesterday upon the stair
We met somebody who wasn't there
She wasn't there when we met her today,
How we wish that she goes away.

We all enjoyed the paradoxical rhyme of Mary that in a way described the illusory Nothing beautifully.

Merwan said, 'Spiritual knowledge cannot be expressed in the routine format and rules of a language. That is why Prophets and spiritual Perfect Masters make use of language in a different manner. In 1943, Meher Baba, while explaining his Divine Theme chart to a select group, said: "There are three languages in which the Avatar teaches: In ordinary language, for the masses who follow the *shariat* (custom) and ritual of their religion, so that they can understand; In language both ordinary and mystical, for the few advanced souls; In language wholly mystical, for the circle."^{2.1}

'Mystic language and expressions are quite often difficult to comprehend. They may appear meaningless, self-contradictory, and even absurd. However, this is because they endeavor to describe that which is transcendental and cannot be described. It is the imperfection and the limitation of the language, which make it impossible to describe reality - the ultimate and the supreme reservoir of all things known and unknown. Mystic language, therefore, is always suggestive and indicative. It is full of many blanks to be filled in by the seeker of the truth. Some parts are described and some parts are to be integrally visualized and completed. Obviously, their comprehension differs from person to person as they differ in their capacities of creative abstraction and integral visualization.'

'Language is a phonetic code developed by man to identify, correlate and give meaning to auditory and visual sensory pulses or inputs. Alphabets codify different sounds, and words are specific sound patterns correlated with images and experiences. Language provides the building blocks of thought. No language, no thought - this is the axiom.'

'In reality, objects and processes of our external world are shadows of shadows of the Reality and that is why it is impossible to describe totally and completely even the tiniest of the objects of the world. This innate complexity of the external objects, and the structural and functional imperfections of a language, restrict our perception and experience of the outer world only to segments and provides us with only a tentative understanding of the outer world.'

`Merwan, why don't you explain this with an example which we can understand easily,' suggested Ram.

`That is a good suggestion ', Merwan said. `Imagine me as one who is born blind. That means I have only auditory memory. Now, enchanted by the music that Mary plays on her guitar, I ask her to give me an idea of the thing, which produces such a pleasing music.'

`Mary tells me that the music has been produced by her guitar the music. Now, I request Mary to describe the thing, which she calls a guitar. Come on Mary. Go ahead and describe.'

Mary looked quite enthusiastic to respond, but failed to do so immediately. She said, `Merwan, I think you are right. I can now feel how difficult it is to describe correctly and fully, a simple object such as this guitar. Moreover, that too to a man born blind and endowed with only auditory memories. I can only say that guitar is a musical instrument made of wood having metallic strings. Its strings are fixed on a wooden rod like structure, which joins to a hollow wooden belly sort of a thing. How funny and how meaningless this description would be to a person who is born blind.'

`We all are born blind to things involved in our own origins and origins of other things in the universe', Merwan said. `It is inevitable that our attempts to describe these things, and explain them, should appear paradoxical and meaningless. But, in case, if we really want to talk about such things, a language will have to be used in spite of its innate imperfections and limitations.'

`And Mary, the guitar story does not end with your description. My question was - 'what is that thing which has produced such a wonderful music'? Ram, if guitar is the thing which has produced the music, then why it is not doing so right now?'

`That indeed is quite a thought provoking observation, Merwan. The guitar did not produce that music. The music was in fact, produced by Mary' said Ram.

`No, Ram, No. Mary cannot produce that sort of music without her guitar,' Merwan pointed out. `It is this interdependence, inter-convertibility and interrelatedness of things of our universe, which make even a simple happening like creation of music so difficult to comprehend and describe. Imagine then our utter helplessness and unsurpassable incompetence in describing things which are concerned with the beginning of all beginnings.'

`Merwan, you have made things quite clear now by drawing our attention to the nature of mystic language and expressions. Somewhere inside, I was reacting sharply to your use of the expression, the "Eternal Now", earlier. It sounded not only contradictory, but also quite meaningless. How could the immediately available moment - the "Now" - be eternal? If a moment can be qualified as "eternal", how do we define eternity? Somehow, I just ignored the whole thing and decided not to start a row over it,' said Rahim.

`Rahim, you are not at fault. Any body would have reacted in the same manner. However, in stead of adopting an escapist attitude, you should have explored its true meaning. That would have been a real exciting affair. Mystic expressions and language can never be decoded, and understood, by adopting a literal approach. They need a meditative approach to discover the meanings, which go beyond the literal meanings of words,' Merwan said. `Let us, for example, meditate on the expression, the "Eternal Now". "Now" is the key word. This "Now" is always available. It is that, which alone is always available. It contains the past moment as memory and the next moment only as a probability. If we ever come across with the next moment, it will always be in the form of "Now", and nothing else.'

`We say that the cosmos exists. This cosmos is existing only because it is filling the "Now". Rivers are simultaneously originating, flowing over great distances, and merging in the seas. All this is happening in the "Now". Planets are revolving and moving, along with their satellites, in the "Eternal Now". Electrons and other subatomic particles are interacting in the "Eternal Now". Close your eyes, and experience the profound feeling that your totality is existing in the "Eternal Now". The "Eternal Now" contains the past, present and future of all things. Even if we

die, this "Now" will not cease to exist. It will remain available to others. Since we all are born in "Now" and we all die in "Now", we always remain available for birth and death. That which does not exist in the "Eternal Now", does not exist at all and can never exist. Moreover, that which exists, exists only in the "Now", and undergoes only the cycle of appearance and disappearance. This meditation, on the eternal "Now", can be as endless as the "Eternal Now" itself. Meher Baba has described this "Eternal Now" beautifully:

"Through enslavement to the temporary and the passing, man deprives himself of the eternal and lasting. Each moment with which man is confronted can either tighten the grip of the false or deliver him to the Truth. God is the only Reality and He is the fountainhead of all love, beauty, peace and happiness. Even in and through the "fleeting now" of the false, God is eternally inviting man to Himself, affirming Himself as the Truth of man's being. Those who dare to see and love God in everyone and everything, experience Him as the everlasting immediate Presence.

Only when his mind is utterly detached from the false is it possible for man to disentangle himself from the repetitive clutches of the fleeting moment. Then and only then can he become established in the "eternal now", which everlastingly includes the eternal past and the eternal future. The eternal "I AM" is an unfailing assurance of the only Reality which ever was, is and will be.

The way to peace and fulfillment in union with God, the divine Beloved, is a daring dive into the "eternal now". Not by fruitless surveys of the past, nor by elusive longings for the future, nor by enslavement to the fleeting moment, but by shaking everything for God, is it possible for you to experience yourself as the illimitable ocean of love. Here and nowhere else is the final solution of all your problems. Love born in the Truth liberates without binding and fulfills without overpowering; it is a pure blessing not only for yourself, but for each and all, for ever and ever, in the "eternal now".^{2.2.}

`In this voyage across the ocean of Infinite Real Nothing and the ocean of Infinite Real Everything, we will be having frequent encounters with mystic

statements and language. What we have discussed just now would be of great help in understanding things in their finite and transcendental perspectives.'

`Our universe is a part of the ocean of Infinite Real Nothing. Science has already explored it right up to the level of its fundamental building blocks. We will earnestly look into the findings of Science. There is no clash between Spiritual Mystic Knowledge and Science. What Science has discovered was already discovered earlier; and what Science would discover, the Spiritual Perfect Masters have already discovered that earlier. Not the little inventions and discoveries, but the final discovery about the nature of space, time, radiation and material things.'

`Science, so long it does not arrive at its final "Theory of Everything", will remain as science and different from spirituality. However, the day it succeeds in postulating it is decisively final "Theory of Everything"; it will become one with Spiritual Mystic Knowledge. Science, therefore, is the Spiritual Mystic Knowledge in the process of rebirth, and that is why science and spirituality are not at loggerheads with each other.'

`The ocean of Infinite Real Nothing includes within itself our externally perceptible universe and our internally perceptible universe. The two are existing in a concentric hierarchical order. There is a mystical statement on this: "*Yatha Brahmaandey Tatha Pindey*", meaning, "Universe Without is Universe Within". If we meditate on this statement, meanings start unfolding. The statement reveals that the external universe is in reality existing within. Meher Baba has said: "The existence of this whole phenomenal world is all due to your mind. It all exists because your mind works. Once the mind stops, the world of phenomena ceases to be."^{2.3}

`The mystic statement, "Universe Without is Universe Within", reminds me of a similar statement in the famous *Tantric* scripture "*Shiv Samhita*",¹ said Ram interrupting Merwan.` "*Brahmaanda Samgyake Dehay Yatha Desh Vyavasthithah*", meaning, "whatever is there in the universe, is also found within the human body."^{2.4}

`Does it mean that the external universe is just a fabrication of our mental imagination? How could it be! The perception about the form, position and arrangement of objects of the external world does not differ from person to person. If universe is our personalized imagination: then the contents of the universe should also differ from one individual to another,' Rahim asked Merwan.

`This statement does not convey that the external world is our mind's imagination. The final cognitive process takes place inside the brain or the neural center. The statement, therefore, reveals that the universe exists, because our mind thinks that it exists. Why a mirror and a camera do not `see', that is, become aware of the images imprinted on them? Do we really see through our eyes, hear through our ears, and feel through our skin? If we really see through our eyes, then a mirror and a camera should also have this faculty. If we really hear through our ears, then a tape recorder should also have the capacity to listen. Moreover, if we really feel through our skin, then a dead body should respond to our touch. We all know however, that this is not true. Why? Because we do not see through our eyes, hear through our ears and feel through our skin. We see, hear and feel through our minds,' Merwan explained. `Seeing is always seeing the shadows through the mind.'

`This should be true, Merwan, 'Mary said. `Sense organs are merely the recording instruments, while the mind is the real integrator, analyst and interpreter. The dimensions and the contents of the universe should, therefore, be proportionate to the respective perceptive capabilities of the sense organs, and the integrative and analytical capabilities of the minds of the perceiving entities.'

`Mary, this means that the limits and the contents of the universe will vary with the perceptive capabilities of the sense organs and the integrative and analytical capabilities of the minds of the life forms of different categories,' Rahim said. `It appears that there is not one, common to all, absolute perception of the universe. Diverse living organisms are operating in their own universes and these universes come in all sizes and with differing contents. For example, flagellate protozoans detect only the presence or absence of light. Their universe is only a

pattern of light and shade. Jumping Spiders, characterized by a distance or non image forming eye, are able to detect an object 12 inches away which is a considerable distance for such a small animal. The universe of these organisms, therefore, is the spatial orbit with a radius of 12 inches and is almost totally devoid of visual images.'

`The compound eye, found only in arthropods, is most highly developed in insects and crustaceans. It is in fact, a cluster of eyes. Each photoreceptor unit of a compound eye can respond to one point of light. It is an image forming eye and the image formation is dependent upon the number of photoreceptor units present. Some wood lice possess no more than 25, whereas dragonfly possesses 30,000 photoreceptors. The universe of these organisms is characterized by multiple images that are only partially integrated in the brain. The spatial limits of these worlds would differ because of the number of photoreceptors present.'

`Basic components of the simple eye, which is an image-forming eye, are the lens and the retina. The lens focuses the impinging light as an image on the retina. Light sensitive cells of retina transmit to the brain, signals of a part of the whole image that is individually incident upon them. The human eye is a simple eye, which is a perfect and a matchless instrument of visual perception.'

`Color may be a common component of the physical reality for humans, some crustaceans such as hermit crabs and insects such as bees and certain flies. But the worlds of other animals are totally colorless.'

`Despite the emphasis placed upon eye structure, an image is ultimately an interpretation by the central nervous system of signals received from photoreceptors. The signals are in the form of electrical impulses.'

`Coming to humans. Do we all perceive exactly the same universe, or there are differences of perception even among ourselves?' Mika asked Rahim.

`From a holistic ecosystem view-point, our universe is not merely an inventory of objects and their distribution in space,' Rahim said. `It is much more than that. It has numerous processes, and its own web of relationships. In the case of man, the relationships are not only physical and ecological but also social and spiritual.

Spiritual relations appear to be deepest and difficult to comprehend. It is in the perception of social and spiritual relationships; my universe may differ from yours.'

`That's a very good question, which Mika has asked, and Rahim has given an equally befitting answer. It is in the spiritual dimension, the dimension of consciousness, that there are great differences. Avatars or Prophets and Spiritual Perfect Masters make use of the universal mind and universal body,' Merwan added. `During His 1958 visit to U.S.A., Meher Baba has explained this in these words:

"Why do I say, everything here is within you? It is not above or beneath; the difference is only in the state of consciousness. For example, an ant is here on the Barn floor; it is free and active. You also do actions here on the same floor. But the consciousness of the ant when compared with yours is insignificant. The difference between the experience of the ant and your experience is very great, though you both are on the same gross level. Similarly, the difference between your experience and my experience is like that between you and the ant; we are here together in the same room and on the same floor, but to me you appear as the ants appear to you!"^{2.5}

`But there are enormous differences between an ant's universe and our universe. Ant's world is a tiny world full of partially integrated multiple images formatted in two dimensions. It is a colorless world. For an ant, even our toe would be as big as a hill – something too big to be viewed completely. What to say about other things of our universe,' Rahim said. `For an ant, our universe is an unknowable unknown and, therefore, non-existent. How can there be a difference of this magnitude in the consciousness of two human beings with the same set of sensory organs and mental capabilities, and who are coexisting in the same period? '

`Rahim, this would become clear only when we dive more deeply into the meaning of the mystic statement: "Universe Without is Universe Within." The statement also reveals that similar to the external universe of radiation, sound, images or forms and thoughts, there is an internal universe of radiation, sound,

images or forms and thoughts, and this internal universe is also within us. The word "within" is used here figuratively to convey that the external and internal worlds are not only accessible to us, but are actually parts of our own being,' Merwan said. 'Meher Baba has described this beautifully:

"Analogically it is true that man is made in the image of God. The top of his head represents the *Vidnyan-Bhumika*, *Arshe-Ala*, the Highest Spiritual State, or the seat of *Brahma*. The forehead is equal to the entrance to divinity. The center of the forehead, just above the two external eyes, is the seat of the inner or third eye. When the "veil" with all its seven folds is finally removed, man is then able, through the third eye, to see God face to face and sees Him more actually and naturally than what he is ordinarily able to see of his body and the world through the two external eyes. In order to arrive at the divine entrance situated in the forehead, man has to pass through seven doors as represented by the seven physical openings in the face."^{2.6}

'The internal universe of man consists of subtle and mental worlds, which are experienced through subtle and mental bodies, which are different from our gross world bodies. There are four levels or planes of the subtle world and two levels or planes of the mental world. In addition to these, there are semi subtle levels or planes, which link up the gross world with the subtle world. The semi subtle level is experienced through a different form called as "astral" body. However, all of them are parts of the ocean of Infinite Real Nothing. The Universal Mind and the Universal Body are the things of the ocean of Infinite Real Everything.'

'The difference between the consciousness of beings like Meher Baba and us should now become clear. Integrally speaking, man is made in the image of God and has five operational bodies relevant and functional in their own spheres. These bodies are gross body, astral body, subtle body, mental body and universal body. We are gross body based and the orbit of our consciousness is in proportion to the physical capability of our sense organs and mind. Avatars or Prophets and Spiritual Perfect Masters have access to all the components of the outer and inner universes through universal mind and universal body, and that is why there are vast differences in their consciousness and our consciousness.'

`Merwan, these inner subtle and mental worlds, formed out of the interactions of radiation, sound, form and thought, should be our personal dream like fantasies. Why are we giving them the status of an impersonal reality at par with the outer world or universe,' I asked.

`Professor, they are dream like because they are fabricated out of the same materials, which structure a dream creation. Inner radiation, inner sounds form-visualizations, thoughts have interacted, and these worlds were created in the inner space. However, they are not the creations of a human mind and that is why they are not personal fantasies. They exist independently and all those, who have the eligibility of entrance into them, pass through a sequence of common sets of experiences. These worlds are as real or as illusory, as our external universe,' Merwan explained.

`It is not yet very clear,' I said. `The impulses of the universe without, flow from the external regions to our brains. This universe is within, only because it is perceived within. Nevertheless, the internal worlds, as described by you, appear to be internal. They are entirely a within-the-within affair.'

`Whose 'within' are we talking about? It cannot be my within or your within, because access to these worlds is open to all. These worlds can be reached at by any body, anywhere, any time. However, this will not become clear until we ourselves experience them,' Merwan said.

`I accept that. Let me now summarize what we have discussed so far,' I said. `The world and the universe, in which we all are operating with our gross physical bodies, are gross level realities. There are many universes at this level differing in their spatial limits and contents. Our universe is just one of them and perhaps the largest and with maximum diversity. There are worlds at subtle and mental levels or planes, which are parts of an inner universe occupying inner space. Universes without and universes within are the parts of the ocean of Infinite Real Nothing.'

`It's all right Professor. We are now quite clear about the vertical and horizontal expanse of this ocean of Infinite Real Nothing. Why should we knock

the door of something, which in reality is nothing? We are the seekers of Reality, not of illusions,' said Ram.

Interjecting into the conversation, Mary quoted Eugene O'Neill: "Obsessed by a fairy-tale, we spend our lives searching for a magic door and a lost kingdom of peace."^{2.7}

`We are not obsessed by a fairy-tale Mary, and we are not knocking the door of an illusion. Being born in illusion, we are obsessed by it and conditioned by it,' Merwan said. `We are moved by this illusion. We are imprisoned by this illusion. So long we will keep on thinking this illusion to be the reality, the magic door of Reality and the kingdom of Real Peace would keep on eluding us.'

`We are traversing this ocean of Infinite Real Nothing with the hope that the moment we become aware of its illusory nature, we will come out of its clutches. Remember how much relieved and comforted we have felt when, while watching a tragic movie, we were reminded that it is only an illusion of images and not something real. In June 1932, when Meher Baba visited Metro Goldwyn Mayer Film Studio in Hollywood, U.S.A., He gave this message:

"Both the Press and the radio influence thought, but both lack the power of visible example, which is the greatest stimulant to action, and which the motion picture offers now than any other medium. The whole universe and its structure, I have created. The universe is my cinema. But just as an audience becomes absorbed in witnessing a drama on the screen, and the film engages their emotions and sways their feelings by its influence causing them to forget that it is not real; in the same way, the spectators of the world are charmed by this worldly film show, forgetting themselves and taking it to be real! So I have come to tell them that this worldly cinema, in which they are absorbed, is not real. I have come to turn their focus towards Reality. Only God is real, and everything else is a mere motion picture!"^{2.8}

`Sage Vashistha had explained this to Lord Ram, the prince of Ayodhya, in these words: "So long as the Seer believes that the Seen is real and independent of the Seer, so long shall the Seer's pains and pleasures too be real," said Ram."^{2.9}

Mika summed up the discussion telling what the Buddhist sages have said:

"But only when this world becomes a magic circle,
In which each point can be a living center:
Then we surmount the cause of all illusion,
The riddles of rebirth, of death and dissolution.
Then nothing remains rigid, self contained;
No point coagulates into a finite 'I',
Each being in the others is enshrined,
And in the smallest lives infinity."^{2.10}

That day we were delighted to discover that Mika was an exceptionally gifted singer. Mika sang a song of Lama Anagarika Govinda entitled "The Rhythm of Life". Mary supported him with her guitar and Rahim with his harmonica. Merwan gave the beats on the dholak, which he played deftly. The song was:

Threefold is the rhythm of life;
 Taking, giving, self forgetting.
 Inhaling I take the world within me,
 Exhaling I give myself to the world,
 Emptied I live within myself -
 Live without self in voidness supreme. ^{3.1}

Mika proved to be a great mimic too. Inhaling and exhaling, he pumped in and pumped out air like a bellow. He then choreographed the voidness and became stationary, resembling a statue of a ballet dancer.

'Mika, what is Satori?' asked Merwan, catching Mika unaware.

'Satori? Satori is a profound insight into the nature of reality. The thinker and thought are fused in that internal "explosion". A Zen Master, illustrating Satori, says: " When you have Satori you are able to reveal a palatial mansion made of precious stones on a single blade of grass; but when you have no Satori a palatial mansion itself is concealed behind a simple blade of grass. " ^{3.2}

'Very right,' Merwan said. 'By being emotionally attached to this cabin, we have converted it into a simple blade of grass. This blade of grass is now concealing the entire universe'. Mary, please tell us something about this universe of ours which is lying hidden behind this blade of grass.'

`Our universe spreads across enormous distances measurable only in terms of millions of light years. This universe contains 10^9 galaxies. Each one of these galaxies is a cluster of about 10^{11} stars. Ours is the Milky Way and its nearest neighbor is only 16×10^5 light years away. If we make light beams as our vehicles, we would be flying in space covering 186281 miles per second. That would take us to our nearest galactic neighbor in 16×10^5 years, provided we take off from the fringe of our dear old Milky Way,' Mary described the universe in a somewhat technical manner.

Mary continued her narration: `the basic structures of our universe are stars, novae, super-novae, white dwarfs, planets and asteroids. From a distance, our universe appears uniform. Radio astronomers, A. Penzias and R. Wilson, have demonstrated this by discovering the celestial background radiation permeating the entire universe. This radiation was produced when the universe was only 300,000 years old. The temperature of this cosmic radiation was 2.7 Kelvin and the variation at different points of the sky did not exceed 0.005%.'

`The universe, however, is not a structure less desert without any oases. It reveals structures. We first see the largest structures: the galactic super clusters, measuring hundreds of millions of light years and forming a vast cosmic tapestry. Then follow the clusters ten times smaller. Then a group of galaxies twenty times smaller; followed in turn by galaxies, including our Milky Way, two thousand times smaller; followed by stars of our galaxy like the sun 10^{15} times smaller. And lastly the earth, the haven of human beings in the cosmic universe, 10^{17} times smaller,'

`Galaxies have a large-scale tendency to cluster. The largest of these super clusters is the Coma Cluster, which is at a distance of about 315 million light years from us. All galaxies in super clusters have a velocity very near to 7000 km^{-1} . There are two other galactic clusters between our galaxy and Coma Cluster. One of them is at a distance of 180 million light years with galactic velocity of 4000 km^{-1} . The second cluster is about 20 million light years and has a galactic velocity of 500 km^{-1} .'

`What lies between these galactic clusters? Vast voids engulf these galactic clusters. Between the Milky Way and the Coma Super Cluster, there are two great voids of about 100 million light years across. These groups of galactic clusters look like pancakes separated by large voids. Even our local super cluster containing the Milky Way shows a thin disc and large voids. The greatest void discovered so far is located in the herdsman (Bootis) constellation and it measures 264 million light years.'

`The universe has evolved over a period of 15 billion years and presents an amazing spectacle: galaxies grouped in super clusters forming the largest structures known, with dimensions reaching 300 million light years and weighing as much as 10^{15} to 10^{61} solar masses.'

`There is much beyond this visible spectacle. There are quasars, the quasi stellar sources of high-energy electromagnetic radiation. Several hundred of these have now been "observed" through radio-astronomy, while some of them are also visible with optical telescope as they emit light. Then there are pulsating stars called pulsars, which also reemit, radio frequency electromagnetic radiation. And there are Black Holes with their mighty gravitational force which imprisons even the light beams.' Mary appeared to have concluded her description of the universe.

Merwan after listening to Mary's description of the universe appeared to be in a trance like state. `How exciting and revealing is all this,' Merwan said. `This attraction towards each other and clustering together at the galactic level, and the Black Holes attracting light beams and gobbling them. This is Cosmic Love.'

`Love in the world of lifeless matter, Merwan?' asked Rahim. `This doesn't make any sense at all.'

`Rahim you are a biologist. How do you define life?', asked Merwan and without waiting, answered himself. `Is it not defined in terms of the interactions of nucleic acids and proteins among themselves, and with the external environment? Is this not a lifeless material definition of life? When we look at animals and plants, they all respond to love. It is so obvious. When life is perceived as the outcome of the material interactions of life-less materials; and, if

love is one of its most significant characteristics, then lifeless materials and love are scientifically interrelated. Spiritually speaking, Love is not a product of material interactions. Love is a cosmic reality. Meher Baba has described Cosmic Love beautifully and profoundly. Listen to what Meher Baba says:

"The original aspect of love prior to its manifestation in the created world reposed infinitely in the bosom of oneness. It was love in condensation of its quality lying vast and unexpressed in an identity with the Absolute. This identity was unknown to itself. It was not an ignorance of love that prevailed but the highest form of love that knew nothing of knowing or desire except the one revelation of its own true nature. Revelation necessitated a change that could bring a differentiated existence. It lay the seed of a manifestation we call the universe where love plays the dual role of attraction and repulsion, male and female, and all the opposites. Love in an infinite state was infinitely condensed and had very little to choose except the most finite point to express itself in the shape of creation." ^{3.3}

`Meher Baba has mentioned that love has four aspects. The first is that of Divine Love. Then there is love at the level of humans, followed by the carnal animal love. Lastly, there is love exhibited by all inanimate things. Love at the level of lifeless matter is the lowest. Meher Baba has said, "Irrespective of the four divisions and sub-divisions from the magnetic to the Divine, all is Love." ^{3.4}

`This reminds me of a statement made by Mother of Sri Aurobindo Ashram at Pondicherry,' said Ram. `Mother has said:

"Love is at the origin of the world and Love is its goal. What was projected into space had to be brought back to itself without, however, destroying the universe so created. Therefore, Love burst forth, the irresistible power of union.

Love is a supreme force which the Eternal Consciousness sent down from itself into an obscure and darkened world that it might bring back the world and its beings to the Divine." ^{3.5}

`Oh, it's so beautiful and so exciting,' said Mary. `Cosmic Love, the supreme mover, generating the forces of attraction and repulsion. Driving opposites to come closer, collide or embrace, and finally unite and merge. Right from the

sub-atomic world of sub-atomic particles to the galactic levels, the forces of Cosmic Love are in operation in an amazing manner.'

Merwan was deeply moved and immensely delighted. He said, 'We all are seeking to experience the universe. Not through a verbal technical or spiritual description, but experientially. If we are unable to go nearer to the structures of the universe, we can definitely draw them closer to us.'

'We will now no longer talk about Satori. We will perform it. I mean bring about in actuality this fusion of the thinker and thought,' Merwan said. 'Mika's song says, "Inhaling I take the world within me". We all will inhale together chanting mentally *OM MEHER OM* and will ask these stars, novae, super-novae, white dwarfs, planets and asteroids to pass through our cabin. We will keep our cloth bags ready with their mouths open. Who knows, we may eventually succeed in catching some of these things as souvenirs of our encounter!'

OM MEHER OM. We all chanted internally and inhaled deeply, sucking in the basic structures of the universe.

Then it started happening all of a sudden. Gigantic structures came whizzing towards our cabin and passing through it in proportionately miniaturized forms. They regained their normal dimensions, the moment they came out. We were dazzled by the light, which they produced, and felt uncomfortable in the heat generated. Mary could not resist giving a technical commentary.

Mary said, 'Come on. Let us now begin the catching game. Catch this one. This is a star. It is just one of $10^9 \times 10^{11}$ "main sequence" stars. It is an intensely hot glowing mass and produces its energy through thermonuclear reactions. Sun is such a star but we will avoid catching it because that will destroy all of us. In thermonuclear reaction, hydrogen is converted into helium. Moreover, until it consumes 10 percent of its hydrogen, the star remains the "main sequence" star. If it goes beyond 10 percent, it becomes what is called a "red giant".'

'Now catch this one. This is a nova. It is a star ejecting a part of its material in the form of a gas cloud. It is 5×10^3 to 10^4 times brighter than what it was before the outburst.'

`This one too. This is a supernova. It has run out of its hydrogen and is exploding, and flinging a large portion of its matter into space. Planets consist of matter thrown out by super-novae, some of which gets collected by the gravitational fields of the "main sequence" stars.'

`The relatively smaller objects, which we all are witnessing as filling the enormous space of our mysterious cabin, are minor planets called asteroids. We have about 1500 of them rotating around our sun in orbits between those of Mars and Jupiter. None of them exceeds 300 miles in diameter.'

`Catch this one. This is a "white dwarf" representing what remains of a supernova after the explosion. It is a highly dense star with low luminosity. Its small size has resulted in high surface temperatures and that's why it appears white.'

`Ram, why your eyes are gleaming? Do you have a question? ', Rahim asked.

`Yes, I do. Rahim, from where this universe - galaxies, stars, novae, super-novae, planets, asteroids - have come? Did they have an origin or they were there from eternity? Perhaps, Mary would like to enlighten us on this', said Ram.

`There are two view-points,' Mary said. `One is the steady state theory which postulates that the universe has always existed in a steady state and that its expansion is compensated by the continuous creation of matter, which is viewed, as a property of space or *akasha*.'

`The other one is the super dense theory which states that the universe has evolved from one "super dense" agglomeration of matter which suffered a cataclysmic explosion, the "Big Bang". The observed expansion of the universe is a result of this explosion. Consequently, primordial elements: hydrogen, helium, deuterium and lithium were created. The galaxies were created and flew apart like fragments from an exploding bomb. This theory postulates a finite beginning and a finite end to the history of universe.'

`Mary, when we look at the vast expanse of the universe, space preponderates the structures contained,' Rahim observed. `Nothing or vacuum appears to dominate everything.'

`In a way you are right, Rahim', said Mary. `All those super-clusters and clusters of galaxies with their countless stars and other things occupy only 10 percent of the cosmos. Vacuum occupies the remaining 90 percent of the space. All matter has come out of this vacuum, or nothing, or no-particular-thing, or *akasha*. And it will finally end up in this nothing or no-particular-thing or *akasha*.'

Merwan said, ` Meher Baba says:

"The manifold evolving universe arises from the mixing of the one Reality and nothing. It springs out of 'nothing' when this 'nothing' is taken against the background of the one Reality." ^{3.6} Further: "Between the beginning and the end of this changing world, there are many cycles; but there is, in and through these cycles, a continuity of cosmic evolution. The real termination of the evolutionary process is called *Maha Pralaya* or the great annihilation of the world, when the world becomes what it was in the beginning, namely 'nothing'. The *Maha Pralaya* of the world may be compared with the sleep of a person. Just as the varied world of experience completely disappears for the individual who is in deep sleep, the entire objective cosmos, which is the creation of *Maya*, vanishes into nothingness at the time of *Maha Pralaya*. It is as if the universe had never existed at all." ^{3.7}

`All things in this universe are burning, exploding and disintegrating,' Rahim said. `This cosmic inferno presents an exceedingly depressing and hopeless spectacle. Our little worlds lose all meaning and purpose when looked at in terms of this inevitable dismal extinction.'

Mary said, `Looking at our universe one is reminded of a statement by Freeman Dyson:

"Everywhere else the universe appears to be mindlessly burning up its reserves of energy, inexorably drifting toward the state of final quiescence described imaginatively by Olaf Stapledon: `Presently nothing was left in the whole cosmos but darkness and dark whiffs of dust that once were galaxies.' It is conceivable, however, that life may have a larger role to play than we have yet imagined. Life may succeed against all the odds in molding the universe to its own purpose. And the design of the inanimate universe may not be as detached from

the potentialities of life and intelligence as scientists of the 20th century have tended to suppose." ^{3.8}

`Buddha gave us the "Parable of the Burning House" and the "Fire Sermon", Mika said. `Buddha says: "This world is a burning house. People, unaware that the house is on fire, are in danger of being burned to death. So Buddha in compassion devises ways of saving them." ^{3.9}

Ram said, `In a way we are also burning - burning from within. Burning with anger, greed, lust, violence, hate, jealousy and being annihilated by them. Burning with desire, we explode and disintegrate. Ram, the prince of Ayodhya, says in *Yoga Vashistha*: "And stronger than the mind is *Trishna*. Burning quenchless within, it consumes me as the sun's glare kills the morning's moistures." ^{3.10} *Trishna* is thirst, thirst of insatiable desire.'

`Ram, this is exactly what Buddha had also said,' Mika said. `Listen. Buddha says:

"Indeed, this world is burning up with its many and various fires. There are fires of greed, fires of anger, fires of foolishness, fires of infatuation and egoism, fires of decrepitude, sickness and death, fires of sorrow, lamentation, suffering and agony. Everywhere these fires are raging. They not only burn the self, but also cause others to suffer and lead them into wrong acts of body, speech and mind. From the wounds that are caused by these fires there issues a pus that infects and poisons those who approach it, and leads them into evil paths." ^{3.11}

Mary said, `Thermonuclear reactions are behind the fires of the structures of the universe. What kindles these fires within? In a universe, which is going to end up in gloom and dust, how the fires of desire were created in our minds and hearts? Wherefrom the desire surfaced up in a biological system, which is the product of the interactions of material molecules?'

`Come on everybody,' Mika said, `let us take a break and sing a song.

The last reflections

Of a burning world

Pierce through

The narrow gate of senses.
 Within, however,
 Grows an invisible space
 Expanding steadily,
The more the flames recede.
 And from the ground
That trembles still and heaves
 Responding to the
 Outer world's commotion,
 Columns are shooting up
 With shining crystal stems,
Their heads unfolding chalice-like
 Into a vaulted ceiling.^{3.12}

For the last many days, Rahim was insisting that we should give a name to our cabin. Ram supported the idea with a lot of emotion because he sincerely believed that even a stone could become alive if addressed with a loving name. The search for an appropriate name proved to be an exciting affair and ended when Ram came out with the name '*Pushan*', for which we all agreed unanimously.

Ram recited a verse from *Rigveda*, an ancient treatise of Hindus, mentioning '*Pushan*'. '*Pushan*' means dawn, the golden light of morning. The natural phenomenon of the golden light of morning is transformed into a lovely allegory in this verse:

O *Pushan*! thy golden ships travel across the ocean, in the air's mid-region;
 With those thou goest on an embassy to *Surya*, impelled by love,
 desirous of glory.
Pushan, the good friend of sky and earth, Lord of grace, liberal,
 of wondrous lustre;
 Him, the love-impelled, swift moving and strong, the Deities gave to *Surya*.^{4.1}

In the allegory, Pushan journeys across the ocean into the sky, in a golden boat, impelled by his love of the beautiful daughter of Surya and desirous of winning glory to prove his claim to her hand. The Gods find him worthy of her and give him to her in marriage.

Merwan sitting cross-legged, in Padmasana, with his eyes closed, chanted the mantra, 'OM MEHER OM'. Then prophetically he said, 'Feel cosmos as a translucent ever-living presence. Imagine the spirit simultaneously within and

around you until the entire universe spiritualizes. Consider your essence as golden light rays of morning rising from you, and so rise livingness in you. *OM MEHER OM.*'

Ram said, '*Vigyan Bhairava, Sochanda Tantra* and *Malini Vijaya Tantra* are ancient *Tantra* texts. *Tantra* has developed the spiritual viewpoint of cosmology based on the interactions of consciousness, energy and matter. *Devi* Parvati, Shiva's consort, says in *Tantra*:

"O Shiva, what is your reality?
What is this wonder-filled universe?
What constitutes seed?
Who centers the universal wheel?
What is this life beyond form pervading forms?
How may we enter it fully, above space and time,
names and descriptions?
Let my doubts be cleared!" ^{4.2}

'And what answers Shiva gave to these questions, Ram,' asked Mary.

'The whole of *Tantra* is the answer. But the one which may interest you is: "This so-called universe appears as a juggling, a picture show. To be happy look upon it so," ^{4.3} said Ram. Ram then asked a question to Mary. 'Mary, I have asked this question earlier and I ask it again. How this universe and its structures came into existence? From where this universe has emerged and where it will end? What is the physical explanation to all this?'

'The physical explanation or the answer may not be very different from the one, which Shiva gave to Devi. However, its details would make a long story and, if all of you have patience and the inclination, I would be delighted to tell this story. It would be like climbing an imaginary stairway, back in time, leading closest

to that point of time when the Big Bang took place. The closest would be coming face to face with a universe, which was 10^{-43} second old. This is an extremely short time: By comparison, the flash of a camera's strobe light would be long enough to make up a large part of the 20-billion-year history of the universe than 10^{-43} second takes out of a second, said Mary '

'Mary, we have the patience as well as a deep interest in the story of the universe. Please do tell us this story keeping the technicalities to a minimum,' said Ram.

'As I have told you earlier that there are two scientific theories on this. One is the "Steady State" theory and the other is the "Big Bang" theory. It was in 1992, when the Big Bang theory received the biggest boost. COBE, the Cosmic Background Explorer satellite, on a 28 year quest to delve into the mysteries of the universe, succeeded in this year in capturing the dying echo of the Big Bang in a much more enhanced way. This was not possible at the time of the discovery of the microwave background radiation in 1964 by Arno Penzias and Robert Wilson of Bell Laboratories in the United States. This background radiation is thought to be the remnant of the primeval explosion itself and Penzias and Wilson were awarded the Noble Prize for detecting it,' Mary said. 'Among the many new channels of research that opened up as a result of the almost unassailable evidence gathered by COBE in favor of Big Bang theory, was the channel of having a re-run of the physical history of the universe through computer simulation. Seeds of this enormously complex program were sown years ago at the Department of Physics and Astronomy at University of Wales, Cardiff. There they not only pioneered the use of parallel computers for scientific calculations, but also created the original mathematical algorithms, or equations, on which the present simulation is based. The current simulation started with the tiny "ripples" detected by COBE satellite in the microwave radiation leftover from the "Big Bang".'

'These "ripples" are infact density fluctuations. At one stage, in the initial phase, the entire universe remained immersed in a bath of radiation and matter. Radiation consists of light particles called photons. Matter has two components: "baryonic" matter comprising of protons and neutrons, and "non-baryonic"

matter consisting of electrons and neutrinos. All these particles, except the photon and neutrinos, have a mass contributing to the total mass of the universe. Densities of the photons and baryons fluctuate in such a way that the ratio of the number of photons (radiation) per unit volume to the number of baryons (matter) remains the same throughout the universe. This ratio presently is one billion and is adiabatic or invariable.'

'Expansion of the universe is an interesting process, which results in these density fluctuations. Excess of gravity, associated with excess of matter or radiation - two equivalent forms of energy according to Einstein's theory of relativity - attract other neighboring irregularities which fuse with matter and contribute to its growth. However, the gravity, which becomes instrumental in these fusions, opposes the expansion of the universe. During the expansion of the universe, the density of matter and radiation decreases continuously. These "ripples" or density fluctuations, therefore, grew by attracting and fusing together the gas and particles of the invisible so-called "dark matter" of the universe, and condensing it out to form spinning discs that eventually evolved into clusters of galaxies.'

'Beginning with the microwave radiation that was emitted during the very early period of the life of the universe, the simulation study revealed that the dark matter initially formed filaments and sheets with large voids in between rather resembling a honeycomb. The visible galaxies were formed in these sheets and filaments where they actually joined together and formed clusters.'

'These discoveries revealed that the history of the universe, since the first moments of the big bang, was woven throughout the structure of matter.'

'It is now understood that the galaxies act as engines of chemical evolution, building simple atoms into more complicated atoms within the stars, then returning the complex atoms into the interstellar clouds when each star explodes.'

'It sounds like a capsular fruit creating the propagules within and then bursting out, and throwing them all around,' Rahim observed.

`That's an interesting simile, Rahim. Our sun and the planets of our solar system were formed from the condensation of a chemically enriched interstellar cloud rather recently, that is about 5 billion years ago in the roughly 15-billion-year history of Milky Way Galaxy,' Mary said. `Rahim thanks for giving a biological reproduction analogy. It makes lot of sense. Galaxy the gigantic cluster or a capsule of stars and planets; exploding its stars, loaded with complex atoms, to release interstellar clouds, and these clouds condensing and reproducing new stars and planets which get loaded with more complex atoms. This is quite fascinating and falls into a pattern.'

`While talking about Pushan, we mentioned the golden rays of morning light. We would now talk about gold itself. Carbon atoms, upon which all life is based, appear to have been built out of helium atoms in the core of middle sized stars. These stars subsequently exploded spewing the carbon and the other heavy atoms, they had created, into the surrounding interstellar medium. The newly generated solar system, condensed from the enriched interstellar clouds, incorporated the heavy elements released by the deceased stars. Atoms of the heavier elements, such as gold, required for their creation the violent energies when these stars exploded as super-novae. Atoms in every nugget of gold on earth are pieces of stars that exploded before the solar system was created. Old may be gold, but gold is older than the oldest old.' Mary laughed at her own pun.

`Explored in this way, it is now believed that the Hydrogen and the Helium are the oldest atoms, having been created in the cosmic fireball during the first minutes of the expansion of the universe,' Mary said. `There are things much more old than the Hydrogen and Helium atoms. Atoms, once assumed to be the essential building blocks of matter, are now known to be composed of smaller particles - protons, neutrons and electrons; and the protons and neutrons incorporate several sorts of mesons, each evidently composed of still smaller particles called quarks. The strong force holds the particles of the nucleus and the weak force leads to nuclear decay. The sub-atomic constituents of an atom are the oldest. Today, the count of these particles whose traces have been detected by sophisticated accelerators or whose existence has been postulated by physicists adds up to more than 200.'

`Mary, I have heard', Rahim said, `that the universe was opaque in the beginning and later became transparent. Could you please explain this?'

Right after the first few milliseconds, following the Big Bang and until about 300,000 years later, there was not much change. The electrons remained free and could not combine with protons to form hydrogen atoms because the surrounding photons still had too much of energy. A photon having energy greater than 13.6 electron-volts would destroy any hydrogen atom formed. These free electrons, however, did not have significant freedom of motion because whenever they moved, they collided with photons, which were present in large numbers. Protons, being much heavier than electrons, experienced even greater difficulty in moving through this jungle of photons. This hindrance to the motion of electrons and protons completely prohibited the increase of fluctuations, since photons prevented the agglomeration of protons and electrons,' Mary explained.

`Continuing the narration, Mary said, `we move now to a point of time, which is beyond 300,000 years after the Big Bang. Because of the continuous expansion of the universe, the energy of photons had decreased to a level below 13.6 electron-volts. Electrons could now combine with protons to form hydrogen atoms, which could no longer be split by the photons. There were now no free electrons hindering the movement of photons. Matter and radiation, which were earlier intimately coupled, were now decoupled. This resulted in the transition of an "opaque" universe into a "transparent" one, because now photons could move freely without colliding with electrons.'

`If we want to examine the dawn of cosmic history in terms of our rudimentary scientific understanding, we would have to imagine a stairway leading up to the hoary past. The bottom of this stairway encompasses everything that has happened since the universe was but one billion years old. Each step above the bottom stair takes us deeper into the past and each represents one-tenth as much time as did the step below it. One billion years for the bottom step, one hundred million years for the step above it; 10 million years for the next and so forth.'

`Now we start climbing this stairway', Mary appeared quite excited as she succeeded in building great deal of suspense. She was an excellent interpreter and communicator, and each one of us enjoyed her commentary greatly.

`One step up the bottom stair and the universe is but 100 million years after the big bang. The universe is a dark sea of hydrogen and helium gas. A few protogalaxies shine through the gloom as glowing whirlpool, ornamented by island clusters of new born stars.'

`Three more steps and the age of the universe is one hundred thousand years. Darkness is replaced by light. It is hot; the smaller the universe, the higher its energy density. We are nearing the time before which it was too hot for atoms to survive.'

`We climb 10 steps farther into the inferno. The universe is now 2 minutes 15 seconds old. It is dense as rock, though in its great heat it resembles rock being vaporized in a nuclear explosion. At this time, most of the helium in the cosmos is forged.'

`We move higher. We find the universe becoming still hotter and denser. Now not even the nuclei of atoms can survive. The constituents of the universe include unattached protons, neutrons and electrons, positrons, neutrinos and antineutrinos. The great heat permits no particle to settle down and create an atomic nucleus.'

`We go still higher. The environment is too severely hot for the protons, neutrons and electrons. Above this step, everything is boiling soup of quarks, leptons and photons.'

`We now climb 27 steps to reach the Weinberg-Salam transition. The fork road where the electroweak force broke into the electromagnetic and weak interactions. The universe is now a million million times denser than the nucleus of an atom and smaller than the orbit of the earth around the sun.'

`At 51st step, we reach the grand unification point. It is now only 10^{-35} second after the big bang. The observable cosmos is the size of a baseball and 10^{60} times denser than the nucleus of an atom. It is here, that a single primordial sort of

interaction -Salam calls it "electronuclear"- split into the electroweak and strong interactions. Some physicists give a fascinating description of the creation of universe at this point. The mechanism is called "spontaneous symmetry-breaking" resulting in the "crystallization" of the universe, like salt or diamonds cooling from formless homogeneity into a state of obvious structure. As a liquid, salt is symmetrical. But once it has cooled and formed crystals, it becomes asymmetrical.'

`Symmetry to asymmetry! Symmetry breaking in relation to particles and their interactions is somewhat clear. However, universe is space-time as well as matter-energy. Spontaneous symmetry breaking in relation to space-time is not at all clear. The intense gravitational fields, characteristic of the dense early universe, warp space-time radically. The relationship between the two is similar to that between a vase and the water it holds. Water assumes the shape of the vase.'

`Eight more steps and we reach the "super-unification" of all interactions. The universe is 10^{-43} second old. We have reached a point at which each particle is crushed to so great a density that its gravitation, normally negligible on the nuclear scale, has become as strong as the other interactions. If it is true that all particle interactions were once ruled by a single sort of interaction, this step marks the point at which the brief, monotheistic rule of that pure force came to an end.'

`It is not possible to reconstruct what happened during first 10^{-43} second, for at these densities general relativity breaks down. A super-unified quantum theory of gravitation might lift the veil.'

`Now coming to your second question, Ram', Mary said. `Where did the universe come from? Science has no definite answer. However, scientists are investigating and speculating. Among the most provocative and promising of these speculations are theories proposing that the universe sprang into existence from little or nothing, as if from vacuum.'

`Physicist Heinz R. Pagels says: " All of physics -everything we hope to know - is waiting in the vacuum to be discovered." ^{4.4} Two American cosmologists, Alan H.

Guth of MIT and J. Richard III of Princeton, have come out with scientifically interesting propositions.'

`Guth's "inflationary" model portrays early universe as expanding at much faster rate than what had been thought. The universe in these first moments was in a "false vacuum" state - a state in which it contained no particles but was permeated by energy - out of which the particles precipitated like raindrops coagulating from a cloud.'

`Gott builds on Guth's model but goes down still deeper into the ocean of nothingness. He visualizes many universes being created from bubbles in an effervescent false vacuum. For the quantum physicist, the vacuum is a froth of particles and fields. Space is foam like.'

Heinz Pagels in his book "The Cosmic Code", has given us some sort of a scientific mystic statement: "Nothingness contains all of being"^{4.5}. This vision, coming out of modern physics, is a cosmic vision which reveals that everything about us belongs to a chain of cosmic evolution that leads back to the birth of the universe and forward to a glimpse of its fate.'

`Mary, you have talked about some interactions among some forces,' Mika said and asked, `Could you be more explicit about these forces and their interactions, and their importance?'

`The patterns and the structures in the universe are the outcome of cosmic dance of sub-atomic particles and photons in fields of energy. This energy, which is the cosmic choreographer, is of four varieties that differ radically in character,' Mary answered.

`Gravitation is the first. It is a function of mass and acts on all matter irrespective of cosmic distances. It holds the galaxies, stars and planets together. It holds the universe together. It is, however, not of much importance at the level of atomic nucleus.'

`Electromagnetism is the second of the four varieties. Like gravitation, electromagnetism makes itself felt across the far reaches of the universe but unlike the former it is important in the nuclear world as well. Electromagnetism

affects all electrically charged particles. Mika, it is the electromagnetic force acting among atoms that prevents your hand from passing through the page of the book which you hold, even though the page is almost entirely space.'

'Third is the strong force. This force binds the particles of the nucleus of the atom. Lastly, the fourth one, the weak force, is responsible for various sorts of nuclear decay or disintegration.'

Mary continued: 'Physicists are in search of an all embracing unified theory, because they strongly believe that a single force underlies the four interactions or four forces that dictate the behavior of the particles. Physicists, Abdus Salam and Steven Weinberg, have proposed one such theory known as Weinberg-Salam theory. This theory views that electromagnetism and the weak force are aspects of a single "electroweak" interaction or force. The road leading to the final supreme unification appears to be a long one.'

'The principle of quantum uncertainty states that not only matter and energy but sensory perception itself comes in discrete units. A degree of coarseness, something like the grain in a photographic negative, is fundamental to our perceptions of nature. The world resembles the picture on a colour television screen. Viewed at a distance the image looks continuous but examined closely, it resolves into countless little dots - the quanta. Shiva's answer to Devi, "The so-called universe appears as a juggling, a picture show," is not different from the answers given by the physicists.' Mary concluded. We all applauded and hugged her for her excellent commentary.

Mika said, 'Merwan has told us earlier that Meher Baba has said: "The universe is my cinema."^{4.6} Buddha has also said: "The world, indeed, is like a dream and the treasures of the world are an alluring mirage. Like the apparent distances in a picture, things have no reality in themselves but are like heat haze."^{4.7}

We heard rhythmic beats on dholak and saw Merwan playing the dholak vigorously. Merwan was overflowing with great joy. His radiant face was much more radiant, shining with a golden glow.

`What's the matter, Merwan?' asked Mary, `What has happened to you? You are bubbling with joy and happiness!'

`Mary, all along, we talked about oceans and waves. Oceans of Infinite Real Nothing and Infinite Real Everything. Now your scientists are also speaking the same language and talking about the Nothing, about the foam, and about the bubbles. I am foaming with happiness, and bubbling with joy,'

Merwan said, `I have a feeling that physicists are on the right track. `Some of the statements of Meher Baba, which were published in 1929, may be of great interest to all of you. They are:

1. "Really speaking there is nothing like creation in the true sense of the word. What we call creation is, to be sure, the manifestation of countless forms out of nothing."
2. "Innumerable waves, countless drops and numberless bubbles together with foam manifest themselves, when the still ocean of *Paramatman* comes into motion."
3. "Just as there are `knowing' and `not knowing' in knowledge, so there are movement and emptiness, Prana and Akasha in the *Paramatman*. And just as knowing brings out the most finite ignorance out of the Infinite knowledge, so the movement brings out the most finite emptiness out of the Infinite Ocean, and also the *Prana* and *Akasha*, when the latently conscious *Paramatman* becomes conscious of creation. To put the matter in a table of terms, we have the following:

Movement = Universal Energy = Prana = Knowing = Everything
Is Opposite To
Emptiness = Latent Universe = Akasha = Ignorance = Nothing

4. "But side by side with the manifestation of these three pairs of opposites, which were one when they were latent in the one *Paramatman*, a clash between the opposites of each pair takes place; and the outcome of the

clash is the manifestation of the universe. The clash denotes several happenings at one and the same time including the following :

- 4.1. The states of Energy =Prana, and Emptiness =Akasha are manifested.
- 4.2. The Akasha state remains one whole, but the Prana state becomes divided into seven parts which are formed at one and the same time.
- 4.3. Out of the Prana state, the subtle world comes into being, and out of Akasha state, the gross worlds (wave-bubbles) become manifested.
- 4.4. The manifestations of the most finite drop-bubbles, say electrons, take place.
- 4.5. With the movement in the Ocean, innumerable waves, countless drops and numberless bubbles together with foam manifest themselves. Consider that each wave has a big bubble and each drop has a small bubble, viz., wave-bubbles and drop-bubbles. As the waves are not separate from the waves, both kinds of bubbles contain the indivisible Ocean Itself, i.e., the waves are in the Ocean and the drops are in the waves. Each wave, besides having its own bubble, has countless drops, each of which again has a bubble of its own. Each wave-bubble is a world in itself, and its drop-bubbles are numberless forms belonging to, such as electrons, stones, metals, plants, trees, animals and human beings. But each drop is still the indivisible Ocean though it does not know It. Simultaneously with the movement in the Ocean, the Atman (soul) comes to know that it does not know; and along with the clash referred to above, the Atman begins to know the universe, i.e., ignorance-nothingness, most finitely through the most finite first gross form, the electron."^{4.8}

`Words "*Prana*" and "*Akasha*" sound too technical and unfamiliar. Ram, would you please explain these words so that we can understand these statements better!' said Rahim.

`Both are Samskrit words', Ram explained. `*Prana* is derived from "*pra*", meaning "before", "first" plus "*ana*", meaning "breath of life". *Prana* is the "first

breath of life". *Prana* is also the sound of breath, the subtle life force. In Hindu and Buddhist literature, the word "*Prana*" is also used as a medium of spiritual forces. Thus, the Samskrit term "*Prana*" combines the physical as well as the psychic and spiritual qualities of the breath of life. The word "*Akasha*" is derived from preposition "*a*", "to", plus "*kasa*", meaning, "shine", "to appear on all sides", meaning the space in which all things shine and appear clearly. *Akasha* implies an active, if not creative, quality of space; something which is connected with movement, vibration or radiation.'

`The clash or interaction of *Prana* and *Akasha* has been described by Meher Baba some what more explicitly,' Merwan said. `Meher Baba says:

"Movement in the Ocean of *Paramatman* brought out *Prana* and *Akasha* (energy and emptiness) that were latent in it as one compound. Simultaneously *Prana* and *Akasha* clashed with each other, and the result of the clash was that out of *Prana* state (energy) the subtle universe manifested itself and out of *Akasha* state (emptiness) the gross creation became manifested. But let us not forget that without *Prana* or energy, *Akasha* or emptiness would not have manifested itself, and, that therefore, *Akasha* has been dependent on *Prana*, and the gross creation has been dependent on the subtle."

" When *Prana* and *Akasha* clashed with each other the subtle and gross universes, as said above, manifested themselves; but let it be borne in mind that the subtle universe contains most of *Prana* and little of *Akasha*; whereas the gross contains most of *Akasha* but little of *Prana*. In passing it may be stated that the mental universe is beyond and quite independent of both the gross and subtle universes, and has no connection with *Prana* and *Akasha*." ^{4.9}

`In the diagrammatic presentation of "Planes and Worlds" in his book, "God Speaks", Meher Baba has pointed out that the gross world includes universes visible and invisible, and that the gross world imbibes Energy from Subtle world through gross aspects of energy such as nuclear, solar, etc. It also imbibes the aspects of Mind of the Mental world such as desires, thoughts, emotions, etc.,' Merwan said. `Meher Baba has used the words, universe and worlds, differently

and rather freely. Sometime it is a world including many universes; while some other time it is a universe including many worlds.'

`Merwan, let me put in a nut-shell what Meher Baba has revealed,' Mary said. `The beyond state of Paramatman, the still ocean, is the supreme reservoir of all things existing latently as compounded opposites. Three compounded opposites emerged: Knowing - Not knowing or Knowledge-Ignorance; Movement-Emptiness; Prana-Akasha or Universal Energy-Space. The clashes, or the interactions, of these opposites created worlds or universes in a hierarchical order. The Mental World was created out of the interaction of the Universal Mental Energy and Universal Mental Space. This is the first order level in the hierarchy of the mind, energy and space. The Subtle World was created out of the clash or interaction of the Universal Prana Energy and Universal Subtle Space. This is the second order level in the hierarchy of the mind, energy and space. Gross World with visible and invisible universes was created out of the clash or interaction of the Universal Prana Energy and Universal Gross Space. These universes with their varieties of energy and sub-atomic particles stand at the third order level in the hierarchy of the mind, energy and space. It appears that this cosmic hierarchy is not a product of a chronological sequence of creations. Hierarchy here means the hierarchy in terms of "certainty and un-certainty" or "knowledge and ignorance", "order and disorder" or "less entropy and more entropy", and the consequent flows of information and energy.'

Mary continued her summarization: `In the case of our Gross World, which includes visible and invisible universes, the process of genesis started with the initial interaction between the second order universal pranic energy, and the akasha or universal space or vacuum, which it filled. This interaction produced the primordial foam of drop-bubbles or sub-atomic particles, which dancing to the tunes of emerging third order energies in the form of strong force, weak force, electromagnetic force and gravitational force created the wave-bubbles in the form of galaxies, stars and planets. These interactions also produced smaller combinations of drop-bubbles in the form of atoms, elements, molecules, compounds, bigger abiotic structures and the biotic world.'

`It's a wonderful summarization, Mary,' Rahim said. `It is indeed remarkable that Meher Baba had talked about the gross worlds as coming out of *Akasha* or radiant space or shiny emptiness. It is amazing that, as early as 1929, Meher Baba referred to electron like particles manifesting out of *Akasha* or radiant space or nothing. Gross worlds as "wave-bubbles" and sub-atomic particles like an electron as "drop-bubbles" manifesting out of *Akasha*! There cannot be a better description of these things. *Akasha* is radiant space because it is permeated with photons. This is quite clear, but the word *Prana* to me remains enigmatic. *Prana*, according to Meher Baba, is energy but it appears to be an altogether different form of energy.'

Mary said, `It appears that Meher Baba has used the word "*Prana*" as the medium of spiritual forces subject to transformations.'

`That's right, Mary,' Merwan said. `Meher Baba has said that the *Prana* was divided into seven parts instantaneously and simultaneously, while the *Akasha* remained as one whole. Higher order energy makes use of the lower order energy as the medium of transformations. Spiritual forces are the varieties of the first order energy - the Mental Energy.'

`Mary, I have two questions, ' Rahim said. `First, whether the subtle universe coming out of *Prana*, and the gross universe coming out of *Akasha* or space are some type of matter and anti-matter like creations? Physicists do talk about matter and anti-matter. Secondly, what is meant by the wholeness of *Akasha*? Does it imply that the gross worlds, which manifested out of *Akasha*, are fundamentally undifferentiated and insubstantial? '

Merwan explained that the mental, subtle and gross worlds are dimensionally different but are interrelated. According to Meher Baba, Everything is Everything and Nothing is Nothing; but they sustain each other and are infinitely interwoven, wave with wave, drop with drop. They cannot be matter and anti-matter type of creations.

Mary answered the second question relating to the Wholeness of *Akasha*. She said, `Rahim, this statement about the Wholeness of *Akasha* is a significant statement. This takes us to Bell's famous theorem given in the year 1964, some

thirty-five years later to the statement of Meher Baba. Bell's theorem states that if the statistical predictions of quantum theory are correct, then some of our common sense ideas about the world are profoundly mistaken. We now know it so well that the statistical predictions of quantum mechanics are always correct because quantum mechanics is *the* theory. Bell's theorem tells us that the principle of local causes is false and there really may be no such thing as "separate parts" in our physical world. What happens here is ultimately and immediately connected to what happens elsewhere in the universe and so on, because the "separate parts" of the universe are not separate parts. David Bohm, noted quantum physicist, says: "Parts are seen to be in immediate connection, in which their dynamical relationships depend, in an irreducible way, on the state of the whole system (and, indeed, on that of broader systems in which they are contained, extending ultimately and in principle to the entire universe). Thus, one is led to a new notion of unbroken wholeness which denies the classical idea of analyzability of the world into separately and independently existing parts." ^{4.10}

Mary continued: 'The literal meaning of the word *Akasha* as the "space in which all things shine and appear clearly" is equally exciting. *Akasha* is the theatre in which the cosmic ballet of radiation and matter is taking place. We should not forget that photon, the radiation, is a mass-less particle. When a photon is created, it is instantly travelling at the speed of light. It cannot be slowed down or accelerated further. Photons and electron like particles are nothing but shining space. Now, when I am calling them as "particles", I am not using the word "particle" in ordinary sense of the word. Particles are actually interactions between fields. A field, like a wave, is spread out over a much larger area than a particle. When two such fields interact, they do it instantaneously and at one single point in space. These instantaneous and local interactions make what we call particles.'

'Mary,' Rahim said, 'should we not then say that the universe is a manifestation of interaction of waves or fields within a single and whole system *Akasha*! The expressions such as "waves", "drops", "wave-bubble", "drop-bubble", as used by Meher Baba, make lot of sense. Bubbles are finite and temporary

creations. Once created, they move around, collide and are destroyed creating new bubbles.'

`That is quite an interesting observation, Rahim,' Mary said. `Quantum mechanics shows us that we are not as separate from the rest of the world as we once thought. Particle physics shows us that the " rest of the world " does not sit idly "out there ". It is a sparkling realm of continual creation, transformation, and annihilation. Outside a nucleus, a neutron decays into a proton, an electron and an anti-nutrino. The proton, which was earlier thought as indestructible, decays and disappears giving birth to a positron. Proton, made of quarks, is a quark matter while positron is a lepton like the electron. However, unlike electron, positron is antimatter. Proton decay has obliterated the distinction between quarks and leptons - matter and antimatter. Calculations indicate that, heated up, quark-lepton transmutations during the Big Bang could have yielded one excess proton for every billion matched proton-antiproton pairs. The universe gradually expanded and cooled and these pairs committed simultaneous suicide, leaving behind a billion gamma rays along with each left over proton. This tiny residue of matter now constitutes all the galaxies, all the stars, all the planets, and you and me.'

`The discovery of proton decay provides a vivid image of the ultimate fate of cosmos. Dying protons release positrons into an electron infested environment, where they soon are annihilated. After an immensity of time, every structure is destined to vanish, leaving behind just a few gamma rays. Some evasive electrons and positrons may escape and roam the dark space with only the black holes as their companions. Then there would be no trace of ten billion galaxies. From Nothing everything emerged out, and in Nothing everything will fade away.'

Mika started singing:

When the screen is rolled up the great sky opens,

Yet, the sky is not attuned to Zen.

It is best to forget the great sky

And to retire from every wind. ^{4.11}

`Mika, what does this song mean?' asked Ram.

`It means many things, and nothing. Right now it means to forget this exploration of sky and retire from every wind of enquiry,' Mika said.

`But before we do that, have a look at our cloth bags,' Mary said in excitement. `Their gold threads and patterns are twinkling like distant stars. What does this mean?'

`Their meaning is very clear. They are acclaiming us on our great success. We have succeeded in catching some of the galaxies and stars in our bags, ' Merwan commented.

There was no doubt about that. Carbon atoms and the gold of our bags were made in the stars; and, our bags had all the particles and forces involved in the making of galaxies, stars, planets and the rest.

Mika was in a pensive and reflective mood. Mika was usually a lively, witty and boisterously joyous person and it was quite disturbing to see him in this state of mind. What had happened to disturb him to this extent, we were at a loss to understand.

‘What's the problem with you, Mika?’ asked Mary. ‘Perhaps all this talk about the universe did not interest you. Come on, tell us, why have you become so serious and withdrawn?’

‘Mary dear, you are so kind,’ Mika said. ‘We Buddhists are trained to love emptiness. *Nirvana* is the state where all human defilement and passions have been completely extinguished through meditation based upon right wisdom. Literally, it means to “blow off”. But instead of blowing off the confusion, you have blown it up, Mary.’

‘Did I? I am sorry,’ Mary said.

‘There is nothing to feel sorry. However, this mist of confusion need be blown out,’ Mika said. ‘Let me tell you a story:

Yamaoka Tesshu was a student of Zen. He was in search of a Master and called upon Dokuon of Shokoku. Now this Yamaoka Tesshu was a proud person and thought that he knew a lot. Desiring to show his attainment, he said: “The mind, Buddha, and sentient beings, after all, do not exist. The true nature of phenomena is emptiness. There is no realization, no delusion, no sage, and no mediocrity. There is no giving and nothing is to be received.” Master Dokuon felt amused and suddenly whacked Yamaoka with his bamboo smoking pipe. This made the youth quite angry. Dokuon asked: “If nothing exists, where did this anger come from?”^{5.1}

We all exploded with laughter, which shook poor Pushan rather vigorously. ‘I am not joking,’ Mika said, ‘I am quite serious. Listen. We are told that we are

made of electrons, neutrons and protons. Then we are told that these neutrons and protons are made of quacks or quarks, whatever you call them. It is said, that these protons are decaying and disintegrating into positrons. Moreover, because they are decaying and disintegrating, we too are decaying and disintegrating into these things called positrons. This great story does not end here. These positrons are being thrown into the laps of electrons and then both go out to commit hara-kiri. What a spectacular and glorious vision of our lives and our great common destiny!'

`Its true that we, on our own will, commenced this voyage in this Ocean of Infinite Real Nothing. However, it is also true that we are not on a suicidal mission. Mary is seeking true love. Rahim is seeking love and goodwill. Professor is seeking knowledge and truth. Ram is seeking wisdom, which integrates and eradicates hypocrisy. I desire true peace, equipoise and nirvana. Merwan has promised that our desires will find their fulfillment, but only in the ocean of Infinite Real Everything. Now somebody should act as Dokuon did, and beat us with a stick, and ask: "If we are only decaying and disintegrating into quarks and protons, and if nothing exists, where did this desire to discover the abode of true love, peace, knowledge and power come from?' Mika asked.

`Mika you have posed the problem beautifully,' Merwan said. `It is a profound question and not an easy one to answer. Against the backdrop of a burning and disintegrating universe, this desire to seek and achieve "something" is quite amazing. If we are born of "nothing", what could then be the cause of this desire for "something"? The desire takes its birth from the perception that the present is empty. It is nothing. Nothingness or emptiness is the initial cause of desire. If the story of the universe begins with nothing and ends with nothing, wherefrom this desire to fill in this emptiness or nothing with "something" has emerged? The answer to this question cannot be found in this Ocean of Nothing. Desire is a thing of consciousness, and sub-atomic particles are not that close to consciousness.'

`It is an interesting question,' Rahim said, `which can be explored in more than one way. Desire, no doubt, is a thing of consciousness but it has emerged in the living systems, and it would be worthwhile to explore it in terms of modern

biology theory. Jacques Monod, the renowned molecular biologist and a Nobel Laureate, has stated:

"A universal theory would obviously have to extend to include relativity, the theory of quanta, and a theory of elementary particles. Provided certain initial conditions could be formulated, it would also contain a cosmology, which would forecast the general evolution of the universe. We know however (contrary to what Laplace believed, and after him the science and 'materialistic' philosophy of the nineteenth century) that these predictions could be no more than statistical. The theory might very well contain the periodic table of elements, but could only determine the probability of existence of each of them. Likewise it would anticipate the appearance of such objects as galaxies or planetary systems, but would not in any case deduce from its principles the necessary existence of this or that object, event, or individual phenomenon - whether it be the Andromeda nebula, the planet Venus, Mount Everest, or last night's thunderstorm.

In a general manner the theory would anticipate the existence, the properties, the interrelations of certain classes of objects or events, but would obviously not be able to foresee the existence or the distinctive characteristics of any particular object or event." ^{5.2}

'Jacques Monod proposes that the biosphere does not contain a predictable class of objects or events but is a particular event, certainly compatible with the first principles, but not deducible from those principles and therefore essentially unpredictable,' Rahim said. 'Biologically speaking, life is the outcome of the interactions of the bio-informational molecules – nucleic acids and proteins - among themselves and with the immediate external environment. Genetic or reproductive invariance, teleonomy and autonomous morphogenesis are three properties of life common to all living beings. Monod has stated: "It is perfectly true that these three properties -teleonomy, autonomous morphogenesis, and reproductive invariance - are closely interconnected in all living beings. Genetic invariance expresses and reveals itself only through, and thanks to, the autonomous morphogenesis of the structure that constitutes the teleonomic apparatus." ^{5.3}

`Man, being a living organism, is fundamentally a complex biological system of bio-molecules performing the functions of genetic invariance, teleonomy and autonomous morphogenesis. However, this is not the complete story. Modern man is the product of evolutionary symbiosis. He is the heir to, what Monod calls, a "dual evolution -physical and ideational." ^{5.4}

`Rahim, could you please explain these terms: genetic invariance, teleonomy and autonomous morphogenesis?' asked Ram.

`Genetic invariance means conservation of the genetic information essential for a species. The concept of teleonomy implies the idea of an oriented, coherent, and constructive activity. Production of specific structures tailor-made to perform specific projects is teleonomy. Monod has given the example of a photographic camera, which is made specifically to perform the project of capturing images. In the same manner, for example, the emergence of the vertebrate eye can also be related to the same type of project. The essential teleonomic project, which is in operation in all the living organisms, is the transmission of the invariant genetic information from generation to generation. Autonomous morphogenesis is self-controlled differentiation of forms and functions. Monod has identified the nucleic acids as tailor-made for the task of genetic invariance; and the proteins as the versatile agents of teleonomy and morphogenesis.'

`The modern theory of biological evolution is based on two fundamental propositions. First, that the mutations, or heritable changes in the genetic material, take place in a random manner. These random changes result in a variety of new types of functions. It is the interaction with the immediately available external operational environment, which ultimately leads to the selection of a few of them, and rejection and elimination of the rest. The external operational environment in relation to a new variation, occurring in the informational molecules (nucleic acids and proteins), is the intra-cellular environment. The Darwinian theory of evolution considered the environment, external to the organism, as one which through prolonged interactions, brings about the final selection of beneficial changes. The theory of Darwin and Spencer came out with the idea of a "struggle for existence" leading to the "survival of the fittest". Monod regards this idea as "naively ferocious" and refers to the

neo-Darwinian concept, based on the quantitative theories, that the decisive factor in natural selection is not the struggle for life, but -within a given species - the differential rate of reproduction.'

`Gene structure and genetic mechanisms at the molecular level were not known at that time; and it was only after almost a century, scientists could unravel the secrets of the gene and genetics. In the words of Monod:

" Achievements in contemporary biological research permit a clearer definition of the idea of selection. Of the intra-cellular cybernetic network in particular, of its power, complexity, and coherence, even in the simplest organisms, we have a fairly clear picture; this enables us to understand better than our less well-informed predecessors that any `novelty', in the shape of an alteration of protein structure, will be tested before all else for its compatibility with the whole of the system already bound by the innumerable controls commanding the execution of the organism's projective purpose. Hence the only acceptable mutations are those which, at the very least, do not lessen the coherence of the teleonomic apparatus, but rather strengthen it in the orientation already assumed or (much more rarely) open up new possibilities for it." ^{5.5}

Rahim continued: `After the discovery of the detailed structure and structure based functions of Deoxyribose Nucleic Acid or DNA in 1953 by Watson and Crick, the entire post-1953 scenario of modern biology became infused with an obsessive interest in the genes or the nucleic acids and the molecular mechanisms emanating out of them. No attempts were, however, made to review and think afresh on the classical Darwinian concept of evolution in the light of new researches. Jacques Monod's book titled *Chance and Necessity*, which appeared in 1970, is an exception. It is a thought provoking theoretical presentation which endeavors to build a new theory of biological systems and their evolution based on the exciting, and in a way revolutionary discoveries made in the post-1953 period. Monod has talked about teleonomy, about epigenetic process of molecular morphogenesis, about the genesis of cognitive faculty, and about the relationship of language with the evolving living systems. This perception would prove quite useful in this chase of desire right up to its source.'

`For Monod, living organisms are chemical machines and like a machine, every organism, down to the very simplest, constitutes a coherent and integrated functional unit. This chemical machine, in the form of a living organism, is a self constructing one. Proteins are the molecular agents of structural and functional teleonomy or orientation and coherence. All these teleonomic performances rest, in the final analysis, upon the proteins' so called stereo-specific properties, that is to say upon their ability to `recognize' other molecules (including other proteins) by their shape; this shape being determined by their molecular structure. Monod says: "There is here, quite literally, a microscopic discriminative (if not `cognitive') faculty. We may say that any teleonomic performance or structure in a living being -whatever it may be- can, in principle at least, be analyzed in terms of stereo-specific interactions involving, one, several, or a very large number of proteins." ^{5,6} Thus according to Monod, imposition of orientation and coherence is the job performed mainly by the proteins which are endowed with `cognitive' and "discriminative" faculties.'

We were listening to Rahim with rapt attention. Rahim continued his narration: `Monod's perception of living organisms as chemical machines, however, is much more than mere mechanical. Living organisms differ from machines in the manner of their formation. Monod describes this beautifully: "Any machine or artifact owes its macroscopic structure to the action of external forces, of tools which impose shape upon matter. It is the sculptor's chisel that forms Aphrodite from the block of marble; the goddess herself was born of sea foam (impregnated by the blood from Uranus' mutilated genitals), whence her body developed of and by itself." ^{5,7} Monod attributes the unique self generation capability of the living organisms, or this process of spontaneous and autonomous morphogenesis to the stereo-specific recognition properties of proteins. Oligomeric proteins exhibit an amazing capability of spontaneous association of their subunits. The re-assembly of subunits belonging to a given species of protein will occur not only in a solution containing that one particular protein, but also and just as well in complex `soups' made up of hundreds, if not thousands, of other proteins. In the words of Monod: "This is further proof of the existence of an extremely specific recognition process, obviously due to the formation of non-

covalent steric complexes inter-associating the protomers. This process may be justly considered epigenetic since, out of a solution of monomeric molecules devoid of any symmetry, larger molecules, of a higher degree of order, have appeared, and immediately acquired functional properties previously absent." ^{5.8}

`Autonomous morphogenesis, leading to the manifestation of teleonomically conditioned structures, is an epigenetic process performed by the proteins which possess amazing stereo-specific cognitive capability. Monod has visualized the origin of living systems in three presumptive stages: (1) The formation on earth of the main chemical building blocks of living beings, the nucleotides and aminoacids. (2) The formation, from these materials, of the first macromolecules capable of replication. (3) The evolution which elaborated a teleonomic apparatus around these replicative structures, eventually leading to the primitive cell. Emergence of the replicative capability and of the capability of autonomous morphogenesis were the events which took place spontaneously on account of innately structured associative and cognitive capability of the nucleic acids and proteins. Even the evolutionary process of selection remained mainly restricted to the intra-cellular internal environment. The fundamental life processes - teleonomy, replication, morphogenesis- create higher order teleonomically oriented structures. Life is imposing order and certainty in a decadent universe, which is moving towards more and more of disorder and uncertainty. Life is apparently defying the second law of thermodynamics according to which every phenomenon, whatever it may be, is necessarily accompanied by an increase of entropy or disorder within the system where it occurs. In this way, the living systems, according to Monod, are unique. Monod also gives us a mystic statement: "The epigenetic building of a structure is not a creation; it is a revelation." ^{5.9}

`Structures like the Central Nervous System and human brain are teleonomic structures developed through epigenetic processes. The target (or project) was to amplify the cognitive and discriminative capabilities. At some stage in the evolution, language was created and integrated with the cognitive and discriminative workings of the Central Nervous System. This opened the new dimension of ideational evolution.'

`To imagine, that is to say, represent and simulate external events and programs of action for the animal itself is enlisted by Monod, as one of the five prime functions of the Central Nervous System. Quoting Monod: "It is the powerful development and intensive use of the simulative function that, in my view, characterize the unique properties of man's brain. And this is at the most basic level of the cognitive functions, those on which language rests and which it probably reveals only incompletely. Simulation is not an exclusively human function, however. The puppy that shows its joy at seeing its master getting ready for the daily walk obviously imagines - that is simulates through anticipation - the discoveries it is about to make, the adventures and exciting risks it will face, but without danger thanks to the reassuring presence of its protector. Later on it will simulate the whole thing again, pell-mell, in a dog's dream." And this: "But in man subjective simulation becomes the superior function par excellence, the creative function." ^{5.10}

`Monod's theory is surprisingly almost totally centrifugal. All fundamental properties of living systems - such as replication, autonomous morphogenesis and teleonomic expressions, in the form of diverse and increasingly high-order structures, through epigenetic processes - are innately generated and regulated through the bio-informational molecules in the form of nucleic acids and proteins. The cognitive and discriminative functions, language, ideation and simulation also emerged as epigenetic 'revelations' and later evolved further. Even the acquisition of experiences, from the outside leading to behavioral modifications, is done under the patronage of the internal genetic patrimony. Monod has stated: "When behavior implies elements acquired through experience, they are acquired according to a program, and that program is innate - that is to say, genetically determined. The program's structure initiates and guides early learning, which will follow a certain pre established pattern defined in the species genetic patrimony." ^{5.11}

`This means, that in terms of Monod's biological theory,' Ram said, 'the desire is a brain simulated fantasy'.

`But with a difference,' Mary said. `Since the inputs for such a fantasy, in the form of acquired experiences, are screened and finally chosen in terms of the

pattern defined by the genetic patrimony, the desire is a revelation or expression of internal teleonomic regime. What do you think, Professor? '

'Mary and Rahim, both of you have explained things beautifully and brilliantly,' I said. 'This internal thing is quite tricky in being an endless "internal" progression, or regression of teleonomic regimes. This becomes clear when we try to retrace these regimes to their very source. A living organism is a teleonomic apparatus. Its Central Nervous System is also a teleonomic apparatus. Its living cell is also a teleonomic apparatus. Its proteins and nucleic acids, performing the fundamental life functions, are also teleonomic apparatuses. Retracing this "internal" concentric sequence of teleonomic apparatuses, we land up in the quantum world. In that world, the thing, that appeared as exclusively 'internal' to the organism, suddenly becomes cosmic and "all inclusive". Are we confronting a succession of teleonomic regimes or cosmic manifestations of one supreme regime? - We do not know. Cosmic building blocks are consolidating in the forms of organisms and the organisms are developing consciousness, which is endeavoring to encompass the entire cosmos. It appears that some sort of a Cosmic Program is in the process of unfoldment.'

'This means that we have at least two categories of desire. First, intra-system desires or fantasy simulations based on intra-systemal experiences, which keep the living entities bound to the system, but at the same time work as a creative ability leading to more efficient performance. Secondly, we have those desires, which seek system transcendence. At the level of man exhaustion and the frustration generated by the first set of desires lead to the desires of the second category. The desire for the absolute truth or absolute certainty or knowledge for total freedom, for pure love and so on, are all desires which seek system transcendence,' Rahim said. 'The genesis of this set of desires cannot be a function of the system, which they seek to transcend. Wherefrom they have come and what purpose they are serving? And above all, is it possible to transcend the system in which we are born and in which we would die?'

'Rahim, Monod has talked about the physical and ideational evolution. Centrifugal teleonomic processes move both of them. If a living cell and the Central Nervous System are physical teleonomic apparatuses, then by the same

logic it can be concluded that the desires are the 'apparatuses or instruments' of ideational teleonomy which, along with the physical teleonomic instruments, are unfolding a Cosmic Program,' I said. 'Being the constituents of one Cosmic Program, the physical and ideational evolutionary streams are complementary processes; or perhaps, the two sides of the same coin.'

Mary said, 'If bio-informational molecules are teleonomic apparatuses and if a teleonomic program must precede them, then the only available vehicles for the Cosmic Program and Code are the sub-atomic particles and the patterns which they create in the form of atoms. Carbon of these informational molecules was born in the wombs of stars. Hydrogen was born quite close to the time of the Big Bang. Photons, protons, electrons, quarks and others were born still earlier. Origin of the teleonomic regime, imposed by the Cosmic Program and Code, appears to be simultaneous with the birth of the universe, if not earlier. However, it should precede the Big Bang, if it is assumed that the Big Bang itself was an "expression" of the Cosmic Program.'

Mary continued: 'Certainty, or Order, or Teleonomy, are the visible manifestations of the Cosmic Program and Code. The essential biological genetic information and its code, which the living systems conserve through the process of replication, are also manifestations of the same Cosmic Program. Professor has rightly indicated that the Cosmic Program should include complementary physical and ideational program. Seen in this light, the essential biological genetic information and its code should be common to all living organisms irrespective to their chronological appearance on earth or elsewhere.'

'Rahim, what sort of order the living systems are creating out of the physical systems which are destined to drift towards more and more of disorder or entropy? And, is it true that in doing so the living systems are really violating the second law of thermodynamics?' I asked.

'Professor, the second law lays it down that no macroscopic system can evolve otherwise than in downward direction, toward degradation of the order that characterizes it. Monod has reviewed the situation resultant of the activities of living organisms quite elaborately. Monod points out that the prediction of the

second law is valid, and verifiable, only if we are considering the overall evolution of an energetically isolated system. Within such a system, in one of its phases, we may see ordered structures take shape and grow without that system's overall evolution ceasing to comply with the second law. He has cited the example of the crystallization of a saturated solution. The degree of order represented by even the simplest organism is incomparably higher than that of a crystal. Monod has asked the question: "It must now be asked whether the conservation and invariant multiplication of such structures is also compatible with the second law?"^{5.12} This, according to Monod, can be verified through an experiment closely comparable with that of crystallization. Quoting Monod:

"We take a milliliter of water having in it a few milligrams of a simple sugar, such as glucose, as well as some mineral salts containing the essential elements that enter into the chemical constituents of living organisms (nitrogen, phosphorus, sulphur, etc.). In this medium we grow a bacterium, for example *Escherichia coli* (length, 2 microns; weight, approximately 5×10^{-13} grams). Within thirty six hours, the solution will contain several thousand million bacteria. We shall find that about 40 per cent of the sugar has been converted into cellular constituents, while the remainder has been oxidized into carbon dioxide and water. By carrying out the entire experiment in a calorimeter, one can draw up the thermodynamic balance for the operation and determine that, as in the case of crystallization, the entropy of the system as a whole (bacteria plus medium) has increased a little more than the minimum prescribed by the second law. Thus, while the extremely complex system represented by the bacterial cell has not only been conserved but has multiplied several thousand million times, the thermodynamic debt corresponding to the operation has been duly settled."^{5.13}

'I am sorry for explaining this experiment in such detail but since Professor raised this question about the sort of order created by the living systems, I thought that this alone would satisfy him.' Rahim said.

'It is amazing!' we all exclaimed. 'It is nothing short of a miracle.'

Rahim was visibly excited and said, 'It is a miracle. Let us now look into that, which has been replicated in several thousand million copies using only simple

sugar and salts, and in thirty six hours time. The bacterial cell, which was replicated in this manner, is one of the simplest living systems known to us. It is also one of the most primitive living systems; but, this primitiveness is only in terms of its appearance on evolutionary time scale. It is a tiny piece of extremely complex and efficient machinery, which attained its present state of perfection perhaps a thousand million years ago. Its overall chemical plan is the same as that of all other living beings. It employs the same genetic code and the same mechanism of information translation, as do, for example, human cells. Thus, this cell has nothing "primitive" about itself. Monod says: "Selection operating over five hundred or a thousand milliards generations has left them with a teleonomic apparatus so powerful that no vestiges of truly primitive structures are discernible." ^{5.14}

'I think,' Mary said, 'it would help us if we can understand the relations between energy degradation, entropy, order, disorder, certainty, uncertainty and information.'

Mary then explained, 'It was the development of the kinetic theory of matter (or statistical mechanics) that brought out the deeper and broader significance of the second law. The 'degradation of energy' or the increase of entropy is a statistically predictable consequence of the random movements and collisions of molecules. The Second Law is statistical. It needs many entities in a system to apply. Individual subatomic particles are conceived as such conceptually isolated and short lived entities. The Second Law does not apply to them. Increase of entropy is inevitably linked to an increase of disorder. Conversely this means, that an increase of order corresponds to a diminution of entropy or, as it is sometimes phrased, a heightening of negative entropy or "negentropy.'

'The term entropy is a combination of "energy" and *tropos*, the Greek word for transformation, or evolution. Thus, entropy is a quantity that measures the degree of evolution of a physical system. That is, the status of a system on the order-disorder scales. Isolated physical systems are moving in one direction - from order to disorder. The Second Law introduced into physics the idea of an "arrow of time" since this order to disorder movement is irreversible and, therefore, unidirectional. Time, therefore, flows in the direction of high probability; which is

the direction of increasing entropy. Thus, this movement is also from low probability to high probability.'

Mary continued: 'Probability is an interesting concept. Suppose a question is asked for being answered. There can be two situations emerging out of this. First, the high probability and high uncertainty situation in which there are many possible answers to the question so asked. Secondly, the situation in which the one correct answer is known - the zero probability and absolute certainty situation. Complete knowledge about a question is the ability to assign a zero probability to all conceivable answers save one. A person who correctly assigns unit probability to a particular answer has nothing left to learn about that question. Knowledge can thus be coded in a probability distribution; we can define information as anything that causes an adjustment in a probability assignment. The physical systems, therefore, are also moving from less uncertainty to higher uncertainty.'

I said, 'Mary, absolute order, which is unbroken wholeness, is a zero entropy system; it is also an absolute certainty system, therefore, a self evident system. It does not need any quantum of information to describe it.'

'Self evident to whom?' asked Mary.

'Self evident to It-self,' I answered, 'because if it is self evident to somebody other than Itself, then it will cease to be a system of absolute certainty.'

Mary was beaming with excitement. She said, 'If we look at the two categories of desire in this light, things start becoming clearer. Intra systemal desires - the fantasy simulations created out of the experiences generated by the system - are the desires, which chase uncertainties. The systems of their birth are the systems, which are becoming increasingly loaded with entropy and uncertainties. No wonder that these desires ultimately lead us to utter disillusionment, exhaustion, and suffering. The second category desires are the desires which must have originated from a "system" of absolute order and absolute certainty; and as innate teleonomic instruments, are now steering the ideational evolution to achieve the transition to absolute certainty or absolute knowledge or absolute order.'

'An overview is very much needed now,' said Rahim taking charge of concluding the lively and exciting discussion. 'Big Bang appears to be the initial manifestation of the Cosmic Program. Alternatively, this may be the beginning of all beginnings. A monotheistic force makes a short appearance and subsequently finally cleaves into four fundamental forces. Sub-atomic particles of radiation and matter-energy move through the forces of love in the form of attraction, repulsion, union and re-creation. They collide, merge or fade out, reappear, replicate and the cycle keeps on revolving. Simultaneous to this, the instruments of teleonomy, the offshoots of the Cosmic Program, are also in operation running the order imposing transformative processes. Particles, the first instruments of innate teleonomy, weave newer patterns in the form of atoms and molecules. Attraction, repulsion, collision, union or fusion, disappearance, reappearance, and the simultaneously running transformative teleonomic processes are the principal actors in this enactment of a cosmic play under the direction of the Cosmic Program and Code. The first phase teleonomic project was to weave such forms of matter-energy, in which the integration of the information (part of the script of the Cosmic Program and Code) with the physical structure could be achieved in such a way such that self replication is made possible. This was a miracle in itself, because the resultant capsule of information and matter, in which the structure was the program, and the program was the structure, could self replicate. Informational molecules appeared on the scene and the first major quantum leap from disorder to order was achieved. It became now possible to create high order complex structures and to replicate them with minimal expenditure of energy. The second phase teleonomic project was to create the central nervous system so that the ideational evolution can be completed. The third stage project, and perhaps the final one, as far as the physical evolution is concerned, was to create the human brain. Ideational evolution, which was moving from uncertainty to certainty with desire working as a teleonomic apparatus, reached its climax in the case of man. Man alone was capable of acting as the ideational bridge between the partly random and partly directional consciousness and the absolutely certain, absolutely ordered, self evident principle of consciousness. In other words, system transcendence was made possible only in the case of man.'

We all gave a standing ovation to Rahim for his excellent over-view. Merwan beamed and gleamed with an infectious happiness.

Rahim said, 'I have picked up some visible threads and have endeavored to produce some sort of a working hypothesis. Right now, we know nothing about the Cosmic Program and Code. This hypothesis would remain a tentative one, until we unravel that mystery. The order to disorder destiny of physical systems gave birth to reductionist sciences. The magical living systems, reversing this movement from disorder to order, brought to the forefront the holistic aspect of the ultimate Reality. Ecology, the new holistic science, was born.'

'Rahim, something most unexpected had happened with the reductionism of physical sciences', Mary said. 'When these sciences reached the world of subatomic particles with the hope of coming face to face with the ultimate reality, to their amazement they discovered that this new found world - the quantum world - was totally different. The physical laws of the macro-world of molecules and structures that are more complex did not control this world. As a result Quantum Physics and the Quantum Theory were born and out of these revolutionary developments emerged a new cosmic holistic vision.'

'But one thing is not clear to me. We now know that the desire is the most important and essential teleonomic apparatus for the ideational evolution; why then the spiritual masters have condemned it, and made it into a villain?' Rahim said.

'No Rahim,' said Ram, 'they did not. All of them have talked about pure and impure desires - desires which bind, and the desires, which liberate. In *Yoga Vashistha*, the *Anuchunas*, meaning they who know the Scriptures in their full completeness, have explained this to Prince Ram of Ayodhya : " Twofold is desire; one is the foul, the other is the pure. The one ties to the wheel of births and deaths; the other helps to free the Soul therefrom."^{5.15} In *Kasmir Saivism*, a system of idealistic monism based on *Sivasutra*, the transcendental aspect of Existence is called *Parasamvit*. The term is derived from the root *vid*, "to know", and means Pure Consciousness, the Supreme Experience. This Ultimate Reality contains all things in their fullness. It is *Chit*, the Universal Consciousness and the

repository of all feelings. It is *Ananda*, the Universal Bliss of Silence. It is *Ichha*, the Universal Desire as the repository of all desires. It is *Jnana*, the Universal Intelligence; and *Kriya*, the Universal Action. A profound distinction is made between pure and impure desires. *Ichha*, the pure Universal Desire, is *Purnatva* or Completeness, and it is also *Shakti* or force which drives incompleteness to completeness. Impure desires are called *Raag*, meaning the tainted desire - the desire that limits the universal condition of completeness.'

'Pure Desire,' Merwan said, 'is the longing to become one and complete. A longing to unite, merge and become one with the separated counterpart - God, the Divine Beloved. It is an outburst of Divine Love on the part of both - the lover, and the Divine Beloved. Expressed in dry intellectual language, it is the supreme force, which acts on the universe and steers it towards its final union with the supreme principle of Existence. As desire, it is the active force; as Love, it is the Completeness Itself. In the words of Meher Baba: "God is Love. And Love must love. And to love there must be a Beloved. But, since God is Existence infinite and eternal, there is no one for Him to love but Himself. And in order to love Himself He must imagine Himself as the Beloved whom He as the Lover imagines He loves." 5.16

Mika said, 'Buddha has also made a distinction between carnal desires and the pure desire. The Fourfold Noble Truth reveals that the world is full of suffering, and the cause of this suffering is desire - the thirsts of the physical body and the illusions of worldly passion. However, while explaining the Noble Path, the middle way, Buddha has expressed beautifully:

"Just as the pure and fragrant lotus flower grows out of the mud of a swamp rather than out of the clean loam of an upland field, so from the muck of worldly passion springs the pure Enlightenment of Buddhahood. Even the mistaken views of heretics and the delusions of worldly passions may be the seeds for Buddhahood.

"If a diver is to secure pearls he must descend to the bottom of the sea, braving all dangers of jagged coral and vicious sharks. So man must face the perils of worldly passion if he is to secure the precious pearl of Enlightenment. He must

first be lost among the mountainous crags of egoism and selfishness, before there will awaken in him the desire to find a path that will lead him to Enlightenment."^{5.17}

`Listen to what Meher Baba says on this,' said Merwan. `Baba says: "Eat, drink and be merry" is the ordinary individual's philosophy. But in spite of his unceasing search for pleasure, he cannot altogether avoid suffering; and even when he succeeds in having pleasures of the senses, he is often satiated by them. While he thus goes through the daily round of varied experiences, there often arises some occasion when he begins to ask himself, "What is the point of all this?"^{5.18}

Merwan continued, `The overall impact of worldly experiences is that of deep frustration and desperateness to find the truth. Meher Baba says: "When the mental energy of an individual is thus centered upon discovering the goal of life, he uses the power of desperateness creatively. He can no longer be content with the fleeting things of this life, and he is thoroughly skeptical about the ordinary values he had so far accepted without doubt. His only desire is to find the Truth at any cost, and he does not rest satisfied with anything short of the Truth."^{5.19}

Mary said, `Some new questions have now cropped up. Where to find this Cosmic Program and Code? We have seen that in the physical and biological systems, program is the structure and the structure is the program. The question is, where the Cosmic Program and Code was, and in what state, when even the subatomic particles were not born? If the "arrow of time" has taken the direction of the *order to disorder* movement of the physical systems, does it then mean that the reverse movement from *disorder to order* would also reverse the direction of this "arrow of time"? Can it be presumed that the ideational evolution is the outcome of this reverse movement of time? '

`These are beautiful and deep questions, Mary,' Merwan said. `Ideational evolution terminates in this reversal of the movement of time. Meher Baba has called it the "involution of consciousness". He has said:

"It is this cycle of innumerable deaths and consequent births of human forms that ultimately results in inciting the fully evolved consciousness of the gross-conscious human soul to involve this consciousness to that depth where the fully

involved consciousness of this soul realizes the reality of the infinite, eternal state of the Self.

"This process of involution of consciousness gradually takes place as the gross impressions of the opposites gradually become fainter and less concentrated." ^{5.20}

Merwan continued, 'We are still in the ocean of Infinite Real Nothing, and are trying to hold the wave-bubbles and the drop-bubbles which will vanish within no time. It is the ocean of Infinite Real Everything which contains all the answers. Things will become clear when we will collect the drops of this ocean and ride on its waves.'

Ram added, '*Tantra* says: "As waves come with water and flames with fire, so the universal waves with us." ^{5.21}

Mary was in tears. She was crying. Something was troubling her. Apparently, it appeared that she was in some deep emotional turmoil; or maybe like many of us, she was also experiencing, a torturing feeling of loneliness which was stirred by some past memories.

The six of us had been living and travelling together. And, of course, Pushan was also there. So, in all, we were seven. However, in spite of us being together, the Ocean of Nothing with its unfathomable expanse of space, with all those burning stars, kept reminding us repeatedly about how lonely we all were. The world that we had left behind did not attract us at all. We were hopelessly lonely. The walls of Pushan were covered with countless tiny drops some of which trickled down to the floor. Pushan was also in tears.

'Sing a song, Mary, ' Merwan said in an attempt to liven up the atmosphere. 'We all will sing with you.'

Mary started singing and we all joined in her song:

And I love you so
The people ask me how
How I have lived to now
I tell them I don't know.
And yes I know
How lonely life can be
The shadows follow me
And the life won't set me free.

Singing that song however, did not lighten the gloom cast by our melancholy. Like an impenetrable mist of despair, its pathos filled our hearts and that of Pushan also.

`Anybody out there! ' Mary shouted, `Anybody out there!' And we heard these words being echoed all around `Cool down, Mary', Merwan said. `Let me explain. Life appeared on earth as a part unfoldment of the Cosmic Program. This program is not something exclusive to earth. It covers the entire cosmos in the real sense of the word and includes the gross, subtle and mental spheres of existence imposing cosmic coherence and order. Creation of life was, therefore, a cosmic project. Galaxies, stars, planets, etc. were all produced to unfold the most significant physical component of this Cosmic Program. That is, to evolve and finally create the human form. Life, therefore, appeared on hundreds and thousands of worlds in the cosmos and its varied life forms made their appearance as intermediate stages of this cosmic process of the manifestation of the human form. The Cosmic Law of Opposites rules creation. Processes leading to higher and higher states of order began simultaneously with the processes leading to higher and higher states of disorder. The former took the road to immortality and completeness, while the later took the path of fragmentation, death and extinction. Life, in terms of spiritual wisdom, is not a product of the interaction of informational molecules - nucleic acids and proteins. Subatomic particles, molecules and higher complex structures are the instruments or apparatuses of life, which is acting through them. Life is the ever enlarging orbit or the sphere of conscious-consciousness in the ocean of unconscious-consciousness.'

Merwan took hold of Mary's hands and said, ` Mary dear, we may be lonely but we are not alone in the universe. We are the fruits of the cosmic processes of the evolution of physical forms and expansion of consciousness. Meher Baba has said: "The manifestation of the electron, the most finite gross form, or the first drop bubble, is the beginning of the organic evolution that terminated in the human form "^{6.1}. He has also said: "The eight million four hundred thousands of bubbles or forms which the *Atman* is proverbially said to pass through, are the chief forms or the genera, each of which has its numberless species; and the

Atman has to pass through all of them before it can incarnate in the human form. Yet strictly speaking, there is only one form, viz., the human form, because it is latent in all the previous forms including the electron. In other words, the different forms in the mineral, vegetable, and animal kingdom are nothing but the human form in its latent state which becomes completely manifested gradually as a human body in a human being."^{6.2}

About life on other planets or worlds in the universe, Meher Baba has revealed that there are thousands of worlds in the Creation which are inhabited, some by human beings with fully manifested intelligence, others with lesser and varying degrees of it. However, the value of our Earth, where mind and heart balance each other, is inestimable. Meher Baba has said: "In these millions of universes are many systems with planets: some in gaseous states, some in state of solidification, some which are Stone and Metal, some which also have Vegetation, some which also have developed life forms such as Worms, some also Fish, some also Birds, some also Animals, and a few also have Human Beings" ^{6.3}. So, Mary dear, you will not sing songs of sadness and despair. This revelation is something to rejoice. Sing a song. Sing out loud. Sing out strong. Sing out the good things not bad. Sing out the happy not sad.' Merwan said.

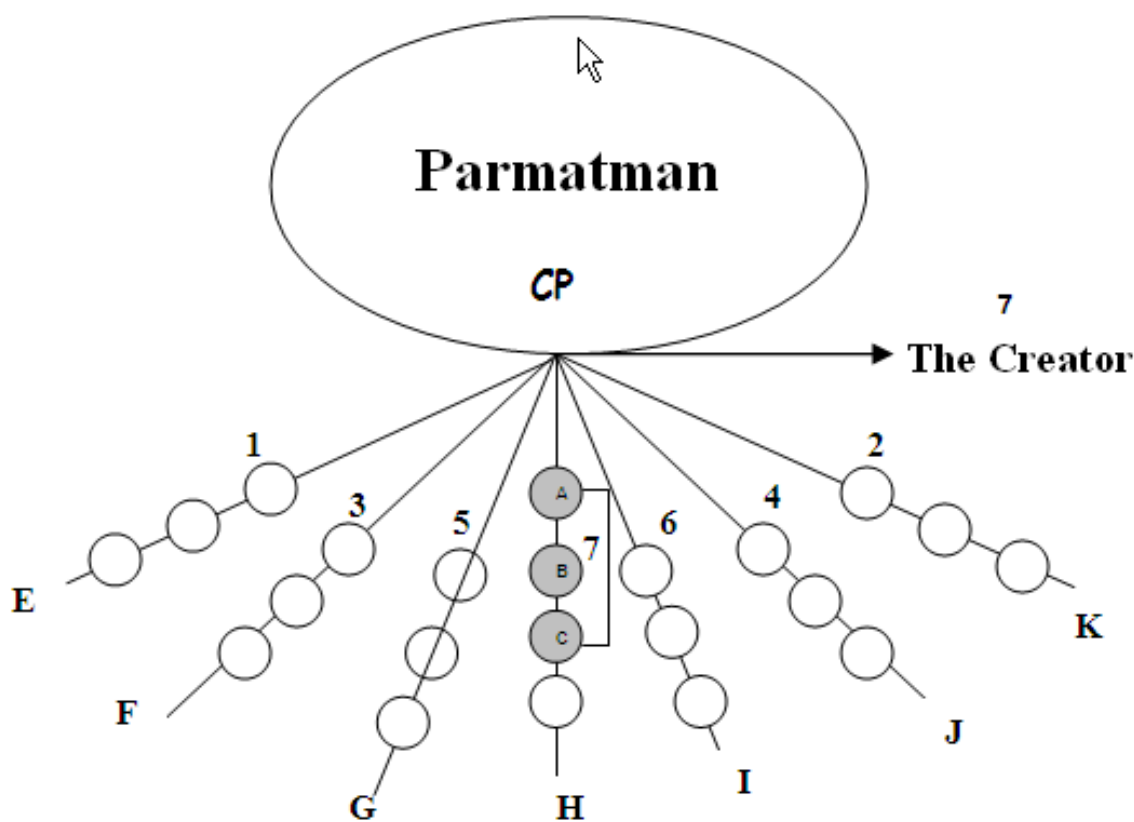
This cheered Mary. She said happily, 'Merwan, you are also a Perry Como fan! I am delighted. By the way, when did Meher Baba reveal about these worlds inhabited by lifeforms and humans?'

'This was as early as 1929', Merwan said. 'Meher Baba revealed this in a series of articles, which appeared under the common title "**God, Creator and Creation**" in "**The Meher Message**", a journal devoted to him. In this series, Meher Baba has explained that worlds and forms emerged out as wave-bubbles and drop-bubbles. Each wave-bubble is a world in itself and that there are numberless worlds. Meher Baba has grouped the countless gross worlds under seven ranges or categories, each of which he has distinguished with a letter. These ranges or categories are: E, F, G, H, I, J, K. Each of these ranges contain a world of its own kind, denoted by a number by Meher Baba, which lies close to the Creator Point. Thus, seven such worlds are relatively quite close to the Creator Point, and among these the world number 7, of the central range H, is closest to the Creator Point.

This world is actually a composite system of three worlds -A, B, C- of the central range which function as one world, because they are connected with one another in a manner that they form one world with two branches. Our earth is "World A" of this composite system of three worlds named collectively as the "World 7", and lies nearest to the Creator Point.

`Merwan, this is indeed quite interesting and a very specific description,' Ram said, `would you like to illustrate it in some way or the other such that we can understand it more clearly.'

`Ram, Meher Baba had illustrated this with a diagram,' said Merwan. `Please give me a pen and some paper and I will try to recreate that diagram'. Merwan then drew the following diagram as given by Meher Baba.



He then went on to describe the characteristics of these worlds as follows:

- Range E with World number 1 that contains stones.
- Range F with World number 3 that contains stones, wind and metals.
- Range G with World number 5 containing stones, wind, metals, water, and vegetables.
- The Central Range H with World number 7 (A, B, C) containing stones, wind, metals, water, vegetables, animals and human beings.
- Range J with World number 4 that contains stones, wind, metals and water.
- Range K with World number 2 containing stones and wind.
- Range I with World number 6 that contains stones, wind, metals, water, vegetables and animals.

`Meher Baba says that it is only the World 7, consisting of worlds A, B, C, that has human beings besides other forms. The peculiarity of this world is that only in it's a part, that is, on our earth, can a human being realize God, owing to several reasons, the chief of which are:

1. Our earth is nearest to the Creator Point.
2. Our earth alone is directly connected with mental and subtle worlds.
3. It is only on our earth that it is possible for human beings to possess intellect and love - head and heart in equal proportions.

Merwan continued: `Meher Baba says that the inhabitants of the C part of the seventh world are extremely intelligent - far more intelligent than the human beings on our earth - so much so that they are capable of expressing their thoughts without gross means. The inhabitants of the B part are also more intelligent in comparison to the people of our world. However, they are not so intelligent as those of C. Inhabitants of C have cent per cent intellect and zero per cent love and those of B have seventy-five per cent intelligence and twenty-five per cent love. Our earth, although inferior to these worlds in terms of intellect, is certainly superior from the standpoint of love and high emotions as it is only on earth that love and intelligence are present in equal proportions.'

`The inter-relations between A, B, C worlds are characterized by *atmic* incarnations in them. When the *Atman* leaves its highest form in C, it takes the highest form in B; and after giving it up in B, it incarnates in the highest form on our earth, A. Therefore, the evolution of forms ends on our earth. But the expansion of the sphere of conscious-consciousness of the *Atman* goes on till it becomes one with God.'

`About the evolution of the wave bubbles or worlds, Meher Baba says:

"Now, just as there is evolution of drop bubbles, so also there is evolution and reaction of wave bubbles. The moon, which gives us light at night, was once an earth, just like our earth, and there are a number of such cooled down earths. Millions of years ago the condition of our earth was quite different from its present condition, and millions of years hence, it will be just like the moon. About the time our earth turns into a moon, it will slip aside from its present position, just as the preceding one did, and its place will be filled by the B part of the seventh world. C will take the place of B and the world number six will take the place of C, and so on. Needless to say that with the evolution of wave bubbles (worlds), the evolution of drop bubbles goes on simultaneously. In the world number 6, at present, there are no human beings but when it will take the place of C, souls, after giving up the highest animal form, will incarnate in the human form with extraordinary intellect. Similarly when B will take the place of our earth its inhabitants will be filled with more love and imbued with higher emotions than they have at present."^{6.4}

`Merwan, that really is quite fascinating,' Mary said. `But before we go deeper into what Meher Baba has explained, Ram should explain the word "*Atman*" etymologically.'

`Mary, this word "*Atman* or *Atma*" is an interesting word,' Ram said. `Etymologically it is nearer to the Greek word *atmos*, *etymon*; *ad*, to eat; *at*, to wander about; *ati*, to go beyond, to transcend; *ma*, to measure; *ma*, to prohibit, deny, negate, repudiate. So, the word *Atman*, according to eminent scholar Dr. Bhagwan Das, means the Self which tastes and enjoys all things and all experiences, pervades all things, transcends all also, measures and sets limits to

all things and at the same time, negates all things, denies the being of all things other than It-Self, i.e. denies all which is Not-It-Self; saying "I am-Not-This". *Atman* or *Atma*, as described by Meher Baba, associates and dissociates with forms in search of its Self. It moves from the world C to B, and from B to A. This movement from form to form and world to world is continued till the *Atman* finally associates and merges with God, its real Self.'

'Merwan, scientific knowledge about the worlds in the space and their features became somewhat clear from 1960 onwards when it became possible to intensify the study of microwaves,' Mary said. 'Clear indications of possible life on at least one planet came only as late as July 1997, when the Path-Finder landed on Mars. What could be the basis of these observations of Meher Baba, which he made way back in 1929? This question interests me immensely. 1929, to me, appears as too ancient a period, even to think about such things.'

'There cannot be a short and simple answer to this question, Mary,' Merwan said. 'Meher Baba has revealed that right from the very beginning, one great cosmic physical project became operational, and the project was to create the human form. This project started with the first finite drop bubbles in the form of electron like particles. Human form was existing latently in the electron and other similar particles. By human form is meant the human body with its amazingly complex Central Nervous System. It was not at all a simple project, when we see that the universe took billions of years to materialize it finally. Subatomic particles, atoms, molecules, galaxies, stars, interstellar clouds, planets, stones, minerals, plant life forms, animal life forms, etc. - in a way all physical and biological structures- were the intermediate products of this great cosmic project. It was indeed an amazing act of progressive miniaturization of physical components and their integration with the forces of consciousness. All of them were finally encapsulated in the form of the human body or human organism. It is only in the human organism, the capability for ideational evolution and involution (leading to higher and higher states of order and certainty), by reversing the direction of the arrow of time, became possible. Further expansion of the orbit of conscious-consciousness, into the subtle worlds of *Pranic* Energy and the mental worlds of Mind, became possible through this unique apparatus- the human

organism. About the uniqueness and amazing complexity of the human body, Meher Baba has said: "Every human being may be compared to a universe. His face may be called the manifestation of the subtle, for just as the subtle got divided into seven parts simultaneously with the clash, so there are seven parts in the face - two eyes, two ears, two nostrils and one mouth. And the body below the throat may be called the manifestation of the gross, for it has the seven shadows of the seven divisions in the subtle, in the shape of two hands, two feet, two openings and one trunk." ^{16.5}

`Human body, above the throat, is the apparatus that handles the inputs of physical energy in the form of light, sound, air, water and food. Out of these, the light and sound inputs feed the subtle ingredients – form images and sound forms – directly to the conscious-consciousness, and the air, food and water release biological energy to keep the body functioning. Body parts below the throat are oriented for action in the gross world and their two openings are the exits of material body wastes. All the vital organs work together to support cosmic wonder - the human brain. The main function of the human organism, as targeted by the Cosmic Program and Code, is to consciously expand the sphere of its consciousness on one hand, and to assume command over the forces of consciousness on the other. Consciousness can then be used imaginatively to create beauty and order in the external world by gaining control over energy and matter, and to traverse the inner path of involution or Self-discovery. The Mental, Subtle and Gross Worlds represent the three levels of cosmic hierarchy - mind, energy and matter. In August 1956, talking to Dante Cardella's group in Los Angeles, U.S.A., Meher Baba explained the inter-relations of mind, energy and matter in these words:

"Mind begets energy and matter. Without mind, there can be neither energy nor matter. Energy is derived from mind and throughout sustained by it; it cannot subsist without mind, latent or manifest. Matter depends upon energy and without energy cannot remain matter, latent or manifest. Mind can subsist without energy as energy can subsist without matter." ^{16.6}

`Human conscious-consciousness, therefore, has the innate capacity to become conscious of the subtle and mental worlds. This transition of conscious-consciousness to higher order states enables it to have much deeper and integral awareness of the physical universe in comparison to the external scientific instruments and gadgets invented by man. Meher Baba referred to this when he explained the structural relations between the subtle and the gross worlds.'

Merwan, continuing the narration, said, ` Meher Baba explains:

"Suppose:

A (Infinite) has its opposite term E (Finite)

B (Light) has its opposite term F (Shadow)

C (Yes) has its opposite term G (No)

D (One) has its opposite term H (Innumerable)

Now taking $B \times D = \text{One Light}$, we get $F \times H = \text{innumerable shadows}$. As the opposites are always the outcome of the originals, it is clear as daylight that innumerable shadows are the outcome of One Light = God.

The shadows are innumerable, countless, and numberless. Let us first consider the light-globes with millions of light-points in each. The light-globes are innumerable and their existence is not a matter for idle speculation. Some of them are actually seen by one who, entering upon Path, reaches the first cosmic plane. What scientists with their powerful telescopes worth thousands of dollars are unable to see, the spiritual aspirant, though advanced as far as only the first plane beholds with his spiritual sight, without the help of any earthly instrument."^{6.7}

`Explaining further, Meher Baba says:

"Each of these light-globes (=shadows) again have their own shadows - and what are these shadows of the shadows? They are the various worlds, including

this gross world. Some of the other worlds we see at night in the shapes of twinkling speck (stars) on the sky.

The stars and planets, suns and worlds, which are the shadows of shadows, though seen from a tremendous distance, appear so bright and dazzling. Then just imagine - Can you? ...The brilliancy and splendour of Real Light (God)!"^{6.8}

`The gross worlds are the shadows of the light globes which are shadows of One Light, the God. Meher Baba says:

"By shadow we do not mean complete darkness but deeply or extremely faint light. It is the subtle universe that is in complete darkness and not the gross. And just because the subtle is enveloped in complete darkness, it is nearer to the Creator Point than to the gross creation."^{6.9}

`The structural sequence of the emergence of creation in the Beyond-the-Beyond God as revealed by Meher Baba is: Emergence of the effulgent ever increasing linear form and simultaneous emergence of the first effulgent circular or globular form; simultaneous emergence of countless shadow-globes, the subtle worlds, engulfed in complete darkness; simultaneous emergence of countless shadows-shadow-globes, the gross worlds. Referral states to assess the relative intensity of light and darkness are the first circle of Light and the complete Darkness, which engulfed it. About the emergence of the first effulgent linear form and its opposite, the circular or globular form, Meher Baba has said:

"...it will not be out of place to touch upon the cause why all the worlds , suns and moons are round and not straight. It is a truism that only what is indivisible, endless and infinite is straight not round. When the Infinite Atman gets the first form, that form is the most infinite. Now just as the infinite has the most finite as it's opposite, so straight line has roundness as its opposite."^{6.10}

`What is this Beyond-the-Beyond state of God, Merwan?' Mary asked.

`Beyond-the-Beyond state of God is not a `state' of God. This expression is used just to put a full stop to all attempts to describe the indescribable. Meher Baba says:

"God is without beginning and without end, and there can never be any question of time and space in Infinity as, otherwise, that would mean a limitation against God's infinitude. No amount of imagination can, therefore, ever think of infinity, because where there is no beginning, the very question as to what was in the beginning cannot arise at all.

For example, let us repeat that before God, there was God, and before that, there was God, and before that, there was God or repeat that after God, is God, and after that, God is, and after that God is: and all this would convey nothing to imagination." ^{6.11}

Ram said, `Hindu scriptures have also used a similar expression, that is "*Paratpara Brahman*" which means literally the Beyond-the-Beyond God. About this Rigveda says:

"There was neither non-reality nor reality then;
There was no air or sky, which is beyond it.
What covered in and where?
And whose shelter was there?
Was water there, fathomless and deep?
Death then existed not, nor life immortal,
Neither of night nor of day was there any sign;
The One breathed, airless, by self-impulse
Apart from It was nothing whatsoever." ^{6.12}

`Atharava Veda says: "This God is designated not as the second nor the third not even the fourth. He is neither the fifth nor the sixth not yet the seventh.

Eighth he is not nor ninth not yet the tenth. One who understands this sole God as existing and pervading alone is the one who knows truly." ^{6.13}

Ram continued and said, 'This miniaturization in the form of man, and with God as the model, is described in the ancient scriptures of Hindus. Rigveda reveals, "For every form, He has been the model, that form of His is the one to look on everywhere" ^{6.14}. Upanishads say, "(The *Atman*) is smaller than the small and greater than the great" ^{6.15}. Svetasvatar Upanishad clearly explains that the Absolute Truth has no material legs and hands but has spiritual hands with which He accepts everything offered to Him; and that, similarly, *Bhagvan* or God has no material eyes, but He does have spiritual eyes which see all. Further, although He has no material ears, He hears all, and, possessing all-perfect spiritual senses, He knows past, present, and future. There are many similar Vedic hymns establishing the Supreme Absolute Truth as a person beyond the material world. Isa Upanishad indicates, the Supreme Absolute Truth is eternally both impersonal and personal. The invocation of the Brihad-aranyak Upanishad states: "That (Supreme Being) is the whole - this (universe) is the whole. From the whole, the whole comes forth" ^{6.16}. Svetasvatar Upanishad states: "I know the great *Purusha*, who is luminous, like the sun, and beyond darkness" ^{6.17}. The Aitareya Upanishad describes the supreme controller as the energetic cause of the creation: "He created these worlds..." ^{6.18}. The Prasna Upanishad corroborates. The Padma Purana states that there are 8,400,000 species, and that the *jivatman* has to undergo birth in every one of them till at last it reaches the human form, a chance to its ultimate liberation from the cycle of *samsara*.'

Ram continued: 'About the Light and the shadows, Rigveda says: "With the ten, the *Dashagwas*, *Indra* found the true Sun, dwelling in the darkness" ^{6.19}. Sri Aurobindo has translated the "true Sun" part of this verse as "the Truth, the Sun". Another verse makes this clearer:

"Looking at the transcendent light beyond the darkness,

We have come to *Surya*,

God among gods,

The Light that is most excellent." ^{6.20}

And this:

"He, shining, caused to shine what shone not,
By Law he lighted up the dawns.
He moves with steeds yoked by eternal order,
Making man happy by the chariot-nave that finds
The light."^{6.21}

Ram continued: 'Vedas reveal that the uppermost level Truth resides in its own home, its self-abode. The ultimate reality is described in the Vedas in various words, such as "*Ritchit*", "*Ritasya sadanam*." Between these two worlds, the highest, and ours there are innumerable gradations, each grade having its own speciality. But that home of Truth, "*Rit*", is alone the highest world of supreme Light or of the Sun of Truth.'

'The Mundak Upanishad expresses this clearly:

"Brilliant is It, the light of lights
That which knowers of the soul do know!
The sun shines not there, nor the moon and stars;
These lightnings shine not, much less this
(Earthly) fire!
After Him, as He shines, doth everything shine.
This whole world is illumined with His light.
Before, behind, to right and left,
Stretched forth below and above."^{6.22}

Ram said, 'According to *Brahma-samhita*, there are not only infinite numbers of planets, but there are also infinite number of universes, which with their infinite planets, are floating on and are produced from the *Brahman* effulgence emanating from the transcendental body of *Maha-Vishnu*, who is worshiped by *Brahma*, the presiding deity of the universe in which we are residing. The same verse of *Brahma-samhita* also states that there is not only one sun in the cosmic manifestation but there are millions and trillions of suns. But the importance of earth is supreme because it is from earth alone, after acquiring the human body, the journey to spiritual subtle worlds, and of beyond, begins. In the *Bhagavad-gita* the Lord confirms this:

"There are two worlds – the material and anti-material. The material world is composed of inferior qualitative energy divided into eight material principles. The anti-material world is made of superior qualitative energy.

Because both the material and anti-material energies are emanations of the Supreme Transcendence, the Personality of Godhead, it is proper to conclude that I am the ultimate cause of all creations and annihilations."^{6.23}

'In *Bhagavad-gita*, Krishna says: "My dear Arjuna, even if you go to the highest planetary system, which is called *Brahmaloka*, you will have to come back"^{6.24}.

'What sort of desire in the Beyond-Beyond God caused the emergence of radiant straight line and circular forms?' I asked. 'Was it the manifestation of the Universal Desire or *iccha* about which we have talked earlier?'

Merwan said: 'Universal Desire, not in action, is Completeness It-self. Beyond-Beyond God is One Complete Whole and there cannot be any reason for Him to be impelled by any desire. Meher Baba has used the expressions "*Lahar*" and "Whim" to describe the cause of all emergences in the Beyond-the-Beyond God. "*Lahar*" means "self-impelled wave or impulse" and Whim means a "sudden fancy". The beautiful Vedic verse, as quoted by Ram, also expresses similarly: "The One breathed, airless, by self-impulse". Words, for that level, can only be used indicatively. And Professor, with a line and a dot one can create any shape or form.'

Rahim asked, 'Did Meher Baba give some idea about the types of life forms on these worlds?'

'Yes, he did describe them in an indicative manner, when he explained the five turns or transitions in the cosmic evolution of forms, targeted innately, to manifest the complete human form', Merwan said. 'These transitions are the happenings in the various gross worlds, which Meher Baba grouped into seven ranges. Out of these seven categories, four are sterile, as the fundamental human form is in a latent state in them, and the remaining three are sustaining manifested life forms. In the sterile group, there are worlds with only rocks; worlds with rocks and gases; worlds with rocks, gases and metals; worlds with rocks, gases, metals and water. The manifested life-form group contains worlds with rocks, gases, metals, water and plant life forms; worlds with rocks, gases, metals, water, plant and animal life forms other than that of man; worlds with rocks, gases, metals, water, plants, animals and human beings.'

Merwan continued: 'The process of the unfoldment and evolution of the latent human form began with the sub-atomic electron like particles but the five turns, as described by Meher Baba, are the happenings at the macro-level - the level of gross worlds. Meher Baba has used the words "species" and "genera" in an altogether different manner, and they should not be confused with the species and genera as commonly understood in biology. Meher Baba has explained:

"The compact latent human form takes four straight turns and afterwards, one inverse turn (in all five turns) before it becomes completely manifested. In order to understand these five turns, we must glance at some of the species.

"Stone is the first important form, which is visible to the naked eye. Every stone has eyes, nose, mouth, hands and feet, in fact a complete body, exactly like the human body; but as it is compact to the last degree, it is extremely latent in this form. It is like the cloth doll, which can be made to resemble an uneven piece of stone when it is carefully folded up. With the evolution from the stone, these imperceptible compact parts of its body begin being unfolded. In the metal kingdom, they are still invisible to the naked eye; but in the vegetable kingdom, the crude manifestation of the latent form is perceptible to some extent.

The latent form in the stone evolves with the head going towards the ground and the feet rising up, gradually becoming upside down in the vegetable kingdom with the head completely underneath the ground and the feet straight up, as is the case with the tree. The tree form is the FIRST TURN of this latent human form. Observe a tree carefully. The mesh of roots are the hair on the head of the tree. The mouth is there, though latent, and so it is not seen by the naked eye. Water and manure are given to the trees in order that they may drink and eat at their bottoms, and not on their tops, for their mouths are under-neath the ground. The entire portion, from throat upwards, of the body of every tree stands out on the ground. The lowest visible portion of the trunk is the throat of the tree, and the remaining trunk is its main body. The bigger branches are its hands and feet, and the smaller branches are the fingers of its hands and feet."^{6.25}

`Merwan, this visualization of human form in a tree is quite fascinating,' said Ram. `Like a surrealist abstract painter, Meher Baba has not only resolved the human form into its basic contours defining its shape, but also revealed its universality. Form is always an abstraction. If I stand with my legs and hands apart, my shadow would reveal a central trunk that has two major branches, each with five smaller branches, at its two ends, and a globular head in the apical position. In *shirshasana*, the Yogic posture of standing on one's head, I would look like a tree. Lying flat on the floor, I would resemble a worm; and floating in the air, I will resemble a large sized bird like thing from the pre-historic past. And if I stand, without separating my hands and legs, my shadow would be a vertical straight line with a circle at its top.'

`This targeted unfoldment of one innate universal life form model, as revealed by Meher Baba, is thought provoking and intellectually exciting,' Rahim said. `Merwan, please describe all the five turns and the life forms representing them.'

`A worm which lies flat on the ground, with mouth upwards and not underneath the ground, represents the SECOND TURN. From the Worm State, the latent form begins to rise again with face upwards. Its THIRD TURN, resulting in a near sixty-degree lift of the upper part of the body, is represented by fish form organisms. Again, through various changes, comes the FOURTH TURN, with face downwards, in the shape of a crab. From the fourth turn, the feet remain in a

compressed form until the inverse turn takes place. The FIFTH TURN takes place in the kangaroo form, and it is an inverse turn, because the head begins rising up and manifesting itself. The principle manifestations of the latent human form in the animal kingdom, according to Meher Baba, are those of kangaroo, the dog and the monkey. The fifth turn is, completed in the human form, which is its complete manifestation. Meher Baba has said: "Though there are millions of nominal forms through which the soul has to pass before it can incarnate in the human form, yet, strictly speaking there is only one form, viz. the human form, from the beginning to the end"^{6.26}. About this end result of the process of latent form unfoldment or the evolution of forms, Meher Baba has pointed out: "The human form is the end of organic evolution, because there is no higher form and no need of a higher form for the Atman to adopt..."^{6.27} ,

`These five turns represent two sequences. First is the sequence of reversing turns ending in the complete reversal of the position of the unfolding latent human form, from its 'head down' and 'feet up' position to 'head up' and 'feet down' position. Second sequence is that of the changes in the external environment: From under the ground to its surface; from the surface of earth to water; from the depths of water to water surface; from the surface of water to air; from air to the surface of the earth. These sequences are the cosmic sequences of the unfoldment of the latent human form. This form is called as the "latent human form" only because it found its complete manifestation in the human organism.'

`This holism does not differentiate between stones, metals, plants, animals and man. All are the outcome of one cosmic process of human form unfoldment. Moreover, if there are worlds with only non-metallic mineral matter, rocks or stones in them, then each of these worlds conceals within itself this universal life form model. They are the outcome of this process of life form unfoldment, which began with the first finite drop bubbles, the electron like particles. Since gross worlds are the shadows of shadows, the latent human form is also a shadow of such a shadow. This holistic vision presents the universe as one Supreme Being or entity.'

'Let me summarize it now,' Mary said. 'The organic evolution, the unfoldment or manifestation of the universally latent human life form model, began with the electron like particles. Its first visible manifestation as vegetable or plant forms took place in those worlds, which possessed non-metallic mineral matter rocks, gases, metal-ore rocks and water. Countless worlds of the universe can be classified in terms of stones or mineral matter rocks, wind or gases, metals in free state, water, vegetables or plant forms, animals or animal forms and man or human forms. There are worlds with only stones; worlds with stones and wind; worlds with stones, wind and metal; worlds with stones, wind, metal and water; worlds with stones, wind, metal, water and vegetables; worlds with stones, wind, metal, water, vegetables and animals; and worlds with stones, wind, metal, water, vegetables, animals and human beings. The FIVE TURNS, leading to final correct positioning – 'head up' and 'feet down' position - of the latent human form, produced biological diversity in the universe. Being the result of one cosmic process of form unfoldment, there cannot be fundamental differences between the life forms of different worlds. This cosmic process of latent human form manifestation ended with the human organism in which this form was completely realized.'

Mary continued and said, 'The description of various types of worlds, classified under seven ranges or categories, by Meher Baba as early as 1920s', is simply amazing. Our knowledge about the universe, and the worlds contained by it, has grown at a very slow pace for want of adequate technological development. Whatever little could be gathered corroborates what Meher Baba had said.'

'That there are numberless worlds in our universe with living organisms, and with highly intelligent organisms, cannot be doubted. There is that famous equation, given by the physicist Frank Drake, which enables us to calculate the number of such worlds: $N = R \times A \times B \times C \times D \times E \times F \times L$. In this equation N is the number of worlds with highly advanced civilization; R is the number of new stars created in a galaxy every year; A is the proportion of those stars or suns which can generate processes which sustain life; B is the number of those suns of A category which reveal the presence of orbiting planets together with their satellite moons;

C is the proportion of those planets which have stabilized themselves at an appropriate distance from their original stars or suns; D is the probability of life molecules on the planets; E is the probability of further evolution of life, on the planets, reaching a high level of intelligence; F is the probability of reaching the technological capability of radio-waves transmissions across the space; and L is the probable number of those worlds which have developed fairly stable civilizations. Since there are billions of galaxies, each with billions of stars, N comes in billions.'

'SETI or Search for Extra Terrestrial Intelligence is a small group of astronomers around the world who have been devoting themselves since 1960 to search for extra-terrestrial intelligence with radio-signals capability across vast stretches of space. A Harvard-Smithsonian radio telescope called as BETA telescope (BETA stands for Billion channel Extra Terrestrial Assay), set in a rural landscape northwest of Boston, scans incoming radio waves through a super-computer. BETA director Paul Horowitz assures that there is intelligent life in the universe. Horowitz, however, adds that the hard part is that the intelligent life in the galaxy is transmitting radio waves to us at a wavelength that we are expecting, and at such a power level that we can detect them. There are many ifs and buts in this.'

Mary then talked about the recent discoveries that provide us with never-before-possible information about some 'new' planets and their moons, and also about Jupiter's moon Europa, and Mars. She said, 'From theoretical speculation, we would now talk about some of the recent discoveries in space. However, before that, a passing reference to that greatest ever event in the history of mankind - the landing on the moon. On 20 July 1969, Apollo XI landed two men on the moon ushering in a new era in man's exploration of space. Moon has practically no atmosphere, as its gravitational power is too weak to hold down gases. The atmosphere on the moon is so thin that it cannot be duplicated in the best vacuum chambers on earth. The day dawns on the moon all of a sudden. There is no sound either, as sound is vibration transmitted through air. Moon is littered with craters on its surface ranging from a few meters across to about 1000 km in diameter. Rocks are basaltic lava, similar to volcanic rocks on the

Earth. Until recently, it was thought that the moon rocks are bone dry with no trace of water. Now, in the year 1998, an orbiting robot craft, the lunar prospector, has found the presence of water in the form of ice on moon. According to NASA scientist Alan Binder, scientists are looking between 10 million and 100 million tons of water on the moon that would be sufficient to fill a lake of 5 square km and 11 meters deep. The lunar water-ice reserves are located at its North and South Poles. A neutron speed-measuring device discovered the water. Neutrons come from natural cosmic rays and are slowed down when they strike atoms of hydrogen. This produces what can be called as "water signature". Lunar water might have come from the striking comets and asteroids. Lunar poles are cold enough - about 118 degrees Celsius - for the water to stay put as ice. During lunar noon, temperatures at the equator could be hot enough for any water to boil off and disappear into space. This indeed is a startling discovery. We landed on the moon and explored it, and what did we find there? A Range J 4 world of Meher Baba with stones or rocks, wind or gases, metal and water.'

`Let us look at some other recent discoveries. In December 1995, astronomers Geoffrey Marcy and Paul Butler of San Francisco State University discovered two `new' planets:

First, a planet orbiting the star 47 Ursae Majoris, some 320 trillion-km (34 light years) from earth in the Big Dipper. It has 2.5 times the mass of Jupiter. It consists of noxious gases, which sometimes spiral into gigantic hurricanes.

Second a planet that circles the star 70 Virginis in the constellation of Virgo, also some 34 light years away. This planet has more than six times the mass of Jupiter.'

`Both planets are temperate enough to allow water to exist in liquid form. The search of life in space is search of water, which is a prerequisite for life, as we know it. These discoveries present a new scenario of the universe comprising of giant unpleasant planets surrounded either by small friendly ones or by large moons that could be hospitable to life. The discovery of possibly life hospitable planets around relatively near, sun like stars indicates that our galaxy, the Milky

Way, which has around 100 billion stars, must be bursting with life hospitable worlds and there may be life on many of them. '

Continuing her narration, Mary said, 'New hopes have been raised by these discoveries. There is good news from our solar system also. Being located in the "habitable zone", there are very good chances of finding another planet, or maybe more than one planet, with life - either existing or extinct. Europa, the fourth largest of the 16 moons of Jupiter, is one such candidate. Pictures and data received from the Galileo Probe, which flew within 155,000 km of Europa, have enhanced the hope of possible presence of life forms. Europa's uneven surface features resemble ice flows in the Earth's polar region. There are small craters, bright scars of former geyser eruptions and many criss-crossing dark bands, described by the scientists as "the great interstate highway system of Europa". Europa's surface, it appears, is completely enveloped by water that is either frozen or liquid. There are surface fissures, which could be the result of dirty geysers erupting along a line, ejecting a mixture of ice and darker silicate debris. Europa's surface temperatures are estimated to be at nearly minus 150 degrees Celsius – too cold for any life form to exist. But the moon appears to be in a perpetual state of geological turmoil causing enough internal friction and heating to keep a large part of Europa's water liquid rather than frozen. A potential Meher Baba Range J number 4 or Range G number 5 world.'

'4th July 1997 was a glorious day in the history of our search for extra-terrestrial life. It was the day when the Mars Pathfinder, a National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA) spacecraft, launched in December 1996 carrying a small rover vehicle named "Sojourner" that was capable of analyzing the chemical composition of Martian rocks, landed on the red planet. The "Discovery" TV channel has immortalized this event and subsequent happenings by airing live telecasts. The information, which Sojourner sent back validates the scientific analytical report on a 4.5-ounce, potato sized, Martian meteorite that had landed on Earth some 13000 years ago. This part of a Martian rock was knocked off from the surface of Mars about 15 million years ago and eventually crashed into the icy continent of Antarctica. Roberta Score, a former staffer of the NASA, scored something unbelievable, when she accidentally picked

up this little rock one morning in Alan Hills, Antarctica. A consortium of scientists from NASA's Johnson Space Center (J S C) in Houston, Texas, the Stanford University in Palo Alto, California, the University of California, Los Angeles and researchers from the Lockheed-Martin Corp, had claimed to have discovered organic molecules, several mineral features - characteristic of biological activity - and possibly microscopic fossils of primitive bacteria like organisms inside the Martian rock which crashed as a meteorite, called ALH84001. David McKay, co-leader of the research team at JSC, pointed out that a combination of many findings leads us to believe that this is an evidence of past life on Mars. These include the detection of an apparently unique pattern of organic molecules, carbon compounds that are the basis of life, and several mineral samples that are known products of primitive microscopic organisms on earth. Structures that could be microscopic fossils seem to support all this. The relationship of all of these facts in terms of location - within a few hundred thousandths of an inch of one another - is the most compelling evidence. The igneous rock in the meteorite has been age dated to about 4.5 billion years, the period of the birth of Mars. The rock could have originated beneath the Martian surface. Somewhere between 3.6 billion to 4 billion years ago, it is thought, the climate in Mars was warmer and wetter, and the water may have penetrated the underground subsurface rock. Water was saturated with carbon dioxide from Martian atmosphere, and this led to the deposition of carbonate minerals in the fractures. The team's findings indicate that living organisms may have assisted in the formation of the carbonate, and some of the microorganisms must have been fossilized. Then about 15 million years ago, a huge comet or asteroid struck Mars, ejecting a piece from its subsurface with a massive force. For millions of years, the chunk of rock floated in space before it finally crashed into the Earth and landed in Antarctica. Wesley Huntress, NASA's associate administrator for space science, stated that recent photos from the Mars Global Surveyor orbiting Mars show an ancient riverbed at the bottom of a 2.5 km wide canyon called the Nanedi Vallis, near the planet's equator. The canyon revealed twisting and winding course providing clear evidence of a fast flowing riverbed that changed its course several times. According to Huntress, this is the first evidence of long-term water flow, and the canyon probably took a million or so years to form. Publishing their findings in the

journal 'Science', David Smith – a planetary scientist at NASA's Goddard Space Flight Centre – reports that in addition to canyons, there is the huge flat region that takes up about a third of planet's surface extending over several thousands of kilometers. It goes right round the planet just south of the polar cap and then all the way up to the equator. According to Smith, this could be a dried up flat oceanic bed. Another surprising finding, which surfaced was that storms on Mars can affect the upper atmosphere, increasing the overall atmospheric pressure five-fold. Small and huge dust storms are quite frequent on Mars. The presence of water in liquid form on Mars, in its remote past, points inevitably to life. Wherever liquid water and chemical are found there is life. There is no exception. Life may be a cosmic imperative. Richard Zare, professor of chemistry, Stanford University and the leader of the Stanford research team has observed that the defining moment of space age could well be the discovery that we are not alone in the universe. Our finding is certainly a step towards such a defining moment. Mars, therefore, could have been categorized as a Range G number 5 world of Meher Baba, which has now, perhaps, reverted to Range F number 3 or to Range J number 4 status.'

Visibly excited by the commentary, Rahim said, 'These discoveries reveal that life originated on more than one planet in the universe and that there are no fundamental differences in the structure, chemistry and functions of life and the life forms on these planets. The evidence, in the form of microscopic fossils of bacteria like organisms inside the Martian rock, is highly significant. We have discussed earlier that except for the fact that a bacterium is a single cell, there is nothing else in it, which can be called as "primitive". The genetic component of a bacterium- DNA, RNA, proteins, amino acids and the rest - under the control of innate genetic code is structurally and functionally similar to that in any advanced organism, including man. This genetic code, which was called "universal" only in the context of Earth, now appears to be truly universal in the light of these discoveries. Origin of life, which in biological terms is the origin of informational biomolecules and the genetic code, must have taken place in the interstellar clouds. Microwaves studies have provided us with the evidence of the presence of organic molecules, such as, cynogen, carbon monoxide, hydrogen cyanide,

nitroxyl, formaldehyde, isocyanic acid, cyanamide, formic acid, methanol, acetaldehyde, methyl formate and ethanol in the interstellar space. Organic evolution, which in the pre-1953 period (the period before the discovery of a universal genetic code) was thought to have begun with the emergence of unicellular organisms, is now conceived as having started with the emergence of the genetic code and the informational molecules. Thus, the emphasis shifted from organisms to molecules. Meher Baba has pointed out that it actually began with the sub-atomic particles, which now appears to be as true. Genetic code is not possible without the trio of the bio-informational molecules; and the trio of these molecules is not possible without the genetic code. The code is meaningless unless translated. The cell's translating machinery consists of at least fifty macromolecular components that are themselves coded in DNA. The code cannot be translated, except by the products of translation. This takes us inevitably to levels below that of the molecules to search for the origins of genetic code.'

`Rahim, would you mind telling us something about this genetic code? 'asked Ram.

Rahim said, `Ram, the building blocks of proteins are 20 amino acids, and the structure and properties of a particular protein are defined by the sequence or the linear order of these amino acids. This sequence is itself determined by that of the nucleotides -the building blocks of DNA- in a segment of DNA. The genetic code is the rule, which prescribes, given a polynucleotide sequence, the corresponding polypeptide sequence. There are twenty amino acids to specify but there are only four "letters" (four nucleotides: Adenine, Thymine, Guanine and Cytosine) in the DNA alphabet. Thus, several nucleotides are required for the specifying of each amino acid. The code in fact reads in triplets: each amino acid is specified by a sequence of three nucleotides. Translation of the DNA nucleotide sequence is done indirectly; a working copy is formed by the transcription of one of the two strands of DNA into a one-stranded polynucleotide called messenger RNA which is finally translated in the form of polypeptide sequence of a protein.'

`Now let us take an overview of what Meher Baba has said about the "latent human form" or the universal life form model, the dominant trend of its progressive unfoldment, and its final and complete manifestation as the human body with its amazing neural complexity. Form, rightly said by Ram, is an abstraction - some sort of final morphogenetic destination to be reached by the single dividing cell and its billions of cell progenies. This is the most amazing part of the process of morphogenesis. Since life form is specific to the individual organism, as well as to the species, all the essential present and future components of form manifestation must remain present in the genetic information repository of a cell. These essential components are not merely the components of an immediately relevant chemical machinery, but include all those things which will be needed later to regulate the morphogenetic processes, and their interactions with the external environment, in order to manifest the "desired" form. This indeed is almost an impossible task, but the cells are making this impossible, as possible, with amazing ease and efficiency. We do not know how this type of, and, this much quantum of information, can be integrated with the structure of nucleic acids, and regulated by the genetic code. The amount of information defined by the nucleotide sequence of a DNA segment is far less than the quantity of information needed to describe the entire three dimensional structure of a protein. Moreover, these proteins, with their amazing cognitive capabilities, are the sole regulators of teleonomic morphogenetic processes. When the central nucleic acids are incapable of containing the quantity of information needed to describe the secondary three dimensional structure of even a single protein, it is then futile to think that they contain the total information package of form manifestation. Only exploration of the relations between information and energy waves at the deepest sub-atomic levels can unravel this mystery.'

Rahim, explaining further, said, `The "latent human form" has two components. The visible form, and the totality of the human body. The visible human form is in the shape of a central axis with two major dichotomous branches (two hands) at the head end, and the two dichotomous branches (two legs) at the opposite end. This basic shape is traceable to marine algal plant

forms. One entire group of vascular plants, called Psilopsida reveals this basic form and its fossil members, like *Horneophyton*, mimic this form almost totally. Not only that, the Telome Theory of Zimmerman treats the leaves and stems of the higher plants as the form-derivatives of the structure exhibiting this basic shape.'

`Form provides a much bigger canopy and covers a wide variety of biological groups, irrespective of their plant or animal origins. We have colonial coelentrates, which have a plant like appearance. The basic human visible form is bilaterally symmetrical, which means, that it is a kind of shape where the right half is approximately a mirror image of the left. This kind of shape is common to diverse groups of animals. However, the important point is that in spite of being displayed by a large number of diverse groups, the basic form or shape emerged as the final "abstract product" of teleonomic epigenetic morphogenesis, and is conserved by the processes of genetic invariance. The latent human form or the universal life form model and its progressive manifestation in the universe, therefore, is a cosmic teleonomic project. The total package of this form manifestation cosmic project, running for billions of years, must be ever available in all living cells. At this point of time, we do not know when, how, and in what manner, this package got integrated with the genetic machinery of a cell. But then, we are equally ignorant about the nature and location of the information needed to describe completely even a single protein.'

`The final target of this cosmic project of latent human form manifestation is not merely the form or the shape, but also the Central Nervous System (CNS) of man. The two - Form and the CNS - together are needed for the ideational evolution. J. Bronowski, in his classic book, "**The Ascent of Man**", raised an interesting question: "At what point can we say that the precursors of man became man himself?" Bronowski gave the answer himself:

"That is a delicate question, because such changes do not take place overnight. It would be foolish to try and make them seem more sudden than they really were - to fix the transition too sharply or to argue about names. Two million years ago we were not yet men. One million years ago we were, because by one

million years ago, a creature appears which can be called *Homo - Homo erectus*."6.28

`Head down and a drooping posture, you are an animal. Head up and an erect posture, you are a man. The five turns, as described by Meher Baba, emphasize this only. The latent human form or the universal life form model, which started manifesting from a 'head down' and 'feet up' position, realized its final 'head up' and 'feet down' position in man. What has made this 'head up' position and erect body posture so crucial and important? The epigenetic development of the Central Nervous System was targeted to make the head as the center of neural activity. Its raised position, in relation to the ground level, enhanced immensely its image and sound receiving capabilities. Bronowski has stated, "The head is more than a symbolic image of man; it is the seat of foresight and, in that respect, the spring which drives, cultural evolution"6.29. The up-right position of the head was also very much needed, because the eyes had already occupied the position of fully forward stereoscopic vision. This feat was accomplished some twenty million years ago by the anthropoid apes in East Africa, Europe and Asia as revealed by a classical discovery made by Louis Leakey. In these anthropoid apes, which were named by Leakey as "*Proconsul*" and "*Dryopithecus*", the brain was markedly larger and the eyes in the stereoscopic vision position.'

`Bronowski has described the uniqueness of the up-right human form beautifully:

"The human baby, the human being, is a mosaic of animal and angel. For example, the reflex that makes the baby kick is already there in the womb - every mother knows that - and it is there in all vertebrates. The reflex is self sufficient, but it sets the stage for more elaborate movements, which have to be practiced before they become automatic. Here by eleven months it urges the baby to crawl. That brings in new movements, and they then lay down and consolidate the pathways in the brain (specifically the cerebellum, where the muscular action and balance are integrated) that will form a whole repertoire of subtle, complex movements and make them second nature to him. Now the cerebellum is in control. All that the conscious mind has to do is to issue a command. And, by

fourteen months the command is 'Stand!' The child has entered the human commitment to walk upright."^{6.30}

The erect posture also liberated the forelimbs. As a result, man became dexterous and this further accelerated the pace of cultural evolution.'

'The human form climax was reached at after millions of years of evolution with many stages in between. Emergence of the worm body plan, the second turn as described by Meher Baba, was a transition from radial symmetry to bi-lateral symmetry. With this body plan, began the positioning of the head at the anterior end and the concentration of sense organs, such as light sensitive cells, in the head. It had also achieved a change in the 'head down' 'feet up' position, of the manifesting latent human form, to a prostrate position.'

'In the fishes, particularly *Agnatha* group, the first vertebrates in the fossil records, appeared the distinct trend of the lifting up of the anterior portion. One good example is the fossil *Agnatha* fish *Ostracoderm*, which shows a clear 60-degree lift of the anterior head region. This marked the third turn. Crabs, a group of Arthropods, achieved more pronounced concentration of the central nervous system tissue in the anterior head region in comparison to worms. The concentration of ganglia into the anterior end is related to the corresponding tendency toward concentration of major sense organs in the head region. Nervous system became complex permitting a cleverness of behavior that is scarcely rivaled except by birds and mammals. This was the fourth turn, the take-off stage of the final rising up of the head - the fifth inverse turn.'

'Rahim – that was really, a very revealing description of the manifestation of the latent human form', Mary said. 'How about the central nervous system? Human brain is an exceedingly complex structure and its development through the epigenetic processes can be nothing short of a miracle.'

'You are right, Mary,' said Rahim. 'In man, the central nervous system contains some ten billion neurons inter-connected by means of about hundred times as many synapses, some of which connect nerve cells lying far apart from each other. Jacques Monod has called the epigenetic development of the CNS, as

the "knottiest and most important of these problems". The long distance morphogenetic interactions are an enigma in them. But they are there.'

`What makes human body so unique and an essential requisite for the ideational evolution and spiritual involution? Few facts about the human brain would make it clear. Scientists from the various disciplines have been trying to understand the working of the brain. Neurologists, psychologists, mathematicians, electronic and computer engineers have started interacting on this. The human brain has three overlapping layers corresponding to three distinct stages of evolution. They are the hindbrain, midbrain and the forebrain. The forebrain, the neo-cortex or cerebrum, was the last to evolve. It represents the principle seat of thinking or cognitive activity. It has more than 10 billion cells called neurons, all packed in a small portion of the space occupied by the neo-cortex. This is amazing. The remaining space is taken up by the exceedingly intricate wiring between these neurons. This wiring is in the form of extremely fine nerve fibers that branch off from the cells and provide trillions of inter-connections. The awesome powers of memory, learning and thinking emanate from these inter-connections. These interconnections provide thousands of leads to each neuron which present to them, options of alternative routes for transmitting electrical impulses or messages. All brain activity results from chemical action and electrical impulses. Our sense organs send electric signals through nerve fibers to the brain to trigger the desired sensation or activity.'

`And Mary dear, this would interest you,' said Rahim. `An important feature of the brain's structure is that a neural impulse, when sent to any part of the brain, is taken up by a large number of neurons for parallel processing. In a way, the brain cells are wired in parallel as opposed to the serial wiring in a conventional computer. This not only eliminates random errors, but also makes for much faster processing of information. This is the mode of wiring adopted in the architecture of advanced super computers. The computer that defeated chess champion Kasparov had 256 chips working in parallel. In the human brain, there is also a large amount of built-in redundancy and flexibility. Specific body functions and sensations are localized in specific regions of the brain, and injury to these areas

does not greatly impair the brain functions. The adjoining areas take them over in due course. However, where the human brain is made up of these billions of neurons having trillions of inter-connections, the human *mind* is not neurons: it is what neurons do. Neurons manipulate electrical signals, while the mind manipulates symbols.'

Ram said, 'Rahim, we deeply appreciate this great over-view about the uniqueness of man and the cosmic manifestation of the latent human form. However, we do not know what Meher Baba has said about the Ape ancestry of man, the Darwinian viewpoint that had brought religion and science on a head-on collision course.'

'Ram,' Merwan said, 'Meher Baba has revealed about the evolution of the gross universe, about the evolution of life on earth and about the evolution of human form in the universe in his own way. In 1934, Meher Baba dictated "The Theme of Creation" on his alphabet board. In it he talked about lower order floating algae being formed in the warm and rusty oceans and evolving later to form anchored seaweeds. From the seaweeds evolved the higher forms of "vegetation" or higher categories of plants.'^{6.31}

'Meher Baba revealed about the spiritual uniqueness of man that differentiates him from the rest of the animals. In the cosmic manifestation of the latent human form, man, as a distinct organism, makes appearance only after the appearance of other animals. Meher Baba, as early as 1934, not only talked about the Ape ancestry of man, but had also revealed about man's "missing evolutionary link" on earth. Talking about this "missing link," Meher Baba had disclosed that this "missing link" is a creature exactly like a gorilla but with a short tail, and, whereas the gorilla uses its hands while walking, the missing link walks on its feet. His face is like a chimpanzee's, and his figure and gait of walking are similar to those of a gorilla. After this missing link, the human form evolves further and in its initial stages, it remains physically or sexually a eunuch. In 1934, Meher Baba had pointed out that the scientists might find signs of this so-called "missing link" in Java, Sumatra or the Indian jungles of the Central Provinces. The manifestation of the latent human form, however, started from the electrons

onwards. This perception enlarges immensely the total time-period of the evolution of human form in the universe.^{16.32}

`All this amazes me greatly,' Rahim said. `This talk, in 1930s, about the floating marine algae as evolving to anchored algal seaweeds, and about the emergence of the higher plants from them, is unbelievable. Plant science arrived at this conclusion much later when the moss like plants (Bryophytes) and fern like plants (Tracheophytes) were traced back to their independent algal origins.'

`And, this specific mention of the evolution of the "great apes" in Asia by Meher Baba is again quite exciting. It was only recently, in 1998, that Caro-Beth Stewart and Todd Disotell have proposed a new model for evolution of Humans and Apes. Disotell and Stewart's theory is the cover story of July 30th issue of "Current Biology". Today, the lesser apes (gibbons and others), and some great apes (Orangutans) live in Southeastern Asia, while other apes (gorillas and chimpanzees) live in Equatorial Africa. Apes were present in Europe and Western Asia during the Miocene Era, from about 8 to 17 million years ago. Ancestors of these ape species must have moved between the African and Eurasian land masses during their evolutionary history. According to the theory held by most paleoanthropologists, the hominoids evolved in Africa. Based on a synthetic analysis of molecular, fossil, and biogeographical data for the primates, Stewart and Disotell propose instead that the lineage leading to the common ancestor of all living apes dispersed out of Africa about 20 million years ago, and then speciated or evolved into the greater and lesser Ape lineages in Eurasia. This theory makes a significant departure from the long held view that the evolutionary history of the lineage leading to humans was confined to the African Continent. A theory similar to this theory was proposed about 25 years ago by pioneering molecular anthropologist Vincent Sarich, but he, at that time, lacked rigorous analytical methodology to prove it. Stewart and Disotell theory is based on parsimony analysis: That is the model that involves the fewest evolutionary events to explain data is the most plausible. The technique uses computer technology to analyze large sets of data to identify the most parsimonious evolutionary model.'

`Rahim, all this is really most amazing, ' Mary said. `No wonder, that starting from the electron like particles this cosmic project of latent human form manifestation took billions of years to achieve its target.'

Ram said, `I have never studied science. However, I have heard that the organic chemistry is the study of carbon compounds. Since all earthly life is carbon based, the organic evolution should begin with the birth of carbon atoms in the universe. That it began from the electron like particles is not clear. And, above all, how the gigantic quantum of information, needed for this long term and long distance project of latent human form manifestation, could get integrated with the electron like particles? Alternatively, to put it differently, how the subatomic particles acted as the carriers of this information package? This is something, which baffles me.'

`This would baffle any body, Ram,' Rahim said. `But the complete manifestation of the awe-some cognitive capabilities of the human brain, supported by its billions of neurons and trillions of neural connections, began with the emergence of protein molecules with innate cognitive capacity. We know so little about the structural basis of this capability of protein molecules, but that doesn't mean that it is not there.'

`Ram, coming to that carbon and organic chemistry part of your question. My reaction is that you are bothered by some tentative boundaries, which the scientists have created for their convenience,' Mary said. `In reality, there are no such boundaries of physics, chemistry and biology. At the very center of all sciences is the concern about the stuff of which everything is built. For example, I am writing this letter -"M" - with my ink pen. Magnify your view of this letter one million times, and you can see the molecules the ink is made of. This is the realm of chemistry. Magnify a billion times more, and you can see the atoms the molecules are made of - the realm of atomic physics. Select one atom, magnify it 10,000 times, and you are inside the nucleus - the realm of nuclear physics. At this stage, we can no longer see; light waves become as large as the grand swells of Arabian Sea viewed from a rowboat. Smash the nucleus and its particles disintegrate in a bomb burst of still smaller particles. This is the world of the particle physicist. Whatever holds true here should hold true throughout the

universe, for this is what everything is made of. So you see, these boundaries are more artificial than real.'

'And try to smash a sub-atomic particle, and, in case you succeed, you are back to the square one - to yourself, from where you had started,' Mika said and he laughed and danced with great joy.

Merwan joined him, saying, 'This chase of shadows of shadows, in order to discover their real source, would only end in your own Self.'

The initial gloom had completely vanished. There was happiness all around, which was emanating from our understanding of the divine orchestra as described by Meher Baba - the countless worlds of the universe, the 7th world with it's A, B, C parts, the uniqueness of earth, life on other planets, the unfoldment of the inherent latent human form through progressive evolution of forms, the importance of the human form for ideational and spiritual evolution - all seemed to fill us with a strange sense of belonging and significance in the cosmic plan. With this feeling of belonging, the sorrow that all of us were earlier experiencing due to separateness was now no longer there. We had constructed an image of the whole from the shadows. In fact – the shadows of shadows.

And we all danced together. Pushan also joined us, finding it rather difficult to resist the temptation.

Turning around all we shall see
Is no one
And still the poet speaks
Of one who besides us walks
What shall we tell our children
When they ask, "what is the truth?"
And where is it hidden?
Such lives as shine
In plants and in the eyes
Of animals left to wander
Such life as turns ripe and falls
How may we show our children these?
Who was it wounded you
And who did you harm?
And
Why seek the meaning of hidden things
When here we are
Walking with
No one.^{7.1}

Rahim recited this poem. It was indeed a pleasant surprise, for all of us, to learn that Rahim loved poetry. The vastness of space was a constant reminder of our physical insignificance.

`Merwan,' said Rahim, `so far we have moved only from nothing to nothing. First, it was an encounter with a burning universe. Then the realization came that there is no absoluteness in the universe that we perceive. The size and the contents of the universe are totally dependent upon our perceptive capabilities. Now we learn that it is all a shadow play. Some sort of an optical illusion created by a master magician. The universe is perceived as images by our brains, and we cannot be sure about what we are actually seeing. Stars, which we see right now, are the shadows of what might have existed millions and millions of light years ago, as the light rays take that much of time in reaching us. The visual world, which comes to our homes through TV and computers, is shadow's shadow. The spoken words – which come to us through telephones, mobiles, radio and television – are in a way all shadows. The written words are shadow scripts of the sounds symbolized by the words. Space is the shadow - boundary that our minds create. Moreover, time is a big cheater. It is sunset here and sunrise elsewhere. Time is the sequence of thought shadows in our minds. Reality – if there is any thing like that – is disgustingly elusive. It glitters and tempts us to run after it. But the moment we try to grab it, it vanishes into nothing.

Meher Baba says that God is Existence, but what is existing we do not know. Mary tells us that the building blocks of universe are the sub-atomic or elementary particles. But, can we say with certainty that these particles really exist, and they are not mere shadows!'

Rahim's observations were indeed quite interesting. Mary explained: `It was the study of elementary particles that brought physicists face to face with a mind boggling paradox: Newtonian physics does not work in the realm of the very small. The impact of this earthshaking discovery is still reshaping our world-view. Quantum mechanics experiments repeatedly produced results which Newtonian physics could neither predict nor explain. However, in spite of its total failure in the realm of the microscopic, it continued to explain the macroscopic phenomena very well the paradox being that the macroscopic is made up of the microscopic.

The world of the so called elementary particles in the end proved to be quite illusory. At present, the most likely candidate for the title of the "ultimate building block of the universe" is the quark. All known particles, the theory goes, are composed of various combinations of a few, say twelve, different types of quarks. But a quark is any of the six hypothetical particles that are believed to form the basic constituents of elementary particles called hadrons, such as proton, neutron, and pion. The quark concept was proposed in 1963 by two different researchers, American physicists Murray Gell-Mann and George Zweig. The term quark was taken from Irish writer James Joyce's *Finnegan's Wake*. Each kind of quark has its antiparticle, and each kind of quark or antiquark comes in three types of "colors". Quarks can either be red, blue, or green, while antiquarks can either be anti-red, anti-blue, or anti-green. These quark and antiquark colors have nothing to do with the colors seen by us. Rather, these colors represent a quantum property. The hypothetical carrier of the force between quarks is called the gluon.'

Our attention was shifted towards Mika who, interrupting Mary, got up and started to sing and dance in joy. The song for this dance was his own version of an old nursery rhyme. None of us could resist the temptation of joining him. We clapped and sang with him:

Old, Old Buddha
Had a farm
E I E I Ou
And on that farm
He had some ducks
E I E I Ou
And a quark quark here
And a quark quark there
And a quark everywhere

And a quark no where

E I E I Ou

And a red quark here

Anti-red there

Now here, now there

Now no where

E I E I Ou

And a blue quark here

Anti-blue there

Now here, now there

Now nowhere

E I E I Ou

And a green quark here

Anti-green there

Now here, now there

Now no where

E I E I Ou

And quarks with glue

In me and you

With not any clue

Quark here

Quark there

But no where

E I E I Ou

'Oh, Mika dear!' Mary exclaimed, 'You are great! And this beautiful rhyme of yours states the truth. This world of ours has no substance. It is a hall of mirrors in which images are multiplied endlessly. It is a virtual reality. And, if you all agree, I can take you inside the quantum world to explore the reality of elementary particles. In the end we will sing and dance again, but not on our toes. We will dance on the TOE, the Theory of Everything.'

'We are ready, Mary' we all said in one voice.

'Here we are then. At the threshold of the most amazing maze - the world of quantum', Mary said. 'Our singing, dancing and merry-making reminds me of 1984 cabarets staged at Aspen Center for Physics. This cabaret came after an eight-year hiatus. In the previous one, physicist Murray Gell-Mann, had jumped from the audience, dashed to the stage and exclaimed, "Stop everything! I have to explain to you the theory of the universe! I understand how everything works". Mann, playing the role of a mad scientist, babbled wildly about quarks, leptons and gluons. In 1984, Mildred Goldberger asked John Schwarz to play this role. Playing the role, Schwarz talked about the amazing super-strings theory, blabbing that it explains everything. This theory, since then, became famous as TOE - the Theory of Everything. So Mika dear, singing and dancing at times opens up new frontiers.'

'I think, we should first concentrate on the electron because that is a known stable elementary particle. We will talk about photons, protons and neutrons later. Unlike electrons, protons and neutrons are not unitary as they are made of quarks. The first great difference between the familiar world of ours and the world of quantum is that we do not "see" things in the same way in the two worlds. Ram, what would happen if you run into a wall?' asked Mary.

'I would surely collide and would hurt myself,' Ram replied.

'But this would not happen if you were an electron,' Mary said. 'You would simply disappear at this end and would reappear on the other side of the wall without even leaving a hole behind you. What does this tell you about the electron? How "real" or "not real" it is!'

`Inside the atom, we find everything in little bundles called quanta. At this level both matter and energy always come in "quanta", that is, discrete quantities. An electron can be at one energy level, or another, as it orbits a nucleus, but never in between. This makes an electron a truly bizarre entity, which goes through a wall, disappears and reappears without leaving a hole behind. Nothing in everyday life prepares us for this.'

`Now let us compare the process of "seeing" in these two worlds - our world and the world of atom. When you look at something -say the wall of Pushan - you are detecting the light that has come from some source and which was bounced off its wall. Nevertheless, this bouncing action leading to the act of seeing does not change the object seen in any way. There is stability of objects in our familiar physical world. In the quantum world however, things are quite different. Seeing means "seeing through a collision" and in the process, that which is seen, is changed. If you want to "see" that bundle of matter that we call an electron, you have to bounce another bundle off it. In the process, the electron being "seen" is bound to change.'

Mary explained this further with the help of an analogy. She said, `Suppose we want to find out, if there is a car in a long tunnel; and suppose the only way we can do this is to send another car into the tunnel and listen for a crash. No doubt, we can detect the original car in this way but it is obvious that after our detection experiment is over, the car that we were trying to detect would not be the same as it was before. The uncertainty principle of quantum mechanics makes it clear that you cannot observe something without changing it in the process. There are other uncertainties also in this way of seeing. When we choose to observe one thing, for example, the location of the car in a tunnel, we would for ever be uncertain about something else, say how fast the car was moving before the collision.'

`The inability to observe things in the subatomic world, without at the same time disturbing them, has some surprising consequences when one starts to think about the way that particles move from one point to another. If we want to know where a particular electron would be next moment, we cannot answer it in our usual familiar way. In our usual way, we would like to see where the electron is at

a given point in time, then would like to look again to see its direction of movement, and would also like to see how fast it is moving.'

`But with an electron, you cannot look at it for more than once and the first look changes everything. You have no other way except to talk about the various probabilities of where it can be. This collection of probabilities is what physicists call a wave function. Electron - an entity of the quantum world - is just a set of probabilities until you see it or succeed in bouncing it off with another bundle of matter. The electron at any point of time is not really at any particular place unless it is being measured. In between, its just a set of probabilities that describe what would happen if a measurement occurred. The question that, in between measurement, whether an electron is really there, or really somewhere, or probably there, or probably somewhere, perplexed physicists for a long time. This uncertainty, which rejects some sort of underlying reality beneath the wave functions, was probably what led Albert Einstein to his famous comment, "God does not play dice" with the universe.

`What then is the substance of an electron?' Rahim asked, `I mean of what thing is an electron made of?'

`In this world-view there is no substance,' Mary gave the answer and explained, quoting the words of Gary Zukav:

"That question, however, `What is it made of?' is based upon an artificial mental structure that is much like a hall of mirrors. If we stand directly between two mirrors and look into one, we see our reflection, and, just behind ourselves, we see a crowd of us's, each looking at the back of the head in front of it, stretching backward as far as we can see it. These reflections, all of them, are illusions. The only real thing in the whole setting is us (we).

"This situation is very similar to what happens whenever we ask of something: `What is it made of?' The answer to such a question is always another something to which we can apply the same question.

"...Like a pair of parallel mirrors, reflecting reflections, gives the illusion of an unending progression to no-where, the idea that a thing can be different from what it is made of creates an infinite progression of answers, leaving us forever

frustrated in an unending search. No matter what something - any thing - is 'made of ', we have created an illusion which forces us to ask, 'Yes, but what is that made of?' ^{7.2}

Ram asked, 'Mary, why do you say that there are two worlds - our familiar macro world and the world of quantum? If the universe is the interplay or dance of photons and other sub-atomic particles, then there should be but one world, not two?'

Mary said, 'In reality, there is only one world -the quantum world. We may say that this world has two components: the visible familiar world of ours and the invisible world of atom. These two components or worlds, as we understand them at this point of time, are controlled by two different sets of physical laws. This may sound unfamiliar and strange. Let me explain it with an example. Imagine a vast swarm of locust. Millions move in one formation and in unison. The size of the swarm, its speed, its location at a given point of time and the direction of its movement can be determined with the help of modern remote sensing methods, and described. However, if you ask about the present location of one particular locust and its track of movement that would indeed be an almost impossible task. A formation of elementary particles is just like the swarm of locust; while an electron, which we intend to measure, is just one particular locust.'

'The analogy of the hall of mirrors is beautiful. But if it is given to discourage questions about the substance of things seen and experienced, then the analogy somehow fails to achieve that objective. If we look at the mirrors, no doubt, they show an unending illusory progression of images. Nevertheless, we are also aware of the fact that they all are our images. We are the reality behind those images,' said Ram. He asked, 'How can we ignore and brush off the real cause of those images?'

Mika asked, 'Ram, what makes you so sure that you are not one of those images?'

'That's a question and the answer as well,' Mary said. 'Reality is virtual in nature. What appear to be "real" entities, like trees, people, electrons, and the rest, are actually the transient illusions that result from a limited mode of

awareness. Nothing makes this observation more clear than the study of self-interactions and the interactions of subatomic particles. Particle self-interactions become quite intricate when virtual particles emit virtual particles that emit virtual particles in a diminishing sequence! Feynman diagrams present these self-interactions most lucidly and correctly. In 1949, Richard Feynman discovered that space-time maps of the movement of elementary particles have an exact correspondence with mathematical expressions, which give the probabilities of the interactions that they depict. Feynman's discovery extended Dirac's 1928 theory and it helped to evolve that theory into the quantum field theory that we know today.'

'Mary, would you please summarize the quantum field theory in a way that we can understand,' Ram urged.

'This theory is quite interesting. The quantum fields theory states that when two fields interact with each other, they do not interact gradually, and they also do not interact at all areas of contact. When the two fields interact, they do it instantaneously and at one single point in space. That is instantaneously and locally. These instantaneous and local interactions, according to this theory, are "particles". The continual creation and annihilation of particles at the subatomic level is the result of the continual interaction of different fields,' Mary explained.

'Imagine two areas of two cloud formations interacting instantaneously. This would demarcate the interacting areas as the "particles".'

'One of the Feynman diagrams presents the momentary transformation of a virtual particle - a negative pion. A pion is a middleweight particle with an average lifetime of 26 billionths of a second. This particle exists in three forms - positive, negative and neutral; and, their anti-particles. This particle transforms itself momentarily into two virtual particles - a neutron and an anti-proton - before re-emerging as a negative pion.'

'Kenneth Ford in his book, "The World of Elementary Particles," has constructed another Feynman diagram depicting the exquisite dance of a single proton, performed in the flicker of time permitted by the uncertainty principle.'

Ram said, 'Mary dear, if it doesn't interrupt you much, would you please explain this uncertainty principle?'

Mary answered, 'It is called Heisenberg's Uncertainty Principle, which shook the very foundations of the "exact sciences". Heisenberg proved that at the subatomic level there is no such thing as the "exact science". This principle states, that there are limits beyond which, we cannot simultaneously measure with accuracy, the processes of nature. These limits are not determined either by the clumsy nature of our measuring devices or by the extremely small size of the subatomic entities. They are imposed by the very way nature presents itself before us. The uncertainty principle reveals that as we go deeper and deeper into the subatomic world, we reach a certain point at which one part or the other, of our picture of nature, gets blurred and there is no way to re-clarify that part without blurring the other. Divide this picture into two parts - right part and the left part. The right part corresponds to the position in space of the moving particle, and the left part corresponds to its momentum. The uncertainty principle reveals that we cannot measure accurately, at the same time, the position and the momentum of the particle. If we use light with a wavelength short enough to locate an electron, we simultaneously cause an undeterminable change in the momentum of the electron. The principle makes it clear that at the subatomic level, we cannot observe something without changing it. Ram, there is a profound message conveyed by this principle: There is no such thing as an independent observer standing on the bank and watching the river of nature running its course.'

Mary continued, 'Coming back to the dance of a single proton performed in a flicker of a moment. Eleven particles make their appearance, between the time the original proton transforms itself into a neutron and a pion, and the time it becomes a single proton again. A proton never remains a simple proton. It alternates between being a proton and a neutral pion on one hand, and being a neutron and a neutral pion on the other. And a neutron never remains a simple neutron. It alternates between being a neutron and a neutral pion on the one hand, and being a proton and a negative pion on the other hand. And a negative pion never remains a simple negative pion. It alternates between being a neutron

and anti-proton on the one hand, etc. etc. In other words, all particles exist potentially - with a certain probability - as different combinations of other particles. Each combination has a certain probability of happening.'

`A happening in the sub-atomic world is called an "event",' Mary said. `Events are indicated in Feynman diagrams by dots. The annihilation of the initial particles and the creation of new ones mark every sub-atomic event. Let us track such an event in relation to an electron emitting a photon. Starting, an electron moves through space with a certain velocity. At a point in space and time - indicated by a dot in a Feynman diagram - it emits a photon. The photon flies off at the speed of light to the right and the electron, its momentum affected by the emission of the photon, alters course and moves off more slowly to the left. This event is not that simple. The electron moving through space emitted a photon and went out of existence at that point! A new electron was created in this process, and it departed the scene with a new, different momentum. The original particle got annihilated and a new one created.'

`Let me now describe an interaction in the form of a collision. A negative pi meson collides with a proton and the two particles are annihilated. Their energy of being (mass) and energy of motion create two new particles, a lambda particle and a neutral K-meson. These two new particles are unstable, and live less than a billionth of a second, before they decay into other particles. The neutral K-meson decays into a positive pi meson and a negative pi meson. The lambda particle, and this is much more amazing, decays into original two particles - a negative pi meson and a proton! A collision between two photons creates an electron-positron pair, and subsequently the electron and positron annihilate each other and create two photons.'

`Mary dear,' Rahim said jokingly interrupting Mary, `your earlier analogy of two cars made to collide in a dark tunnel, in order to detect the presence of one, needs a modification after what you have described just now. No doubt, we succeed in detecting the presence of the unknown one, when they smash each other with a bang. But keeping in mind what you have just explained, what does

one expect to see after the crash? Instead of seeing the debris of the smashed cars, we can now expect to see more automobiles coming out along with the originals and with no sign of a crash!'

Mary, ignoring the jest, continued her explanation - 'Now we come to the most hallucinogenic aspect of the particle physics. There is a Feynman diagram of a three particle interaction. In the diagram no world line leads up to the interaction and no world line leads away from it. It happens literally out of no where, for no apparent reason, and without any cause. Where there was no-thing, suddenly in a flash of spontaneous existence three particles - proton, negative pion and anti-neutron - make their appearance and vanish without a trace. This type of Feynman diagram is called a 'vacuum diagram'. That is because the interactions happen in a vacuum. From "No-thing" comes 'Some-thing' in a flash and that 'Some-thing' disappears again into 'empty space' or 'No-thing'. In the subatomic realm, a vacuum obviously is not empty. This is also true for our world.'

Merwan said, 'Meher Baba says, "The manifold evolving universe arises from the mixing of the one Reality and Nothing" 7.3. It is an interwoven matrix, wave with wave, drop with drop. He has also revealed that the Beyond-the-Beyond State of God is the Supreme Vacuum from where everything and nothing have emerged out 7.4.'

'They are profound statements,' Mary said. 'The quantum field theory, which is a successful physical theory, is premised on the assumption that physical reality is essentially insubstantial. According to quantum field theory, fields alone are real. It is the fields and not the matter that are the substance of the universe. Matter (particles) is simply a momentary manifestation of the interaction of the fields that are intangible and insubstantial. Fields are the only real things in the universe.'

'Mary, after the proton and pi meson collision and their annihilation, how the two new particles get created?' asked Rahim.

Mary said, 'The answer is partly given by Einstein's special theory of relativity. The new particles are created from the kinetic energy (energy of motion) of the

projectile particle in addition to the mass of the projectile and mass of the target particle.'

`Mary, if particles are instantaneous and are local interactions of fields in very minute regions of space, then, what do we mean when we say that an electron moves or a proton moves,' asked Rahim.

`This again is an interesting question,' Mary said. `When an electron, for example, passes through a photographic plate, it leaves a visible "track" behind it on the plate. This "track" is actually a series of dots. Each dot is a grain of silver formed by the electron's interaction with atoms in the photographic plate. Now this "track" marked by a "sequence" of dots, we call as the movement, assuming that one and the same electron, like a little ball, went streaking through the plate. This "movement", marked by the connection between the dots of the "moving object", is a product of our minds and it is actually not there. In rigorous quantum mechanical terms, the moving object - the particle with an independent existence - is an unproved assumption.'

`But, Mary, we know that subatomic particles exhibit three basic characteristics,' said Rahim. `First is that every particle of the same species, or type, looks exactly alike. The second characteristic is the charge. Every subatomic particle has a positive, a negative, or a neutral charge. And this charge conditions its behavior. The third characteristic of such a particle is its spin, much like a top, spinning about a theoretical axis. The spin of a particle is always at exactly the same rate. Spin is a fundamental characteristic of a subatomic particle so much so that if it is altered, the particle itself is destroyed. Is this spin not a movement? Or this too is an imagination of the observer?'

Mary replied, `It is true that every subatomic particle has a fixed, definite, and known angular momentum, or spin, but nothing is spinning. Max Born in his book "The Restless Universe" points out that "one should not imagine that there is anything in the nature of matter actually rotating"'. 7.5

Ram asked, `Mary, you have used expressions like 'self –interaction' and 'interaction', also "particle" and 'virtual particle'. What do they mean in the quantum world? '

`Ram, the quantum world is a world in which particles just do not sit idle. Particles are beehives of activity. Take the case of an electron. It constantly emits and absorbs photons. But these photons are not full fledged photons. They are of now-here-now-nowhere type. They are exactly like real photons, except for the fact that they do not fly off on their own. The electron reabsorbs them as soon as they are produced. Therefore, they are called "virtual photons". They are in fact photons, but the ones that are reabsorbed immediately. Electrons are always surrounded by swarms of virtual photons. Electrons always prefer to stay in their ground or home state. This is the state of lowest energy level and is closest to the nucleus. But an "excited" electron - the one at a higher energy level than the ground state level - emits virtual photons, while returning back to its ground state, which absorb energy released by the electron. Such photons fly off and are not reabsorbed. This is how a virtual particle is transformed into a real particle. Repulsion between two electrons is virtually an exchange of virtual photons. When an electron emits a virtual photon, which is reabsorbed, it exhibits 'self-interaction'; and when it exchanges virtual photons with another particle, it exhibits "interaction". This interaction between two electrons results in repulsion.'

`A proton, like an electron, is also full of activity. It continually emits and reabsorbs virtual photons, which makes it susceptible to the electromagnetic force. It also emits and reabsorbs virtual pions, which makes it susceptible to the strong force as well. Moreover, an exchange of virtual photons between an electron and a proton – an interaction between the two – results in attraction. That is why in quantum electrodynamics, the word "interaction" is sometime replaced by the word "force".'

Rahim said: `This movement from the macro world to the world of quantum is once again a movement from one set of no-things to another set of no-things. And see, what we find in this strange world of atoms! Things that are moving but are not actually moving! Spinning, but are not really spinning! Particles getting created suddenly out of nothing! Particles colliding with one another and being annihilated in the process, but re-emerging with new companion particles!

Particles self-interacting and creating new particles! And those new particles getting absorbed again! Virtual particles gaining energy and getting transformed into real ones! Moreover, when we ask, "what sort of particles are these and how real they are when they exhibit now-virtual-now-real nature," we are told that they are fields, and not the particles. That they look like particles because they are the instantaneous local interactions of the fields. Fields with no material substance.'

`Mary, you have brought us face to face with an insubstantial and a virtual physical reality, which is only an endless progression of images in the hall of mirrors. What sort of reality is this? What sort of science is this, which talks in the language of uncertainty? In this mind boggling, rather mind torturing, maze only one question emerges as most relevant: What we all are? Who are you? Who am I? I refuse to believe that I am nothing but a shadow. I am feeling terribly shaken and shattered.'

`Rahim, the question "Who am I?" is most fundamental,' Merwan said. `Our inability to understand and describe the reality is due to the fact that the contents of our minds are the creations of uncertainty. The threads of our mental logic are the threads of illusion, and this makes all our conclusions equally illusory. Things are not what they appear to be. When we conclude again what they really are, we end up with just another comprehension of what they appear to be. The world of quantum is the stage on which a ballet of subatomic particles is being staged. Ballet dancers keep on appearing with different masks and make-up, and disappearing behind the backdrop. What activities are going on behind the backdrop we do not know. Who is the supreme choreographer and the author of this cosmic ballet? We do not know. Quantum theory, it appears, presents only a glimpse of this ballet of masked dancers as they appear, perform, and disappear. In the words of Meher Baba:

"The drama of the continued life of the individual soul has many acts: .The end of the act is not the end of the progressive theme. The actors disappear from the stage of earth only to reappear again in new capacities and new contexts.... The actors are so engrossed in their respective roles that they treat them as being the be-all and end-all of all existence. For the major part of their continued life

(running into innumerable incarnations), they are unconscious of the closely guarded truth that the Author of the drama, in His imaginative production, Himself became all the actors and played the game of hide and seek in order to come into full and conscious possession of His own creative infinity." ^{7.6}

`Reality is One and contains the Everything and the Nothing which include the attached observer, with limited perceptive capabilities, and also that which is being observed. In the active zone of this Nothing, illusions of virtual realities are being created, sustained for a while, and destroyed. Meher Baba says: "The Original Real NOTHING, being in the Real EVERYTHING is also one, infinite and eternal. But the False Everything that is projected from the Real NOTHING comprising innumerable nothings or all things in Creation, is innately and unendingly dual."^{7.7} A progression of opposites or dual entities-everything-nothing, conscious-unconscious, mind-energy, energy-matter, light-shadows, good-bad, and so on.'

Merwan continued: ` From our point of view, this reality can best be described as One Undifferentiated Whole-ness, in which interacting components are not only interconnected and interdependent, but also qualitatively one and the same. That is why these components are inter-convertible. Mary has said that Newtonian physics applies only to our familiar macro world but fails in the quantum world. And, that the world of the atom is the domain of quantum physics. However, this is not the end of the story. There are far deeper levels of Reality where even these laws become irrelevant. That, is in the domain of more fundamental spiritual laws.'

`Merwan has given us a wonderful over-view', Mary said. `Science, in general, and physics in particular, has been obsessed with what can be called as the "search-for-the-ultimate- particle" syndrome. The most successful departure, from this search of particle-behind-particle obsession, is the S-Matrix theory in which all particles are defined in terms of each other. According to the S-Matrix theory, "particles" are inter-mediate states in a network of interactions. Each network, as well as each interaction, is associated with a certain probability. In this perception, a neutron, for example, is a "reaction channel" through which energy flows. A proton and a negative pion can form it. If more energy is

available, a lambda particle and a neutral kaon can create the same channel. Inter-connections, inter- dependability and inter convertibility are the holistic characteristics of reality. Quantum theory has dived deeper into these areas.'

`Let us have a look at the Bell's theorem, which had exploded the myth of the principle of local causes. This principle states that what happens in one area does not depend upon variables, subject to the control of an experimenter, in a distant space-like separated area. The simplest way to explain the failure of the principle of local causes is to reveal, that what happens in one area, does in fact depend upon variables, subject to the control of an experimenter, in a distant space-like separated area.'

`This is what one concludes from that Pandora's Box of modern physics - the Einstein, Podolsky and Rosen's (EPR) thought experiment published in the year 1935. The title of the paper was, "Can Quantum Mechanical Description Of Physical Reality Be Considered Complete?". The intention of the paper was to give the message that the quantum theory is not a "complete" theory because it does not describe certain important aspects of reality which are physically real even if they are not observed. However, it gave a revealing message that the particles in the EPR thought experiment somehow are connected in a way that transcends our usual ideas about causality.'

`EPR experiment centers on what physicists call a two-particle system of zero spin. In this system, the spin of each of the particles cancels the spin of the other. If one of the particles, in such a system, has a spin "up", the other particle has a spin "down". No matter how the particles are oriented, their spins are always equal and opposite.'

Mary continued, `Now suppose that we separate these two particles in some way, like electrically, that does not affect their spin. One particle goes off in one direction and the other particle goes off in the opposite direction.'

`The spin of subatomic particle can be oriented by a magnetic field. For example, if a beam of electrons, with randomly oriented spin, is sent through a particular type of magnetic field called a Stern-Gerlach device, the magnetic field splits the beam into two equal smaller beams. In one of them, all of the electrons

have a spin "up", and in the other, all the electrons have a spin "down". If only one electron goes through this magnetic field, it will come out of it with either a spin "up" or spin "down". The experiment can be designed in such a way that the odds are 50-50. If we re-orientate the magnetic field, that is change its axis, we can give all the electrons a spin "right" or a spin "left" instead of a spin "up" or a spin "down". If only one electron goes through the magnetic field, when it is oriented this way, it will come out of it with either a spin "right" or a spin "left". And with equal chance either way.'

`Coming back to our earlier example, suppose that after we separate our original two particle system, we send some of the particles through a magnetic field that gives them either a spin "up" or a spin "down". In this case, let us say, that of a pair of particles (twins), one particle comes out of the magnetic field with a spin "up". This means that we automatically know that the other particle has a spin "down". There is no need to make a measurement on the particle because we know that its spin is equal to and opposite to that of its twin. Now, if the axis of the Stern-Gerlach device in the experiment is changed to make the particles spin 'right' or 'left', instead of 'up' or 'down', the particle in 'up' area would have a spin 'right' instead of a spin 'up'. This means that the particle in 'down' area would now have a spin 'left', instead of a spin 'down', as its spin is always equal and opposite to its twin. Now suppose that the axis of the Stern-Gerlach device is changed this way while the particle in the 'up' area is in flight. Somehow the particle travelling in 'down' area instantaneously 'knows', that its twin in area 'up' is spinning 'right', instead of 'up', and so it spins 'left' instead of 'down'. In other words, what we did in one area affected what happened in the other area. This strange phenomenon is known as Einstein-Podolsky- Rosen (EPR) effect. The experiment is the Pandora's Box of modern physics because it inadvertently illustrates an unexplained connectedness between the particles in two different places. The particle in one area seems to "know" instantaneously the spin status of the particle in the other area. This connectedness allows an experimenter in one place to affect the state of a system in another place.'

`But Mary, this was only what you called a 'thought experiment', and it only assumes that the particle in one area would take the spin opposite of its twin in another area', said Ram. `This assumption needs experimental validation; this is what I feel. And, what do you mean by space-like separated area? '

Mary said, `Thought experiments are quite common at this level. However, this does not mean that they are less sound scientifically and lack credibility. Let me explain it with an analogy. Imagine two buckets, A and B, tied at the two ends of a long rope resting on a pulley mounted at the mouth of a deep well. If A goes down, B comes up automatically, and vice versa. To determine the status of B in relation to that of A, one does not need any measurement.'

`Now coming back to our EPR experiment. Let us suppose that the two areas -"up" area and the "down" area - are very far apart. They are so far apart that there is insufficient time for a light signal to connect an event that happens in one area with an event that happens in the other area. There is no way, according to the usual ideas in physics, that the event in area, say B, can know about the event in another area A. In physics, this is called a "space-like" separation. In other words, an event is space-like separated from another event if there is insufficient time for a light signal to connect them. Yet, this is exactly what the EPR thought-experiment illustrates. Although they are space-like separated, the state of particle in area B depends on what the observer in area A decides to observe by changing the orientation of his magnetic field. In other words, the EPR effect indicates that information can be communicated at super-luminal, that is faster than light, speeds contrary to the accepted ideas of physicists.'

`Einstein denied the above conclusion. It is not possible, he argued that the setting we choose for a measuring device here could affect that which happens somewhere else. In 1964 Bell's theorem, based upon correlations between paired particles, similar to the pair of hypothetical particles in the EPR thought-experiment, proved wrong the contention of Einstein-Podolsky-Rosen. In 1964, Bell's experiment was still a hypothetical construct. In 1972, John Clauser and Stuart Freedman at the Lawrence Berkley Laboratory actually performed Bell's experiment with a view to either confirm or disprove Bell's predictions. They found that the statistical predictions upon which Bell based his theorem were

correct. In 1982, Alain Aspect, a physicist at the Institute of Optics, University of Paris in Orsay, France, conducted an experiment, but with one important difference: the settings on the measuring devices in Aspect's experiment could be changed at the last micro-second. This insured that information about the setting of the measuring in either area does not have sufficient time, travelling at the speed of light or less, to reach the other region before the particle arrives. Aspect's experiment verified the statistical predictions of quantum mechanics and super-luminal transfer of information appeared to be quite reasonable.'

Mary continued, 'Earlier, in 1977, H. Stapp had already summarized the situation on super-luminal transfer of information in these words:

"Quantum phenomena provide prima face evidence that information gets around in ways that do not conform to classical ideas. Thus, the idea that information is transferred superluminally is a-priori, not unreasonable.

Everything we know about Nature is in accord with the idea that the fundamental process of Nature lies outside space-time but generates events that can be located in space-time."^{7.8}

'In December 1997, researchers at the Institute for Experimental Physics, Innsbruck, Austria, under the leadership of Professor Anton Zeilinger, successfully performed an experiment in which the properties of a single subatomic particle of light, a photon, was superluminally transferred to another photon instantaneously and without any connectivity or communication between the two. Professor Zeilinger feels that we have reached the threshold of an entirely new area of quantum physics - the field of quantum information and quantum computation. Professor Zeilinger is full of hopes that what has been made possible with photons can be applied to atoms within a few years and to small molecules within 10 to 20 years. This would indeed be a quantum leap for computer technology which would make today's electronic technology obsolete, and usher all of us in the world of instantaneous superluminal transfers of information.'

'Thus, more than ninety years after Planck presented his quantum hypothesis, physicists have been forced to accept the possibility, among others, of the

superluminal transfer of information between space-like separated events as an integral aspect of our physical reality. Ram, Bell's theorem not only leads to superluminal transfer of information, but also to super-determinism. The "unbroken wholeness" of the physical world also reveals that the idea, that events are autonomous happenings, is an illusion. In this picture, what happens here is intimately and immediately connected to what happens elsewhere in the universe, which, in turn, is intimately and immediately connected to what happens elsewhere in the universe, and so on, simply because the "separate parts" of the universe are not separate parts.'

'Mary, what you have said about superluminal transfer of information shakes not only the very foundations of physics but also of biology, and other sciences,' said Rahim. 'It reveals that information, information storage and information transfers in the universe are components of reality at levels far more deeper than what we have thought earlier. We need a fresh and a new all inclusive holistic approach to understand the nature of reality at those levels. Right now, I would like you to further elucidate how two opposite things – uncertainty on one hand and this super-determinism on the other – can be held as true? Or have we reached a level where happenings cannot be described without referring to pairs of opposites and using orbicular mystic expressions such as 'Everything including Nothing', 'Consciousness including un-consciousness' and now, 'Certainty or Super-determinism including uncertainties!' Meher Baba has also said, as told by Merwan, that the reality is innately and un-endingly dual.'

'This appears to be as true, Rahim', Mary said. 'Let us explore it further. According to quantum mechanics, individual events are determined by pure chance. We can calculate, for example, that a certain percentage of spontaneous positive kaon decays will produce an anti-muon and a neutrino (63%), a certain percentage will produce a positive pion and a neutral pion (21%), a certain percentage will produce two positive pions and a negative pion (55%), a certain percentage will produce a positron, a neutrino and a neutral pion (4.8%), a certain percentage will produce an anti-muon, a neutrino and a neutral pion (3.4%) and so on. However, the quantum theory cannot predict which decay will produce which result. Individual events, according to quantum mechanics, are completely

random. This pure chance aspect was another objection that Einstein had about quantum mechanics. It is one of the reasons why he never accepted it as the fundamental physical theory. "Quantum mechanics is very impressive," he wrote in a letter to Max Born, "...but I am convinced that God does not play dice." But when we look at the spontaneous positive kaon decays as a wave function, all of these results (result 1, production of anti-muon and a neutrino; result 2, production of a positive pion and a neutral pion; result 3, production of two positive pions and a negative pion; result 4, production of a positron, a neutrino and neutral pion; result 5, production of an anti-muon, a neutrino and a neutral pion and other possible results) are contained within this wave function as potentialities. When the decay actually happens, one of these potentialities is converted into an actuality. Although the probability of each potentiality can be calculated, the actual happening of a potentiality at the moment of decay, appears to be a matter of chance.'

'Bell's theorem implies that the decay reaction, occurring at a certain time, is not a matter chance. Like everything else, it is dependent upon something, which is happening elsewhere. In the words of Stapp:

"... the conversion of potentialities into actualities cannot proceed on the basis of locally available information. If one accepts the usual ideas about how information propagates through space and time, then Bell's theorem shows that the macroscopic responses cannot be independent of faraway causes."^{7,9}

'Application of quantum theory divides the world into two parts. These parts are the observed system and the observing system. The observed system and the observing system are not the same as the "region of preparation" and the "region of measurement". These regions describe the physical organization of the experimental apparatus. The observed system in the positive kaon decay, for example, is the positive kaon. The observing system, in all quantum mechanical experiments, is the environment that surrounds the observed system, which also includes the physicists who study the experiment. The actual happening of one of those five decay potentialities appears as a chance happening in the observing system because of the falsity of the principle of local causes. At the same time it is because of the falsity of the principle of local causes that this "chance" happening

is not a chance but dependent on something which is happening elsewhere. The unbroken whole-ness of the universe makes the observing system and the observed system related to one another and to the parts of the universal wholeness. The observed happenings, from this point of view, appear to be the revelations of those relationships, which we are capable of observing. Thus, all the five potentialities, in the form of particles produced due to spontaneous positive kaon decays, are only the manifestations of relationships and not the manifestations of discrete entities. As Stapp states: "...an elementary particle is not an independently existing, unanalyzable entity. It is, in essence, a set of relationships that reach outward to other things." ^{7.10}

`Should we understand it like this,' Ram said, `that all those particles - anti-muon, neutrino, positive pion, neutral pion, negative pion, positron - likely to be produced in the process of spontaneous positive kaon decays, are the manifested relationships between the observed system, in this case the positive kaon, and the observing system? '

`Perhaps you are right Ram,' Mary said, `but we should not forget that the observed system, the positive kaon, may in itself be a manifested relationship of some other observed and observing systems. The recent experiment of 1997 by Prof. Zeilinger about which I have mentioned earlier, proves this point. The new photon, which in reality has acquired the properties of another photon, may give the impression that these properties are either its own or the outcome of its self-interaction.'

`That's wonderful, Mary,' Merwan said, `If all happenings in the subatomic world are the manifestations of relationships, then the universe and its creation, as a happening, should also be a manifestation of relationships between the observed and observing systems. But these observing and observed systems, at this super macro-level, should then be the manifested revelations of a programmed sequence.'

Mary said, `It is true that Bell's theorem has been reformulated in several ways since Bell published the original version in 1964. However, irrespective of how it is reformulated, the message is clear. The theorem says that not only do

events in the realm of the very small behave in ways which are utterly different from our common sense view of the world, but that events in our everyday world also behave in ways, which are utterly different from our common sense view of them. This incredible statement cannot be dismissed as fantasy because it is based upon the awesome and proven accuracy of the quantum theory itself.'

`Mary, you are right,' said Rahim. `Bell's theorem does not encourage us to fantasize about the reality. On the contrary, it reveals that reality is one unbroken wholeness, and whatever multiplicity we observe is the outcome of a deeper process of self-interactions of this reality. Fantasy is this unreal division of the unbroken wholeness of the universe in compartments of a "macro-world" and a "micro-world". Universe, as perceived by us, is the pattern emerging out of a network of interactions in which discrete entities are only intermediate states. And that includes all of us. However, that does not make us mere shadows. We are shadows, only because we take our intermediate states to be real. If ultimate reality is innately and unendingly dual, then these shadows are only half-truths. The other half, at the starting point of this progression, should be the reality itself of which they are the shadows. All this confusion is due to our incapability of knowing that reality. In the hall of mirrors, the observed system is no doubt a shadow, but the observing system can also be a shadow. This is a paradoxical situation, which defies logical comprehension. We are perhaps conditioned to understand reality only in terms of discrete and observable entities. Minus them, the reality does not look like reality. It appears as unknowable emptiness. Insipid and frightening emptiness.'

`This feeling of emptiness is not a negative property,' Merwan said, `but a state of freedom from impediments and limitations. It is a state of spontaneous receptivity in which we open ourselves to the all inclusive reality of a higher dimension. In the words of Meher Baba:

"In one sense the act of manifestation must be regarded as a sort of expansion of the illimitable being of the Absolute, as through that act the Infinite, which is without consciousness, seeks to attain its own consciousness. As this expansion of Reality is affected through its self limitation in various forms of life, the act of manifestation might with equal aptness be called the process of

timeless contraction. Whether the act of manifestation is looked upon as a sort of expansion of Reality or as its timeless contraction, it is preceded by an initial urge or movement, which might (in terms of thought) be regarded as an inherent and latent desire to be conscious." ^{7.11}

And this:

"The one Reality, which is infinite and absolute, does not thereby suffer any modification. It is absolute and is as such entirely unaffected by any addition or subtraction. The one Reality remains what it was, complete and absolute in itself, and unconcerned and unconnected with the panorama of creation that springs out of Nothing." ^{7.12}

Meher Baba also says:

"When you talk of the Infinite and the finite, you are referring to them as two; and the Infinite has already become the second part of the duality. But the infinite belongs to the non-dual order of being. If the Infinite is looked upon as the counterpart of the finite, it is strictly speaking no longer infinite but a species of finite; for it stands outside the finite as its opposite and is thus limited. Since the Infinite cannot be the second part of the finite, the apparent existence of the finite is false. The Infinite alone exists." ^{7.13}

Merwan said, 'Meher Baba has made it clear that the Infinite is beyond duality. It is the Self or Being of all things. It is the all-inclusive Reality.'

'That's a revealing perception, Merwan,' said Rahim. 'The emergence of paired systems, that is "observing" and "observed" systems, is part of the process of 'self-assertion' or 'self-interaction' on the part of transcendental Infinite. This process is also 'throwing out' and 'self-limiting' the dual components of 'entities' or 'waves'. One such mega entity is the infinite and finite paired system, in which the infinite is indulging in self experiencing through endless progression of finite forms at one end; and the finite is chasing the experience of its reality, the Infinite, through a negation of the projected finite forms, at the other. The most exciting part of this overview is that, in spite of all the 'waves', 'bubbles' and 'foam', nothing is added or subtracted. Reality, the Infinite Real Everything, remains the Infinite Real Everything in spite of an endless progression of countless

nothings; and the Infinite Real Nothing realizes that it is really nothing, and that realization makes it one with Reality, the Infinite Real Everything.'

'That is indeed a great transformation, Rahim,' Ram said, 'You are now speaking the language of a spiritual seer.'

'We all are inter-convertible,' Mary said and we all enjoyed the pun.

Rahim said, 'But I am not going to abandon this search of Reality simply because it cannot be understood and described. I am now intensely aware of the fact that by discovering the Reality, I would be discovering the reality of my own Self. So, we come back to our main obsession: What, really, is existing? If particles do not exist, then, perhaps, fields and forces should be existing? Can we say that?'

Mika took the question and said: 'Nur-Al-Jerrahi Lex Hixon, while commenting on Mother Prajnaparamita, the Wisdom Goddess, has said:

"Prajnaparamita warns to her spiritual beloved children never to thematize, analyze, review, formulate, represent, project, perceive, isolate, define, grasp, crystallize, reify, concretize, objectify, conceptualize or personalize What Is, simply because Reality remains great, profound, ineffable, limit-less, boundless, boundary-less, frontier-less, division-less, identity-less, infinite, transparent, harmoniously functioning, open, free, elusive, deep, pure, empty, sublime, calmly quiet, at peace and blissfully awakened. Reality is not a void or an absence but is simply more real and more fulfilling than any conceptual or perceptual capacity can convey. Such is the Prajnaparamita Sutra's reliable report on the ineffable nature of What Is." ^{7.14}

'The core thought in Prajnaparamita Sutra is: The Reality, to which all names refer, is utterly ungraspable and inconceivable, possessing absolutely no physical or metaphysical self existence.'

'There is a way out,' Merwan said. 'The statement of Meher Baba, that the Infinite has to discover its unlimited life in and through the finite without getting limited by the process, shows the way out of this maze. This endeavor to discover "What Is" need not be abandoned halfway with a feeling of helplessness and hopelessness. This voyage should go on, knowing fully well that God or "What Is",

would always be beyond the beyond. If we fail in knowing 'What Is', we will, perhaps, come to know 'What is Not'.'

Ram said, 'This is exactly what the Brihadaranyaka Upanishad has described. The Upanishad states that the philosophers, searching for Brahman or the root of existence in the components of matter, end up with only *neti neti*. That Self is known only through negation – 'not this', 'not this'. Logical categories or linguistic symbols cannot define Brahman. It is incomprehensible *nirguna* (without attributes) Brahman, the pure Absolute. Material illusion is called 'maya'. Maya means unreality, deception, forgetfulness – 'that which is not'. The error is committed when we take that 'which is no' as 'that which is'. And if we eventually succeed in discovering that what we thought as 'is', is in reality 'is not', the error gets corrected.'

Mary said, 'Merwan has insisted that our voyage across the ocean of existence must go on irrespective of the fact whether we succeed or fail in catching something substantial in the end. That is an inspiring thought. Substantial has now become totally irrelevant. We have started talking in terms of "observing systems" and "observed systems" and that makes our search even more exciting. If that which is observed is just an interaction or insubstantial nothing, then what is the reality of the observing systems? When I look at myself, I am surprised to find that I am both - an observable object on one hand and an observing entity on the other. Perhaps, I am not an entity but a field of energy. Some kind of a wave. I agree with Rahim that the question "Who am I?" has become much more real and much more relevant than what it was earlier. I would like to ask whether, Mary, the observer, is a product of some sort of interaction on the part of Mary, the object? Alternatively, whether Mary, the object, is the product of some sort of self interaction of Mary, the observer? Or, is Mary a thought-image information package transported from some other unknown source? I am reminded of what Auden wrote in *Labyrinth*:

" The center that I cannot find
Is known to my unconscious mind

I have no reason to despair
Because I am already there “7.15

‘So, let us keep on exploring. We now move on to the modern quantum theories. However, before we talk about them, it would be better, if we take a recap of the four fundamental forces that we have discussed earlier. We now know that subatomic particles are the local patterns created by the interacting fields of energy. This energy is of four varieties that differ radically in character. First is gravitation, which is the most dominant force in the universe and extends trillions and trillions of kilometers, out to the farthest stars. Second is electromagnetic force, which holds the atom together. It makes the electrons to orbit around the nucleus and in that way, regulates the laws of chemistry. Perhaps the most familiar form of the electromagnetic force is light. When the atom is disturbed, the motion of its electrons becomes irregular and they emit light and other forms of electromagnetic radiation. The strong force is responsible for binding the protons and neutrons in the nucleus. Within the atom's nucleus, the strong and weak forces overpower the electromagnetic force. Massive nuclei, such as uranium with 92 protons, become unstable and disintegrate spontaneously releasing fragments and debris, which we call radioactivity. It is the weak force, which controls radioactivity and is responsible for the disintegration of massive nuclei. Nature has its own checks on those who have a tendency of bloating their egos, or size.’

Mary continued, ‘The problem is that while the behavior of each of the four forces, better called interactions, is reasonably well understood, no body knows why there should be four of them rather than some other number? Nor one knows that why should there be so many different sorts of subatomic particles? What is the “base wood”, an expression used by Albert Einstein, beneath the coating of surface appearances? The new theories do not resemble the single masterstroke that Einstein had hoped for and strived for. An ultimate account of all the forces of nature remains a dream for the future. But, we are not far away from fulfilling this desire, as promising unified theories are being formulated. All

the new unified theories are quantum theories and they deal with the three interactions - electromagnetism, and the strong, and the weak nuclear forces - that have been interpreted quite successfully in terms of the quantum principle.'

'Mary, before you describe them, I would request you to explain the terms "fields" and "waves" as used by you,' asked Ram. 'I was surprised when you said that perhaps you are a field or a wave'.

'Ram, field is a concept which emerged out of quantum field theory which is premised on the assumption that the physical reality is essentially non-substantial,' Mary said.

'According to this theory fields alone are real. They are the substance of the universe and not "matter". Matter or particles, as we understand them, are the momentary manifestations of the inter-acting fields, which though insubstantial, are the only real things in the universe. Quantum field theory is a contradiction in itself. A quantum is an indivisible whole. It is a small piece of something, while field is a whole area of something.'

'According to Bohr's complementarity, light reveals a dual nature - a particle-like aspect and a wave-like aspect depending upon the context or experiment. Quantum theory holds that something can be this and that. For example, light can be wave-like as well as particle-like; but it is not possible to observe both the wave-like aspect and the particle-like aspect in the same situation. However, both of these mutually exclusive or complimentary aspects are needed to understand light. It is like one person playing male and female roles in a play. In a given situation this actor can either be one or the other character, but not both. A particle is something that is contained in one place. A wave is something that is spread out. A wave function is a mathematical fiction that presents all the possibilities that can happen to an observed system when it interacts with an observing system or the measuring device. The form of the wave function of an observed system can be calculated through the Schrodinger wave equation. The wave function of an observed system, for example, a photon, is a mathematical catalogue that gives a physical description of those things, which could happen to it when we make a measurement on it.'

'Mary,' Ram said, 'from what you have explained it appears that the wave-aspect and particle-aspect are the revelations, which emerge out when we try to measure the fields. But, if a field is a larger area, as compared to a particle, filled by something, what then is that 'something' which fills it? Or we have a concentric hierarchy of super-mega, mega and smaller fields filled by that 'something', which can be tentatively measured only in terms of complimentary but mutually exclusive aspects, but can never be described or understood totally.'

'Mary applauded Ram, in admiration of this profound statement. She said, 'In 1922, Werner Hiesenberg, as a student, asked his professor, Niels Bohr, "If the inner structure of the atom is as closed to descriptive accounts as you say, if we really lack a language for dealing with it, how can we ever hope to understand atoms?". Bohr hesitated for a moment and then said, "I think we may yet be able to do so. But in the process we may have to learn what the word 'understanding' really means." It means, for example, that the same person can be good and evil, learned and ignorant, bold and timid, and so on. Since reality is One, and fills this entire diversity of fields, it cannot be understood without understanding the total contents of its diversity. And this brings us back to those modern quantum theories, which we were about to discuss.'

'The first of the new unified theories known as the Weinberg-Salam theories, views electro-magnetism and the weak interaction as aspects of a single "electroweak" interaction. Steven Weinberg and Abdus Salam arrived at it independently and shared the 1979 Noble Prize in physics with Sheldon L. Glashow of Harvard, for which reason the electroweak theory is sometimes called Glashow-Weinberg-Salam theory. Salam and Jogesh Pati, an Indian physicist who worked at the University of Maryland, found that grand unified theories in general imply that protons are mortal. They only look immortal because of an unusually long lifetime. The discovery of proton decay has, therefore, added greatly to the stature of these theories.'

'The principle of quantum uncertainty states that not only matter and energy but perception itself comes in discrete units - that a degree of coarseness, something like a grain in a photographic negative, is fundamental to our perceptions of nature. In the perception of these theories, each particle swims

not only in a classical vacuum but in an ocean of ghostly virtual particles that represent its possible past and potential future.'

Mary continued, 'Mathematically, one can treat the virtual particles as if they had the properties of real particles. This might seem no better than reification, the imputation of reality to a purely abstract. However, nature seems to take virtual particles seriously. Physicists, calculating the orbits of the clouds of electrons that surround the nuclei of atoms, must take into account that virtual particles, popping up to enjoy a brief moment of existence before subsiding back into the vacuum between the nucleus and the electron cloud, will alter the orbit of the electrons. Failing this, it is just not possible to calculate the orbit correctly. Pump enough energy into a vacuum, and the virtual particles created will move away as permanent particles; this happens in colliding-beam accelerators all the time. "Beneath the placid surface of things," writes Weinberg, "nature is boiling with quantum fluctuations"'.^{7.16} Normally one may think that the virtual particles are restricted only to the world of quantum or the world of very small. But, in the first moments of cosmic history, the universe was very small. It is now thought that the whole show began as a globule of quantum foam in a vacuum. Nothingness, according to new grand unified theories, contains all of being. Physicists are looking inside this nothing or vacuum to discover the Theory of Everything. A revolution is rocking the foundations of modern sciences. The new theory of 'super-strings' may provide a comprehensive principle to explain all known physical phenomena, right from the Big Bang to the dynamic deep within the nucleus of the atom.'

'In 1970, Yoichiro Nambu, of the University of Chicago, proposed a strong force theory in which nature's building blocks were "strings" not "particles". Nambu speculated that subatomic particles consisted of a series of vibrating strings, with each mode of vibration corresponding to a separate particle. John Schwarz, regarded as one of the major architects of "superstrings" theory, initiated by Nambu, developed the concept further and this theory now aspires to unite all the laws of physics into one mathematical framework.'

`Mary, a string is either a twine or a piece of wire on a musical instrument,' Ram said. He asked, `With what meaning the word is used in this "superstrings" theory?'

Mary said: `To understand the "superstrings" theory, let us think of the way a violin or a sitar string can resonate with different frequencies, each one creating a separate tone of the musical scale. The tones created by the vibrating string are not themselves any more fundamental than any other tone. What is fundamental is the fact that a single concept, vibrating strings, can explain the laws of harmony.'

`In the superstrings theory, the fundamental forces or interactions, and the various particles found in nature are merely different modes of vibrations of one-dimensional strings. The answer to the ancient question "What is matter?" is that it consists of particles that are different modes of vibrations of a string. Matter is the "music" created by the strings. The four fundamental forces of nature can be described by interacting strings in splitting apart or joining together to create the unified force from which the four forces are derived.'

`Mary dear,' Ram said. `Are we listening science or music?'

`If science can be used to explain music ' Mary replied, `then what is the harm if music is used to explain science! The original string theory failed to describe all the 'spinning' particles found in nature. We already know that 'spin' is angular momentum. All objects - from galaxies, which may take millions of years for one rotation, to subatomic particles, which can rotate millions of times in one second - have spin. In 1971 Schwarz and Andre Neveu, both working at Princeton, and, Pierre Ramond, then at the National Accelerator Laboratory near Chicago, proposed a version of the string theory that included particles with spin.'

`This new version of superstrings theory visualizes a ten-dimensional universe. It means that a six-dimensional 'sister universe' co-exists with ours. According to the superstrings theory, the other universe has curled up to such an incredibly small size - about one hundred million million million times smaller than the nucleus of an atom - that it is closed to humans. In 1974, Schwarz and Joe Scherk found that Einstein's general relativity theory is a low-energy approximation of

the string theory. In 1979, Michael Green, a physicist from Queen Mary College of the University of London, joined Schwarz. In the summer of 1984, Green and Schwarz arrived at a mathematical understanding of the cancellation of anomalies from the superstrings theory. They could discover the possible key to unification. The result was that the number of superstrings papers published in scientific journals in the early 1980's mushroomed to hundreds by 1987. The theory precisely explained how the universe went from ten to four dimensions.'

`At a physics conference in 1984, the prominent Princeton physicist Edward Witten astonished his audience by declaring that we may be witnessing a revolution in physics as great as the birth of the quantum theory. "Science" magazine, always careful not to exaggerate the claims of scientists, startled readers by declaring that the superstrings revolution may be no less profound than the transition from real numbers to complex numbers in mathematics.'

`Mary, listening to you is always a rewarding and refreshing experience,' said Merwan. `May I point out one thing. No universe, howsoever minute it might be, is closed to human consciousness. You have talked about the observing system or the measuring device. God had programmed the universe to create this most amazing measuring device and supreme observer -the human form- with accessibility to the entire creation. The human form includes gross, subtle and mental bodies and sensory systems specific to them.'

`Merwan, what you have said is a possibility,' Mary said. `Physicists Jack Sarfatti and Nick Herbert have speculated that perhaps human sensory systems can detect the zero-point vacuum fluctuations of the dance of virtual particles in empty space predicted by the uncertainty principle. Some philosopher-physicists think that if this is so, such detections might be part of the mechanism of mystic knowing.'

Rahim was in a poetic mood again, and recited this poem:

After the Sun
Set
We lived by Moonlight
The Moon
Waned
Now Jupiter
Threatens
To go
Into occlusion
This Solar System
Grows apparently dimmer
And
Dimmer
Dwindling in manifest light
Behind Veiling Clouds ^{8.1}

`Look, where we have come,' Rahim said. `All through, we have been chasing the expanse of the universe in space with a hope that we would discover infinite colors of Reality, or would come face to face with a soul invigorating colorful Reality which will make our otherwise gloomy lives cheerful. The universe is now disappearing behind the veiling clouds of cosmic illusion and uncertainty. We

have landed again in the frightening and impregnable gloom of the unknown. All that which we have chased with a desire to possess and benefit, has vanished into a mysterious vacuum or void. That which we thought as real has proved to be an abstraction. All things are fields. We are fields. In case we are not fields, then we are perhaps musical vibrations of strings. These are strange revelations indeed! If you love poetry, think you are a "*svara*" or a musical tone. If you love science, think you are a ghost - a virtual reality. And in case you are fond of spirituality, console yourself with the idea that you are infinite real nothing, or perhaps, infinite real everything. If I am a "*svara*" or musical tone of a stringed instrument, I must know whether the stringed instrument is a one stringed "*ek tara*", or a three stringed *sarangi*, or a four stringed violin, or a seven stringed *sitar*, or the multi-stringed *santoor*. Above all, I must know whose music I am? Whose shadow, or ghost, I am? But we are told that Reality transcends everything. So, shut your mouth. Bury your intellect. Do not ask. Seek no answers. Learn to enjoy contradictions - "nothing" which is "infinite" and appears as real, and "everything" which is "infinite" and the "real". However, do not ever forget that real infinite is neither nothing nor everything. It Is. It alone Is. 'Is' alone Is, and there is nothing else. Tell me, do you really think that these words carry any meaning at all?

Mika said, 'Keep going Rahim, you are doing quite well. This frustration, born out of utter helplessness and hopelessness on our part to understand and describe the truth, is a sure sign of super-awakening. This may eventually lead to the emergence of "*Prajna*". "*Prajna*" is transcendental wisdom or the mental function that enables one to perceive life without error and to distinguish between what is true and what is false. It is "*Prajna*" which, according to Buddha, helps us to cross over to the other shore or "*paramita*". It is *Prajna* alone, which by renouncing explanations and by unraveling the mystery, can accept and intuitively realize the unlimited, the timeless and the infinite. The unlimited, which can only be felt, experienced and realized but cannot be defined. That which "Is" is a mystery, and continues to be a mystery, because it transcends the trio of seer-sight-seen. Wise, therefore, surrender themselves to the care of the compassionate Mother *Prajnaparamita*. Let me explain this transcendence with the help of a koan - the koan of the "Sound of One Hand."

`Mokurai, Silent Thunder, was the master of Kennin temple. Toyo, only twelve years old, was his little protege. One day Toyo wished that the master should take him under his personal guidance and give instruction. "Wait a while," said Mokurai, "you are too young". However, Toyo insisted and Mokurai consented. "You can hear the sound of two hands when they clap together," said Mokurai. "Now show me the sound of one hand". Toyo bowed and went to his room and reflected deeply on the problem. From his window, he could hear the music of the geishas. He told Mokurai about the music of geishas and actually played the music. Master told him this is not the sound of one hand. Toyo moved to a quite place to ponder over it more deeply. There he heard the cry of an owl, the sound of dripping water, the sound of sighing wind and he thought each one of them is sound of one hand. Mokurai rejected all of them. A perplexed Toyo pondered for almost a year what the sound of one hand might be. At last Toyo entered true meditation, the abode of mother *Prajnaparamita*, and transcended all sounds. Toyo told Mokurai, "I collect no more", "I hear no more", and, "this is how I reached the soundless sound of one hand." *Prajnaparamita Sutra* reveals, "There is absolutely nothing to understand". "Even if there were some reality more exalted than Final *Nirvana*, that too would be a magic display, a dream display." The *bodhisattwa*s mind is not frightened by the total absence of any recognizable, definable or findable being called a *bodhisattwa*.'

`It appears that we are confronting some sort of a black hole,' Mary said. `Intellect's black hole! This great gobbler gobbles everything - thoughts, inferences, descriptions, reason, logic and so on. Bell's theorem reveals that Reality is Un-broken Wholeness. Bohm's physics states: "Thus, one is led to a new notion of unbroken wholeness which denies the classical idea of analyzability of the world into separately and independently existent parts..."^{8.2}. David Bohm, the renowned physicist, points out that quantum physics is, in fact, based upon a perception of a new order. Bohm says: "We must turn physics around. Instead of starting with parts and showing how they work together (the Cartesia order), we start with the whole"^{8.3}. Bohm's physics points out that "matter is a form of the implicate order as a vortex is a form of the water - it is not reducible to smaller particles. Particles, may be discontiguous in space (the explicate order) but

contiguous in the implicate order"^{8.4}. Bohm asserts that the most fundamental level is an unbroken wholeness, which is, in his words, "that-which-is". All things, including space, time and matter are forms of That-Which-Is.'

'Mary, what is the meaning of "implicate order" and "explicate order"?' Ram asked.

'I would explain this with an example, Ram,' Mary said. 'If we place an ink drop on glycerin in a bowl and rotate the entire bowl in a way such that the drop disappears, this would be the implicate order or the enfolding order. On the other hand, if we rotate the bowl in reverse direction, and the drop makes its appearance again, that would be the explicate order or the unfolding order. Bohm's physics asserts, that-which-is conceals within itself the implicate or enfolding order, and the explicate or unfolding order. Universe exists enfolded as the implicate order of the ultimate truth That-Which-Is, and this is its 'dissolved' state. Universe "crystallizes" explicitly as an unfoldment or the explicate order. The Big Bang theory does not say anything about the Source -That-Which-Is. The Source is not something that can be investigated scientifically. When Bohm tells us about That-Which-Is, he actually talks about the Source. This Source cannot be understood fully, and cannot be described fully.'

'This is not the language that is normally used in science,' said Rahim. 'Expressions such as "That-Which-Is" go well with philosophy, but not with science. It is even more confusing when we realize that these statements are coming from scientists of impeccable credibility. Scientists are talking about the Source, but the questions about its nature and structure are not encouraged. I think we should now pose the question: Have we reached the "so-far-no-further" stage in science? Or, perhaps, we are forbidden to ask such questions only temporarily because there are no immediately available answers?'

'It think it is "so-far-no-further" stage,' Mary said. 'I recollect Merwan once saying that the spiritual wisdom reveals that the universe is structured in consciousness. Could we then say that this Source is consciousness itself?'

Merwan said, 'There is no doubt about the fact that the universe is structured in consciousness. However, the supreme Source is beyond the beyond.'

It cannot be known and cannot be described. Even to assert – that 'It Is' – is to bring it in the realm of duality. Mary, I liked the expression Unbroken Wholeness but would like to qualify this statement by adding that this Unbroken Wholeness includes the invisible implicate and the visible explicate, and remains unaffected. Consciousness has emerged as a consequence of the very first act of unfoldment. All the rest has emerged out of Consciousness. The acts of enfolding and unfolding do not affect, in any way, the wholeness of this Unbroken Wholeness. In the words of Meher Baba:

"The infinity of the Truth cannot suffer any increase through additions, nor can it suffer any decrease through subtractions. In fact, nothing can be added to it and nothing can be taken away from it, because it is all inclusive and leaves no room for any other, small or great. It is immeasurable, indivisible, and integral."^{8.5}

'We are feeling perplexed and confused because of our arrogant and foolish insistence on the contention that our limited cognitive capabilities and our repository of mental images of the external world are sufficient to comprehend the totality of the reality.'

'Isa Upanishad states,' Ram said, "Because He is the complete Whole, even though so many complete units emanate from Him, He remains the complete balance." Brihadaranyak Upanishad reveals: "That (Supreme Being) is the Whole - this (universe) is the Whole. From the Whole, the Whole comes forth." '

Mary said - 'The eminent physicist, the late Dr. J. Oppenheimer, in his 1953 Reith Lectures, spoke of man's "two ways of thinking - the way of time and history: the way of eternity and timelessness"^{8.6}. Oppenheimer stated that, "Both are part of man's effort to comprehend the world in which he lives. Neither is comprehended in the other, or reducible to it. They are "complementary views, each supplementing the other, neither telling the whole story"^{8.7}. Sir Roger Penrose, the noted British mathematician-physicist and the author of popular science books, "The Emperor's New Mind" and "Shadows of the Mind", has talked about "three worlds" and "three mysteries". First is the world of our conscious perceptions about which we know least in any kind of precise scientific terms. It is a world containing mental images and where smells, sounds and sensations of all

kinds intermingle with our thoughts and decisions to act. Then there are two other worlds that we are cognizant of - less directly than the former -but about whom we know quite a lot about. One is the physical world of objects. Sir Penrose points out that: "It is not at all clear why the world of our perceptions should have anything to do with the physical world, but apparently it does"^{8,8}. There is also one other kind of world, though many find difficulty in accepting its actual existence: the Platonic ethereal world of mathematical forms or abstractions.'

'And what are the "three mysteries"?' asked Ram.

Mary said, 'The first mystery is, why the universe is an unfoldment of a mathematical plan? This Platonic world of mathematical forms is based on precise and profound mathematical laws. The very world of physical reality seems to have emerged out of the Platonic world of mathematical forms. According to Sir Penrose, the natural numbers precede human beings or indeed any other creature on earth or elsewhere.'

'The second mystery is how and why the perceiving beings can arise out of the physical world. Why are people conscious, and what is consciousness, where does it come from? And the third mystery is, how it is that mentality is able to "create" mathematical concepts out of some kind of thought-model of the abstract Platonic world of mathematical forms. The Platonic mathematical world is a world of absolute order with absolute notions of truth and beauty.'

This description of a transcendental world of precise and profound mathematical laws, preceding the physical world, came as a big surprise for Ram and Rahim.

'We are unable to make out anything from what you have told us Mary,' said Ram and Rahim. 'How mathematical abstractions can be contended as the substratum or the source from which the physical world emerged out?'

Mary said, 'That's the most logical reaction to this bizarre concept. Reuben Hersh, a mathematician emeritus of the University of New Mexico, observes in his recent book that, "Ideal entities independent of human consciousness violate the empiricism of modern science"^{8,9}.' Science is anchored by observations of the physical world. Hersh insists that mathematics is a creation of human mind like

literature, banking and so on. Physicist Eugene Wigner has reacted by calling this concept as something of a scandal because of an enormous gap in human understanding.'

'Mary on what grounds the existence of this so-called Platonic world of transcendental mathematical forms was postulated?' asked Rahim.

'According to the Big Bang theory,' Mary explained, 'energy, space, time and matter were created during the primeval explosion. Then instantaneously everything began unfolding according to a mathematical plan. It is, therefore, quite natural to ask, where did the mathematical plan come from? How and when integers were created and from where, the relationships, which they obey, came from? It appears that in the beginning there were numbers and the numbers were with God.'

'According to Stanislas Dehaene, a cognitive scientist at the National Institute Of Health & Medical Research, Paris, there is strong experimental evidence to show that the brains of humans, chimpanzees and rats come equipped at birth with innate wired-in aptitude for mathematics. Dehaene tells us that integers are integrated with the human nervous system by evolution, along with crude ability to subtract and add. Mathematics, therefore, is engraved in the very architecture of our brains. Numbers come handy and useful to discern discrete and movable objects. Dehaene and others have tentatively traced this mathematical module to an area of the brain called the inferior parietal cortex. This is the area, in which the visual, auditory and tactile signals converge.'^{8.9}

'This area, the inferior parietal cortex, is also involved in language processing and in distinguishing right from the left. This is quite significant because, in a way, mathematics is also a kind of language using numbers to order space. A study conducted by S. Vijayan and S. Bandi Rao of the Department of Psychology, New York University, and P. M. Vishton of Amherst College, Massachusetts, reveals that infants as young as seven months can deduce simple algebraic rules from language like sounds. This capability of rule formation - the first step of learning language - is not a late add-on but remains in the brain right from the birth. The study, published in "Science" and widely reported by the news magazines^{8.77},

shows that infants extract the rules from small inputs. Rules play a crucial role in shaping human cognizance. They are used to analyze information received through different sensory systems, to gain knowledge about the external world.'

'So, dear Ram and dear Rahim, the Source, or That-Which-Is, appears to include the notions of truth and beauty on one hand, and mathematical laws on the other.'

'Why is this abstract mathematical world called the Platonic world,' asked Ram.

Mary said, 'It was Plato who had proposed, rather unscientifically, that numbers and mathematical laws are ethereal ideals existing outside of space and time in the realm of the beyond. Scientists are allergic to the word God and therefore find this word "Platonic" quite convenient.'

'Mary, why are we saying that the universe has unfolded under the regime of mathematical laws?', Ram said. 'Why these laws cannot be the creations of human mind? On what basis is it assumed that the abstract world of mathematical forms precedes the world of concrete forms?'

'Comprehension of this is not that difficult as it appears to be', Mary said. 'One of the fundamental principles of modern physics has been that the laws of nature can be described by very simple and general mathematical relationships. It was this revelation which had initiated this pursuit of a "Theory Of Everything" in physics because the theories of physics are regarded as being, at least in principle, complete and universal descriptions of the phenomena of nature. It was believed that the reality of nature, or that which really is, can be described by systems of numbers, and that all of the phenomena of nature can be calculated from certain mathematical relationships between numbers which are called "the laws of nature". In the 18th century, Issac Newton summed up: "I... suspect that (the phenomena of nature) may all depend upon certain forces by which the particles of bodies...are either mutually impelled towards one another and cohere in regular figures, or are repelled and recede from one another"¹⁰.' The relationship with mathematics becomes evident when we reduce all phenomena of nature to forces of attraction and repulsion, the intensity of which is dependent only upon

the mutual distance and state of material bodies. Distance is order of space, and state is order of time. In the quantum mechanics physical systems are still described by arrangement of numbers, although the particle coordinates of classical physics are replaced by Hilbert space vectors, and the laws of transformations of these numbers are given by brief equations. The important point is that these laws are universal and cover non-biological and biological systems. Seen in this light, the universe gets reduced to particles or field inter-actions. Objects are myriads of configurations assumed by these particles or fields. The very fact that these laws are literally universal and are applicable to fundamental particles and their configurations, makes it clear that they are not the creations of human mind.'

'Bhagwan Krishna,' Ram said, 'has used two expressions - "*Khsetra*" and "*Khsetragya*" - to explain "*Prakriti*", the world of energy or nature, and "*Purusha*", the Supreme Soul, in Bhagvadgita's Chapter 13. This should surprise Mary and Rahim, because the word "*Khsetra*" literally means a "field", and the word "*Khsetragya*" means the one, who is the knower of the fields and their interactions, and with whom the fields are filled up. Krishna reveals that all bodies are "*khsetras*" or fields and God, the Supreme Knower, fills them. This is one way to describe this relationship. A better expression would be that "*khsetras*" -the field or bodies or discrete self-limiting entities- are the ripples in the ocean of God, That-Which-Is. God is the Knower of all fields. Verses 6 & 7 of Chapter 13 give a summary of these "*khsetram*" or fields. The list is comprehensive and covers "*avyaktam*", or un-manifest, and "*vyaktam*" or manifest. The five great elements ("*maha-bhutani*"), false ego ("*ahamkara*"), intellect ("*buddhi*"), the senses and the sense objects ("*indriyani dasa-ekam*" and "*panchaindriya- go-charah*"), desire ("*iccha*"), hatred ("*dvesha*"), happiness ("*sukham*"), distress ("*duhkham*"), the aggregate ("*sanghatah*"), the life symptoms ("*chetana*") and convictions ("*dhritih*") - all these are "*khsetram*" or fields and their inter-actions. Thus, individualized personality or "I", thoughts, emotions and material configurations in the form of various objects are all "*khsetram*" or fields and their interactions. They are the virtual formations in God - That-Which-Alone-Is. In Verse 27 of Chapter 13, Bhagwan Krishna has stated clearly that, "whatever you

see in existence, both the moving and the non-moving, is only a combination of the field of activities or *khsetra*, and the knower of the field, the *khsetragya*". In Verse 3 of Chapter 14, Bhagwan has revealed that the Supreme *Khsetragya*, making possible the births of all beings, impregnates the entire *Mahat-tattwa* or the total substance of material creation. The Knower principle is the principle of life. Srila Bhaktivedanta, commenting on Verse 5 of Chapter 13 of Bhagvadgita, points out that *khsetra* is the field of activities and there are two kinds of *khsetragya*, the individual living entity and the Supreme living entity. Taittiriya Upanishad states the same thing. This is a totally different perception of life. Life is *khsetragya*. It is not a product of the interaction of material molecules. And since all things are impregnated by the *khsetragya*, all are life forms or self-limiting forms of *khsetragya*.'

Ram said, 'Mathematical laws are also involved. Vedas reveal that God, the Supreme Source, self-reflected, "I am One, I now become Many", and creation was manifested. This movement from One to Many is the process of becoming and involves numbers, space, time and desire. Creation, or "*khsetram*" or fields are under spiritual and material laws. "*Akash*" or Space and "*Kal*" or Time are mentioned repeatedly in Vedas. In relation to God or That-Which-Is, everything else is "*Idam*" or self-limited entity or field.'

Merwan said: 'This concept of relatively more fundamental world of ethereal forms and laws is quite exciting and leads to the spiritual revelation that transphysical Subtle and Mental Worlds preceded the gross world and are more fundamental. Except God everything else is a dream like formation and, therefore, in the realm of Infinite Real Nothing. Laws - spiritual and material - are operative in Illusion or Infinite Real Nothing. The Infinite Real Everything, or God, or That-Which-Is, is absolute freedom, therefore, free from laws. But numbers and mathematical laws are enfolded in God and become operative during the process of unfoldment. In the words of Meher Baba:

"God is generally spoken of as being One. We use the term One as being opposite to the Many. One we name REALITY or GOD; Many we name ILLUSION or CREATION.

"However, strictly speaking, no number, not even one, can depict ONE who is indivisibly One without a second. Even to call this ONE 'One' is incorrect. We do not speak of the Ocean as One. It just is Ocean. The ONE simply is.

"The ONE is complete whole and simultaneously a series of ones within ONE. Illusion is a ZERO and simultaneously a series of zeros within the ZERO. These zeros have no value, except a false value according to their position in relation to the ONE. In actual fact the zeros have no existence - their existence is mere appearance in Illusion, the big ZERO." ^{8.11}

Meher Baba has said that mathematical laws, though enfolded in the Truth, cannot describe the ONE or That-Which-Is. He says:

"Man is ordinarily so immersed in the objects of gross world that dimensions, magnitudes, and quantities of the gross world unconsciously creep into his estimate of spiritual worth and pervert his evaluation.

All this confusion is due to the fact that man's mind is often dominated by mathematical ideas, even when it is concerned with estimates of spiritual nature. But that which is spiritually great is different in kind from that which is mathematically great." ^{8.12}

That Which Is, is Eternal Now. It is, therefore, free from the limitations of space and time.'

'If everything else is a "*Khsetra*" or a field,' said Rahim, 'of the spiritual or "*Khsetragya*", the Supreme Knower, then all such fields, or self-limiting formations, and their smaller and bigger configurations, are fundamentally physical-spiritual entities. It is now scientifically believed that all of the phenomena of chemistry follow the known physical laws, and that all of the phenomena of life can be reduced to chemistry and hence, ultimately to physics. James Watson, Noble Prizewinner and the high priest of modern molecular biology, has stated that with the development of quantum mechanics, "the various empirical laws about how chemical bonds are formed were put on a firm theoretical basis. It was realized that all chemical bonds, weak as well as strong, were based on electrostatic forces."^{8.13} One can now point out that the non-living systems and the living systems are fundamentally physical-spiritual systems. This

is not some sort of reductionistic perception of Reality, but an integral perception covering the entire expanse of the contraction-expansion duality. Right from the electrons and other sub-atomic particles to complex living systems - all things are fundamentally physical-spiritual formations. The revelation that they are the fields filled by the Supreme Knower or "*Khsetragya*" explains the cognitive and discriminating capabilities of photons and electrons like particles, nucleic acids, proteins and others. I think that the "*Khsetragya*" and its formations that are qualitatively related to it, work also as the repositories of mathematical, physical, chemical and biological information.'

Mary asked, 'Rahim, what do you mean by "*khsetragya*" and the "formations qualitatively related to it"? Also, what do you want to convey, when you say that the *khsetragya* and its formations work as the repositories of mathematical, physical, chemical and biological information?'

Rahim said, 'Mary, it appears that the cosmic pool of information, from where the information flows are being generated and from where they materialize in diverse formations, is neither biological, nor chemical, and not even physical. It is spiritual. Biological or living systems are highly complex entities with a very high information content when compared to chemical and physical systems. Models of modern physics for the course of events within the universe have a low information content. No system of high information content can evolve from a system of low information content. Thus, even the simplest of all living systems - a bacterium- cannot evolve from a physical-chemical system, because of its relatively very high information content. Let me explain it with an example: that of a bacterium called *Escherichia coli*. This organism is a single cell, which is about 500 times smaller than the average cell of higher plants and animals. Yet, this cell contains between 3000 to 6000 different types of molecules. Among these are some 2000 or 3000 different kinds of proteins with an average molecular weight of 40,000 and a single DNA molecule with a molecular weight of 2.5×10^9 . The higher mammalian animal cell contains some 800 times as much DNA, and as many as 200,000 enzymes or proteins as compared to that in *E. coli*. The information contents of these cells, even in terms of DNA and proteins, are enormously high. In a typical book, there are some 70 characters per line and 40

lines per page. This gives us about 1.7×10^4 bits per page, if we use an alphabet set of 64 characters (6 bits to a byte). At this rate, it would take about 300 pages to write down the coding for *E. coli*, and about 240,000 pages to write down the coding for a mammalian cell. We, however, should not forget that fundamentally a bacterial cell and a mammalian cell are configurations of subatomic particles. From where has this information come to these particles? Where does it lie stored in a particle? It should also be asked why forces of attraction and repulsion, dependent only upon the mutual distance of material bodies, should choose the forms of bacteria, amoeba, bumblebees, peacocks, elephants, human beings, and so on, in favor of other much more easier material configurations, such as inert globs or blotches?

'Description of a living cell solely in terms of nucleic acids and proteins is exceedingly simplistic and hypothetical. Molecules such as proteins do not obey any simple structural rule and perform cognitive and discriminative functions independently of the nucleic acids. In the case of highly complex multi-cellular organisms, a cell must contain information for chemical reactions required in cellular metabolism, for form diversity of cells and for cell diversity in relation to specific organs and specific organ related functions. In addition, it must also contain information for the structure and function of different types of organs, for future targeted morphogenesis or differentiation, and for behavioral responses. The overall information content of the higher cells must, therefore, be much higher than what is normally estimated. James Watson, admitting the amazing complexity of a living cell, has stated:

"Most of these macro-molecules are not being actively studied, since their overwhelming complexity has forced chemists to concentrate on relatively few of them. Thus, we must immediately admit that the structure of a cell will never be understood in the same way as that of water or glucose molecules. Not only will the exact structures of most macro-molecules remain unsolved, but their relative locations within cells can only be vaguely known."^{8.14}

`Then there are questions relating to superluminal transfers of information across the universe, and super-determinism. Super-determinism points towards some cosmic theme or program, which is being implemented in the universe. It appears that the physical model of the universe, at this point of time, cannot explain the information storage, information flows and superluminal information transfers at the level of atom and subatomic particles. It also fails to explain why and how, these randomly moving, appearing and disappearing virtual subatomic particles could generate such a large number of structurally and functionally complex life-form configurations. A spiritual-physical model presents before us an opportunity, to explore these things afresh and to explore them in a much more integral manner. If a transcosmic cognitive and experiential principle or "*Khsetragya*" fills particles or fields, then one can rightly presume that all such particles or fields and their higher configurations are essentially spiritual-physical systems. The cognitive, analytical and experiential capabilities, information storage, information flows and transfers etc. should then be the functions of the spiritual part of these systems existing in the form of *khsetragya*. The *khsetragya* formation should, therefore, include a cosmic common medium, referral cognitive centers, information repositories, and the creative thought, sound and image projection capabilities.'

`Merwan, can we say that this *Khsetragya*, the Supreme Knower, is the Ultimate Source, the beginning of the beginning; and, should we say, the Ultimate residue as well?' Mary asked.

`No. Mary, No.' Merwan said. `The ultimate Source, or That-Which-Alone-Is, is beyond the beginning of the Beginning. In the words of Meher Baba: "When there were no other states of God in beyond the beginning of the Beginning, only the most-original infinite state of God (that is, "God-Is" state) prevailed as the Beyond-Beyond state of God."^{8.15}

`How everything started from this transcendental Beyond-Beyond state of God or That-Which-Is? Who will tell us about that? What would be his or her authority to describe that, which cannot be described? ' Mary asked.

Merwan beamed with great joy and said, 'There is no other way except to sit at the feet of Meher Baba and request Him to enlighten us and reveal the Divine Theme and the beginning of the Beginning. In order to know about the beginning of the Beginning, and the Divine Theme, we all will begin the Beguine with Meher Baba as our companion. This would please Him and, compassionate as He is, He would reveal to us the supreme mystic knowledge. Begin the Beguine is an immortal song by Cole Porter that has captivated the hearts of music lovers all over the world all these years. Meher Baba was very fond of this song and He had instructed His close *mandali* or resident disciples, to play it repeatedly near His dead body. When Meher Baba dropped His physical body, this was done, as He had desired.'

'Ahmednagar is a relatively small Indian town in the state of Maharashtra and is sandwiched between two villages, Arangaon and Pimplegaon. At Arangaon is located Meherabad, meaning the "Abode of Meher Baba", with His tomb and a small group of resident Meher lovers engaged in day to day management of the estate and looking after the needs of the visiting pilgrims. Over the years, an international community of dedicated Meher Baba lovers has settled here representing the emerging New Humanity. Pimplegaon is the other village bordering Ahmednagar, where Meherabad is located. Meherabad literally means "Meher Freedom". It is a small residential complex, where Meher Baba resided with His close men and women *mandali*.'

'In April 1927, while strolling on a small hillock in Meherabad - Meher Baba paused and marked a specific spot where he wanted a large pit to be dug. Accordingly, a 6 ft. long, 6 ft. deep and 4 ft. broad pit was dug and a stone floor and steps leading to its bottom were made. By mid-April 1927, a crypt was built over this pit. In 1938, the temporary structure enclosing the crypt was demolished and was replaced by a permanent stone dome. On Meher Baba's instructions, symbols of four religions were installed on the dome's four corners - a temple representing Hinduism, a mosque representing Islam, a cross representing Christianity, and a sacred fire-urn representing Zoroastrianism. The dome was made in the form of a Buddhist *stupa*. In 1938, a Swiss woman disciple Helen Dahm, who was an artist, painted some murals inside the crypt. A photograph of

Meher Baba was placed on the ledge of the north window and remained there for over 24 years. This was later replaced by a full-length painting made from a photograph of Meher Baba that was taken by a western woman disciple Elizabeth Patterson in 1933 in Portofino, Italy. An American artist, Charlie Morton, did this painting.

`In 1954, Meher Baba led a large group of his followers up the hill and instructed them to bow down at the threshold of the crypt. In 1955, during another spiritual get-together or "*sahvas*", as Meher Baba used to call it, Baba allowed his lovers to come inside and go around the crypt, while he himself stood silently inside the structure for sometime in a corner. Baba had said: "The major portion of my Universal work was done on this hill. I have selected this spot for my last resting-place; when I drop the body, it shall rest here, in my Tomb. I have fasted here for six months. I used to lie down here in the crypt taking only water and coffee... After I drop my body the physical remains will rest here, and this hill will become an important pilgrimage for the world. After seventy years... a big township will grow around here." ^{8.16}

`Meher Baba dropped his physical body on 31 January 1969, at 12.15 p.m., in Meherazad. According to Baba's oft-repeated instruction, a rendering of the song "Begin the Beguine" was played seven times near his body in Meherazad, and later at Meherabad inside the tomb where his body was kept for seven days for *darshan* of his lovers. The crypt was finally sealed on 7 February 1969, at 12.15 p.m. and has since become a place of pilgrimage for people from all over the world. Let us all sing this song and dance together with Meher Baba as our dancing partner.'

`But Merwan, what is a "beguine" and why did Meher Baba insist on this song to be played near His dead body?' asked Rahim.

Merwan said, `Beguine is a Caribbean folk-dance with a rhythm similar to Spanish bolero tempo. It also resembles Brazilian Samba which is a ball room dance of couples. There must be some deep significance behind Meher Baba's insistence for playing this song repeatedly near His dead body.'

`Come on everybody. I will play the beats and would join the dance too. Mary will lead with her guitar and Rahim will follow with his harmonica.'

We sang and danced vigorously and joyously. Mary led the dance, while Merwan sang in his melodious voice.

Begin the Beguine

When they begin the beguine

it brings back the sound of music so tender

it brings back a night of tropical splendor

it brings back a memory ever green

I'm with you once more under the stars

and down by the shore, and orchestra's playing

and even the palms seem to be swaying

when they begin the beguine

To live it again is past all endeavors

except when that tune clutches my heart

and there we are swearing to love forever

and promising never, never to part

What moments divine, what raptures serene

till clouds came along to disperse the joys we had tasted

and now when I hear people curse the chance that was wasted

I know but too well what they mean

So don't let them begin the beguine

let love that was once a fire remain an ember

let it sleep like the dead desire I only remember
when they begin the beguine

We were filled with great joy and with feelings of beauty and splendor all around. Merwan increased the pace of the beats and the dance became wild. Pushan also started swaying with us. Mary started clapping wildly keeping her guitar aside. She started chanting "Baba, Baba, Baba, begin the beguine" and we all joined her. Then, all of a sudden, something most mysterious happened. Pushan got transformed into Meher Baba's Samadhi with its interiors painted with murals. Each one of us saw Meher Baba step out of His painted picture. He then started dancing with all of us. We felt that we were "*gopis*", the maidens of *Vrindavan*, and our beloved lord Krishna was dancing with us. It was a dance full of divine splendor and bliss. With Meher Baba stepping out of His picture and dancing with us, we saw that His painted picture became blank and was illuminated like a TV screen. Words and sentences started being displayed, and statements after statements started appearing on the screen:

Statement On Before The Beginning of the Beginning & Thereafter

Meher Baba has said:

"God is Infinite and His Shadow is also infinite. The Shadow of God is the Infinite Space that accommodates the infinite Gross Sphere which, with its occurrences of millions of universes, within and without the range of men's knowledge, is the Creation that issued from the Point of Finiteness in the Infinite Existence that is God".^{8.17}

God Is. God Alone Is. God is all that was. God is all that will be. God is all that is here and now. The beginning is God, the end is God, and the intermediary stages cannot but be God.

There are ten principal states of God:

State I	– God in Beyond-Beyond
State II	– God in Beyond Sub-States A, B, C.
State III	– God as Emanator, Sustainer and Dissolver
State IV	– God as Embodied Soul
State V	– God as Soul in the state of evolution
State VI	– God as human soul in the state of reincarnation
State VII	– God in the state of spiritually advanced souls
State VIII	– God as divinely absorbed
State IX	– God as liberated incarnate soul
State X	– God as Man-God and God-Man

Meher Baba says, "God alone plays the different roles, real and imaginary" ^{8.18}

God transcends all. God cannot be understood. God cannot be described. God is That Who-Alone-Is. If, for understanding sake, some description is necessary, then He can be described as Infinite Consciousness, but only vaguely.

In the words of Meher Baba:

"Infinite consciousness is infinite. It can never lessen at any point in time or space. Infinite consciousness being infinite includes every aspect of consciousness. Unconsciousness is one of the aspects of infinite consciousness. Thus, infinite consciousness includes unconsciousness. It sustains, covers, pierces through and provides an end to unconsciousness -which flows from, and is consumed by, infinite consciousness." ^{8.19}

State I: God in the Beyond-Beyond State

In the words of Meher Baba:

"Of all the principal ten states of God, the first and the most original state is the Beyond-Beyond State of God.

"When there were no other states of God in the beyond the beginning of the Beginning, only the most-original state of God (that is, 'God Is' state) prevailed as the Beyond-Beyond state of God.

"In the infinitude of this Beyond-Beyond state of God only the infinity of Infinitude is manifest as the unbounded, absolute, infinite Divine Vacuum; and all other states, attributes and aspects of God, including infinite consciousness and infinite unconsciousness, are all latent as NOTHING in that Infinitude of the unbounded, absolute, infinite Divine Vacuum as the EVERYTHING (EVERYTHING also includes the NOTHING).

"Thus, the most-original Beyond-Beyond state of God is that state where one can only say: "God-Is" eternally; and that in this most-original state, God is neither infinitely nor finitely conscious, nor unconscious, of SELF or His Own state of Infinitude. In this state, God is also neither conscious nor unconscious of Illusion or Reality".^{8.20}

State I: Descriptive Synonyms

That-Which-Is

That-Who-Alone-Is

Most original Beyond-Beyond State

Divine Vacuum

Paratpar-Parabrahman (spelled also as *Paratpar- Parabrahma*) of Hindus.

Dadar Ahurmazd of Zoroastrians.

Wara-ul-wara Summa wara-ul-wara of Sufis.

Supreme Repository of EVERYTHING

In this Supreme Repository, all things are latent, or implicate, or en-folded, in the form of paired opposites such as *Chit* and *Sat*; Everything and Nothing; Infinite Consciousness and Infinite Un-consciousness; Knowledge and Ignorance; Initial urge to know and the initial urge to not know, and so on. Paired opposites consist of the opposites representing two opposite polarities, and the principle which holds them together, and brings them together when eventually they get

separated. This Supreme Repository, the Beyond-the-Beyond State of God, "...is the hidden of all hidden knowledge and the internal of all internal realities" ^{8.21}. All things, concrete and abstract, real and virtual, are being contained by it as the hidden aspects of the trio of *Sat*, *Chit* and *Ananda* -Energy, Intelligence and Bliss. *Sat*, or Essence, or fundamental Medium, in this trio, is the ultimate state - the existential state of the transcendental ultimate principle which includes *Asat*, the void or nothing or non-existence. It is the repository of all formations of transphysical energy and its transformations. *Chit* is the Supreme Intelligence, or Absolute Knowledge, or Absolute Certainty, the life principle of Consciousness, which includes the inactive static energy principle (*Shiv-tattwa*), and the active energy principle (*Shakti-tattwa*). *Ananda* is the principle of Supreme Bliss, characterized by the total absence of Other-ness. It is the complete state of Love, union or merger in one another, and also the incomplete active state of Love that includes the forces of repulsion or separation and attraction or cohesion, impelled by the desire to come closer and unite. It is *Ananda* or Love, which keeps the opposites together and brings them together whenever they are separated. In the Beyond-the-Beyond State of God, *Sat* or 'Is' is merged in *Chit* or 'Am', and *Chit* or 'Am' is merged in *Sat* or 'Is'. *Ananda* or Love holds this State of One-ness of *Sat* and *Chit*.

State II: God in the Beyond State

Meher Baba says:

"The second state of God accordingly comes into being only as another infinite aspect of the most-original first state. This second state of the ten principal states of God is called the Original 'Beyond State' of God" ^{8.22}.

This state of God comes into being "at the instant when the original infinite whim insurges in the infinitude of the 'God-Is' state", and it is only at that instant "could infinite God conceive the infinite original urge-to-know, as 'Who am I?' - that is, only when the aspect-less State I of 'God In Beyond-Beyond' gets the aspect of State II of 'God In Beyond State'. *Paratpar Parabrahma* thus gets the infinite aspect of '*Paramatma*.'" ^{8.23}

"All this that is latent in the Infinitude could only have the scope of manifestation in State II of God, which may be said to differ from State I only in this respect, of having this infinite scope of manifestation of all that is infinitely, and most finitely, latent as the NOTHING in the infinitude of God as the EVERYTHING." ^{8.24}

"The insurgence of the original infinite whim," Meher Baba says, "could never be experienced by God in His infinitely most independent Beyond-Beyond state of I; it was experienced by God, eternally in the most-original Beyond-Beyond state, only through the infinite aspect of His State II as 'In The Beyond State'." ^{8.25} Thus, the original Beyond state of God is eternally present in the most-original Beyond-Beyond state.

Meher Baba says:

"At the instant when the infinite original whim surged and God had the infinite original urge-to-know, as 'Who am I?', the infinite uniformity of the infinite insurgence of the whim spontaneously made manifest both the latent infinite consciousness and the latent infinite unconsciousness of God simultaneously in the original Beyond state of God, Who is nevertheless eternally in the most-original Beyond-Beyond state". ^{8.26}

The original urge to know the Self - 'Who am I' - is the direct consequence of the original infinite Whim when it insurged the infinitude of the Beyond-the-Beyond State of God. Meher Baba has said that the original infinite Whim is the first "WORD" uttered by God, which created the original urge to know the Self. In the infinitude of the Beyond-the-Beyond God, suddenly reverberated the first "WORD" as '*Para Vak*', or the transcendental *SABDA-NADA* (limitless primal Sound), and with that emerged the most primal transcendental self-awareness with the urge to know the Self. In Whom reverberates this *Sabda-Nada*? Who Am I? It reflected.

In the words of Meher Baba:

"The cause which led to the most finite NOTHING, latent in the infinite EVERYTHING, to manifest itself as infinite NOTHINGNESS, is the original cause called the 'CAUSE'.

This CAUSE is just nothing but the 'WHIM' or 'LAHAR' of God. This original whim can also be called the first 'WORD' uttered by God - 'WHO AM I?'^{8.27}

Thus, the original urge 'Who am I?' initiated the cascading emergence of paired opposites in the original Beyond state of God. The paired system, A (Infinite Unconsciousness) and B (Infinite Consciousness), manifested in the original Beyond state of God. The infinite original urge to know – Who am I – became the focal point or the sphere of Infinite Unconsciousness (sub-state A), which was encircled immediately, and simultaneously, by Infinite Consciousness (sub-state B) - the 'I Am Is and Is Am I' or simply, 'I Am I Am' awareness.

In the words of Meher Baba:

"Sub-state 'A' is of 'God In Beyond State,' marked as State II. This sub-state 'A' is of divine infinite unconsciousness of God's Own infinite power, infinite knowledge and infinite bliss. God in this sub-state 'A' neither consciously experiences His Own trio-nature of infinite power, knowledge and bliss, nor use them.

"Sub-state 'B' is also of 'God in Beyond State,' marked as State II. This sub-state 'B' is attributeless and formless, but is of highest divine consciousness of God's Own infinite trio-nature of infinite power, knowledge and bliss. God in this sub-state 'B' consciously experiences His Own infinite power, infinite knowledge and infinite bliss but He does not use them. He is conscious of His Reality but is unconscious of Illusion."^{8.28}

Hindus call this infinite dual aspect of *Paratpara Parabrahman* as "*Parabrahma Paramatma*." This is "*Allah*" of Sufis. This is "Over-Soul" of mystics.

How could God gain spontaneously His Own infinite consciousness and His infinite unconsciousness simultaneously? This is a fact in the realms of Reality, but it can never be understood or grasped by the mind; it is only to be realized on realizing the Reality.

Divine Goal and Program:

With the emergence of the paired-system in the form of A, the Infinite Unconsciousness, and B, the Infinite Consciousness, the Divine Goal became clear

and the Divine Program was manifested and became operative. Meher Baba says, "...the eternal unconscious state of *Paramatma* marked 'A', in the eternal original Beyond State, marked II, eternally aspires to attain the eternal conscious state of *Paramatma* marked as 'B', which is the second of the dual infinite aspects of the original Beyond God state (*Paramatma*) marked II." · An eternal bridge of Divine Love, the desire to merge and become one again, was established. About the Divine Goal, Meher Baba has said: "Consequently, the Divine Goal is that the unconscious state of God in 'A' should attain the conscious Reality of the conscious state of God in 'B'."^{8.29}

Meher Baba says:

"The whole universe, known and unknown, has come out of a point in the microcosm which may be called the Creation point. Simultaneously with this emanation, two processes came into play - the Evolution and the Production. The difference between the two processes is rather significant and must be clearly understood. The process of Production is dependent on the process of Evolution in sequence of causation, but not in sequence of time. Evolution depends on the 'Creation Point' for cause, but Production is dependent on Evolution. Evolution connotes spiritual progress and Production signifies material growth and change, organic or inorganic."^{8.30}

Evolution implies the evolution of consciousness leading to its full development and its final union with the Oversoul or *Paramatman*. Meher Baba has said: "The sole purpose of creation is for the soul to enjoy the infinite state of the Oversoul consciously. Although the soul eternally exists in and with the Oversoul in an inviolable unity, it cannot be conscious of this unity independently of creation, which is within the limitations of time. It must therefore evolve consciousness before it can realize its true status and nature as being identical with the infinite Oversoul, which is one without a second. The evolution of consciousness requires the duality of subject and object - the centre of consciousness and the environment (that is, the world of forms)."^{8.31}

The centre of consciousness is the 'I' and the environment is the totality of creation in the form of composite, mental, subtle, and gross spheres. The

expansion of consciousness involves the ever expanding sphere of, 'I am This', 'I am not This, I am That', in terms of thought-and-desire formations, as this centre traverses the gross, subtle and mental spheres of illusion. Evolution of consciousness, which is a spiritual process, is the expansion in illusion in terms of illusory identifications of 'I' and its subsequent dissociation from the worlds of illusion in order to achieve its fullest expansion in the transcendental Reality.

Meher Baba says:

"In one sense the act of manifestation must be regarded as a sort of expansion of the illimitable being of the Absolute, as through that act the Infinite, which is without consciousness, seeks to attain its own consciousness. As this expansion of Reality is effected through its self-limitation in various forms of life, the act of manifestation might with equal aptness be called the process of timeless contraction. Whether the act of manifestation is looked upon as a sort of expansion of Reality or as its timeless contraction, it is preceded by an initial urge or movement, which might (in terms of thought) be regarded as an inherent and latent desire to be conscious."^{8.32}

"The manifoldness of creation and the separateness of the individual souls exist only in imagination. The very existence of creation or the world of manifestation is grounded in *bhas*, or illusion; so that in spite of the manifestation of numberless individual souls, the Oversoul remains the same without suffering any real expansion or contraction, increment or decrement. Although the Oversoul undergoes no modification due to the *bhas*, or illusion, of individuation, there comes into existence its apparent differentiation into many individual souls."^{8.33}

Evolution of consciousness also includes its involution. Involution is the inner journey of the fully expanded consciousness, which gets progressively withdrawn or dissociated from the external gross universe and traverses through subtle and mental worlds and planes. As the "... beginning of the end of the divine dream approaches, the full consciousness of God which experiences the false awakening state in the human form strives to the utmost through the process of involution to withdraw inwards, unto Himself, this fully evolved consciousness which is

projecting outwards onto all things in the cosmic universe rather than unto Himself"^{8.34}. Evolution, therefore, is the process that includes the expansion of consciousness through progressive self limitation, and its final union with the Oversoul, or *Paramatman*, through progressive self liberation, or involution.

In the words of Meher Baba:

"The history of evolution is the history of a gradual development of consciousness. The fruit of evolution is full consciousness, which is characteristic of man. But even this full consciousness is like a mirror covered by dust. Owing to the operation of *sanskaras*, it does not yield clear and true knowledge of the nature of the soul. Though fully developed, it yields not truth but imaginative construction, since its free functioning is hindered by the weight of the *sanskaras*. Moreover, it cannot extend beyond the cage created by its desires and therefore is limited in its scope."^{8.35}

Fully developed consciousness means the acquisition of conscious capability to become profoundly Self aware. This capacity comprises of two opposite capabilities - capacity to associate and the capacity to dissociate. Fully developed consciousness also involves the development of a vastly extended memory-repository of long lasting *sanskaras*. This repository is operative at gross, subtle and mental levels.

Production connotes the production of various *sanskaras*, or formations of thoughts and desires. It also involves the production of mental, subtle and gross bodies, and of mental, subtle and gross worlds. It results from the repeated acts of self limitations, or individuations, on the part of the Oversoul. This splinters the Oversoul, only in *bhas*, or illusion, into many souls, and their associative thoughts-and-desires formations and material bodies.

Meher Baba says:

"In the beginning the soul had no impressions (*sanskaras*) and no consciousness. Therefore at this stage or in this state, the soul had no gross form or body, subtle body or mental body, because only the existence of gross, subtle and mental impressions (*sanskaras*) can give existence to gross, subtle and mental

bodies, and only the existence of these bodies can make possible the existence of gross, subtle and mental worlds."^{8.36}

"Now, gross, subtle and mental bodies are nothing but the shadows of the soul. The gross, subtle and mental worlds are nothing but the shadows of the Over-Soul (*Paramatma*).

"Gross, subtle and mental bodies are finite, have forms and are destructible. The gross, subtle and mental worlds are false; they are zero, imagination and vacant dreams. The soul (*atma*) and Over-Soul (*Paramatma*) only are real."^{8.37}

The progressive evolution of consciousness, achieved through progressive associations starting from sub-atomic particles like electrons and protons, and subsequently stone, metal, vegetable and animal stages, culminates in man. Evolving consciousness, according to Meher Baba, makes use of the stone and subsequent forms, "after innumerable cycles and ages of diverse experiences through diverse innumerable species of forms, of which there are seven major different kinds of most, most-finite and most, most-gross gaseous forms, which cannot even be concretely grasped nor imagined by ordinary human beings"^{8.38}. Production, therefore, involves manifestation, or creation, of all these innumerable species of forms. Human form was the final target of this cosmic program. The human form, comprising of gross, subtle and mental bodies, is a unique and amazing spiritual and physical instrument having capabilities of functioning at all levels - gross, subtle, mental and supra mental. About the uniqueness of the human form, Meher Baba has said: "Without having human-form, it is impossible for the *atma* to gain consciousness of subtle and mental bodies and of Self. Similarly, it is impossible to gather experience of the subtle world, the mental world and of *Paramatma*."^{8.39}

As all manifestations - structures, states and processes - emerging out of God State 'I' are in the form of systems of trios of paired opposites, the process of production therefore includes the annihilation of thought and desire formations (or *sanskaras*) and illusory material forms, in order to achieve ultimate merger with the Beyond-Beyond God. Between Production or Creation, and, Annihilation

or Dissolution, the products enjoy relative stability and are sustained by the Sustainer principle of the trio.

Evolution and Production, the two together, finally lead to the State X - God as Man-God. The ultimate cosmic goal is to annihilate the unconsciousness and become one with the supreme consciousness of *Paramatman*, while remaining in the human body and simultaneously retaining the consciousness of the illusory worlds. About the Man-God State, Meher Baba has said:

"This is the state of God in a human body such as a Perfect Master (*Qutub, Sadguru*). In this state the Perfect Master or the Man-God is divinely, unattachedly and unlimitedly above the law of Illusion that governs the cosmic creation in an infinitely systematical order; and yet He permits Himself to be bound by the limitations of time, space and causation while continually experiencing consciously His 'I Am God' state and His infinite power, knowledge and bliss." ^{8.40}

"This tenth state of God in the human body is the state of *Haqiqat-e-Mohammadi*. The Perfect Masters (*Qutubs or Sadgurus*) and the Avatar (*Rasool*) are all of this state. Whether God is in the state of Man-God, as Perfect Master, or in the state of God-Man, as Avatar, He is in this tenth state and functions as a Man-God and as a God-Man from the divine office *Muqam-e-Mohammadi* or *Vidnyan-Bhumika*..." ^{8.41}

This tenth state of God is also the Sub-State 'C' of the original Beyond God, the God State II. In the original Beyond God, emerged the paired system of opposites as Infinite Consciousness and Infinite Unconsciousness. In the words of Meher Baba:

"Of these two seemingly opposite but complementary aspects, the infinite consciousness plays the role of the *Avatar* or Divine Incarnation. The infinite unconsciousness finds its expression through an evolution, which seeks to develop full consciousness through time process. In the human form, the full consciousness strives to have self-knowledge and self-realization. The first man to realize God as one indivisible and eternal Truth was taken up into this realization by the eternal *Avataric* infinite consciousness." ^{8.42}

Thus, with the 'coming down' of the first God-realized man, the eternal *Avataric* infinite consciousness descended and took an incarnation in the body of that person. Thus, the tenth state of God is a special state of the sub-state B of the God State II. This state (sub-state C of God State II or God State X) is instrumental in holding the sub-states A and B - Infinite Unconsciousness and Infinite Consciousness- together, enabling them to function in a mutually supportive manner. Sub-state B of God State II is the state of *Nirguna-Nirakar Paramatma* or attributeless and formless Conscious God. God, in this state, is eternally conscious of His own most-original state of *Paratpar Parabrahman*, but being unconscious of illusion does not use the repository of *Sat-Chit-Ananda*. Sub-state C of God State II is the opposite of Sub-state B, in being *Saguna-Sakar Paramatman* or God with attributes and form. In this state God is simultaneously conscious of His *Paratpar Parabrahman* State, and of Illusion, and makes use of *Sat, Chit* and *Ananda*.

How It All Began? It all began in the Beyond Beyond State of God. All the happenings are happening in the Beyond Beyond State of God and will finally end up in the Beyond Beyond God. It is all a "*Nam*" and "*Rupa*", or Sound and Light, show -a dream like creation created by the consciousness out of sound and light forms. Beyond Beyond God is the beginning of all subsequent beginnings.

Why it all started? What was there at the beginning of the beginning? Who had started it? These are meaningless questions. Beyond Beyond God is beyond the one, who is asking questions, and also beyond the one, who is keen on answering them. In this most original "*Is-Am*" state of God, unbounded absolute vacuum prevails. In the words of Meher Baba:

"In this absolute vacuum there is neither any manifestation of the conscious or unconscious state of God nor is there manifestation of the consciousness or unconsciousness of God. Neither is there the unlimited 'I' - the Divine Ego nor the Universal Ego - nor is there the limited 'I' or the individual ego. Neither is there the Universal mind nor is there limited mind. Neither is there unbounded energy nor is there limited energy. Neither is there the universal body - the '*Mahakaran-Sharira*' - nor is there the limited body. Neither are there universes

nor are there worlds. There is not even consciousness of either the consciousness - '*Mahachaitanya*' or even of the unconsciousness." ^{8.43}

In the Beyond-the-Beyond God, *Sat*, or the Supreme repository of transphysical energy formations and transmutations; *Chit*, or the Supreme repository of spiritual or formations of Consciousness energy; and *Ananda* or the Supreme repository of the forces of union, merger and bliss, were present only in their latent, or enfolded, states. This State of God, which is beyond all descriptions, can only be indicated through paradoxical forms of language. One of such forms is the example of a man experiencing the deep dream-less sleep. Existence becomes non-existence for this man. Even the experience of non-existence is not there. A state of total void or vacuum prevails. Yet, when he wakes up, he immediately starts re-functioning through his body, mind and memories. Where was he in those moments of deep slumber? Where was his mind? Where was his body? Where were his memories? Things "exist" only when we feel that they are "existing". In the absence of such a feeling, they cease to exist. And when they cease to exist in such a profound manner that they do not leave any residual and revivable memories of their "existence" or "non-existence", they just get blanked out of the conscious zone of consciousness as if they had never existed. The Beyond Beyond God State is the state of God's dreamless sleep. Meher Baba has stated, "... the original state of God is that state of unbounded absolute vacuum where God 'is' and consciousness 'is not'. This state is the original divine sound sleep state of God beyond the beginning of the Beginning of Creation." ^{8.44}

"The Beyond-Beyond is the Original Sound Sleep state of God, full of Infinite Vacuum. The Beyond-Beyond is Bound-less Space and Spacelessness, and contains Infinity and finite-ness, Unlimitedness and limits. It is Everything and Nothing, and It is beyond Everything and Nothing. All things are contained within the Beyond-Beyond, All-light and All-Darkness, All-Knowledge and All-Ignorance, All-Consciousness and All-Unconsciousness. But in this Original state of God, there is neither Consciousness nor Unconsciousness. The Beyond-Beyond God contains in Its Vacuum Infinite Consciousness and Infinite Unconsciousness." ^{8.45}

Suddenly the process of awaking started, as the urge to wake up was inherently latent in the Beyond Beyond God. This created a wave like perturbation - Whim-Wave or *Lahar* - in that super-transcendental "Is-Am" or *Sat-Chit* state, or vacuum. A wave is a formation of two mutually opposing movements creating a crest and a trough. In the same manner, the process of awaking of the Beyond-Beyond God started with the Whim, or sudden fancy, in the "Am" of the Beyond-Beyond God with the ambivalence - "I am Nothing: I am Everything". This affected the "Is" of the Beyond-Beyond God. The resultant friction created the original fire transforming itself into the first ever super-transcendental paired system of opposites: Original transphysical energy "*Tej or Tejas*", manifesting as mist or original gas with dazzling brilliance of original fire, and, "*Prana*", the tripartite spiritual energy. This tripartite energy consisted of *Kama-Shakti*, the Will-to-be to love and be loved; *Ichha-Shakti* or Desire-Force; and *Samkalpa-Shakti*, the power of Imaginative-Cognition. The manifested *Tej-Prana* was instantaneously bounded and *Akasha*, or Space, was created at that very instant. *Tej-Prana*, the dazzling brilliance of *Sat-Chit-Shakti*, filled this original *Akasha* or Space. *Tej* enclosed *Prana* (*Tejomayaprana*) and *Prana* enclosed *Tej* (*Pranamayateja*). This became the Creation Point or *Om* Point. *Om* Point, the sphere of dazzling white brilliance of *Tej-Prana*, contained within itself the seven transphysical energy states: Blue - Anti-blue, Purple - Anti-purple, Indigo - Anti-indigo, Green -Anti-green, Yellow -Anti-yellow, Orange - Anti-orange, Red - Anti-red, with seven movements. In the Beyond-Beyond God, the *Om* Point floated between the Ocean of Everything or Infinite Consciousness and the Ocean of Nothing or Infinite Unconsciousness. But there was no body to witness and experience all this, as there was neither conscious-consciousness nor unconscious-consciousness because the awaking and emerging 'I' was oscillating between 'I am Not (Nothing): I am (Everything)' and 'I am (Everything): I am Not (Nothing)' uncertainty.

The Whim-Wave's impact on the 'Am' part of 'Is-Am' Beyond-Beyond, stirred *Chit* and *Ananda*. *Kama-Shakti*, or the Will -to-be of *Prana*, accelerated the process of the emergence of 'I' out of 'Is-Am' Beyond-Beyond. The 'I am Not: I am' ambivalence strengthened the urge to come out of this vicious state and

achieve absolute certainty about 'Who am I?' This urge, gathering momentum, stirred *Chit-Ananda* immensely. *Para Vak*, or Divine Word or transcendental *Sabda-Nada*, now started vibrating in a manner that stirred its contents. *Chit* was activated which resulted in the activation of the Supreme Repository. The Whim-Wave, the urge to have absolute certainty about 'Who am I' stirred *Ananda*, or the Bliss of Union. This activated the dissociative and associative forces of Love in the form of seven desires: Lust and no-lust, Anger and no-anger, Greed and no-greed, Hatred and no-hatred, Pride and no-pride, Selfishness and no-selfishness, Jealousy and no-jealousy, along with their seven movements. Thus, Everything or Infinite Consciousness, which concealed in its womb all things including Nothing, created a super-activated sphere within itself -the *OM-Point*. The *OM-Point* enclosed within itself the total repository of Knowledge that was necessary for the conscious experience of the certainty about 'Who Am I' by the waking Beyond-Beyond God. In the process, dreams in the forms of mental, subtle and gross worlds were created out of the sub-conscious of the waking Beyond-Beyond God. The Big Bang marks the beginning of the gross worlds and the universe, but between the deep Sleep State of the Beyond-Beyond God and the creation of the dream of the gross worlds many creative episodes took place.

In the words of Meher Baba:

"It is of this interim time that I now speak, the ages and ages, the aeons after the Whim and between Everything awakened fully to tell itself 'I AM GOD' (therefore knowing itself) and established the states of Infinite Consciousness, and Infinite Unconsciousness, *Paramatma* and *Ishwar*. In this time before creation began original fire (*Tej*) in infinitely finite form manifested in the Ocean of Nothing. This fire manifested near the *OM Point*, but it was not the beginning of creation. Creation did not begin until Infinite Unconsciousness was established in the Ocean of Nothing, and this original fire manifested before that time. The Whim gave rise to this fire, and this infinitely finite original fire gave rise to infinitely finite energy (*Prana*). Energy, even in such incredibly finite form, required space (*Akasha*) to manifest: simultaneously space manifested with energy and instantly there arose conflict between these two." ^{8.46}

"The Original Question, the Word of Words, 'WHO AM I?' came out of the Ocean of Everything (Divine Knowledge) and the Word came out of every drop in the Ocean of Everything. The Ocean of Nothing (Divine Ignorance) felt the momentum of that Infinite Word, and every drop of Nothing felt it as well. In response to that Word, Everything's question, "Who Am I?" every drop in the Ocean of Nothing began saying in an infinitely limited way, 'I am nothing, I am everything,' through movements in evolution and involution.

"Nothing is as air, and therefore Nothing's expression (through movements) 'I am nothing, I am everything,' is only air imagining! The resultant air is as gas, and therefore the expression of Nothing as 'I am nothing, I am everything,' produces only gas, imagination." ^{8.47}.

"Gas and light are one. The original fire and original light were one." ^{8.48}

"Energy which activates movements has seven divisions (states), so the movements of creation also have seven divisions." ^{8.49}

"Energy (*Prana*) and Space (*Akasha*) clashed before creation and continued to clash after creation, all because of desire. In the time before creation, fire, energy, and space manifested near the *OM* Point. These forces arose out of the Whim. But out of that Original Whim also surged seven major desires which poured into the Ocean of Nothing before and after creation." ^{8.50}

"The most finite point from where the NOTHING projects out as NOTHINGNESS is called the Creation Point or the '*OM*' Point. This creation point is naturally also in the Everything, which means in God in the Beyond the Beyond state." ^{8.51}

"At the instant when the whim surged in the infinite EVERYTHING the creation point or *Om* point manifested as most finite EVERYTHING." ^{8.52}

"This creation point was also latent in the most original State I of God, in the Beyond-Beyond state." ^{8.53}

"Thus creation arose in the Nothing, and the Point at which Everything's question was heard in the Nothing was the *OM* Point, out of which innumerable questions and answers poured into the Ocean of Nothing." ^{8.54}

"...divine sub-consciousness of God also emerged from the NOTHING which was latent in the 'God Is' state of the EVERYTHING, and necessarily was projected through the 'creation point' or 'Om Point,' in the absolute vacuum of the EVERYTHING.

"The very vibrations of the projection of the divine sub-consciousness of God, through the 'creation point' in the original absolute vacuum, bestirred the divine sound sleep state of God and made manifest the original breath of God, or the original Word - the divine 'NAD'- together with space, time and the cosmic universe, with all of its paraphernalia of the limited and finite ego, mind, energy and the individual and multiple forms."^{8.55}

Conflict is the oscillation between the opposites. The awaking Beyond-Beyond God, the Everything and the Nothing, in the process of becoming self-aware, oscillated between 'I am Nothing: I am Everything'. There was conflict between *Tej-Prana* and *Akasha*. *Tej* started enclosing *Prana*, and, *Prana* started enclosing *Tej*. The original 'I am Not: I am' oscillation, or conflict, was the cause of *Tej-Prana* and *Akasha* conflict or oscillation. This original conflict or oscillation, resulting in the urge 'Who Am I', also activated the *Para Vak*, or Divine Word, or Transcendental *Sabda-Nada* in *Chit*. The activated *Sabda-Nada* reverberated from the Creation Point in the oceans of Nothing and Everything. Being the transcendental *Para Vak*, or Divine Word, the nature and the intensity of this *Nad* or mystic sound cannot be described. Vocally uttered sound "-m-m-m-" of the word *OM*, by keeping the lips tightly pressed against each other, gives some vague idea about the nature of the Divine *Sabda-Nada* or *Pranav-Nada*.

Para Vak, or Divine Word, is not merely *Sabda-Nada*. It is a transphysical oscillation which encapsulates within itself, like a seed, *Sabda* (mystic creative sound enfolding all sounds, words and the transphysical capacity to hear in transphysical space), *Sparsha* (consciousness as the transphysical medium enfolding the trans-physical capacity to touch), *Rupa* (mystic creative light enfolding all subtle and gross forms and the transphysical capacity to see), *Rasa* (mystic force of union and bliss enfolding the transphysical capacity to enjoy) and *Gandha* (mystic fragrance enfolding trans-physical capacity to smell). Creation,

the illusion of mental, subtle and gross worlds, is the outcome of the germination and sprouting of the Divine Word.

About this, Meher Baba has stated:

"GOD in the Beyond-Beyond state is likened to a soundless, shoreless OCEAN. The 'Whim' of GOD for knowledge of Himself ('WHO AM I?') manifested as SOUND. This OCEANIC SOUND is of GOD, is GOD, and contains His experience of Power, Knowledge and Bliss.

"The emergence of the Sound through what is called the 'OM Point' or its Creative Utterance produced the worlds of Minds, Energy and Matter.

"The Primal Oceanic Sound is the Root of all forms and creatures and men and they are continuously connected with IT and derive their life from it.

"When one closes one's lips and expresses sound, a 'm-m-m' is produced. This 'm-m-m' is the foundation or ground of all spoken words and contains all feelings as when it expresses pain and anguish or joy and happiness, or all thoughts when expressed during thought and is capable of containing the whole of a question and its answer.

"This 'm-m-m' is a 'drop' of faint sound of the Oceanic Sound, the 'M-M-M' or 'Word' of God, separated from the Ocean by seven shadows of separation.

"If the whole physical universe was a huge bell, the sound of it in comparison with Sound of the Oceanic Sound would be as the furthestmost point of audibility of an ordinary bell.

"This sound-drop is not different from the Oceanic Sound - it is that Ocean and can never be anything but Ocean - but it experiences itself as a drop because of separation.

"This separation is not a separation by division, but a separation through impression.

"As words are expressions of this drop - 'm-m-m' - separated from the Oceanic 'M-M-M', so are sense actions, expressions and experiences removed from Oceanic Experience: seeing and seen from Oceanic Sight, hearing and heard from

Oceanic Hearing, smelling and scent, tasting and flavor, touching and touch from corresponding Oceanic Faculties.

"This Original Oceanic 'M-M-M' is called *BRAHMNAD* (Sound or 'WORD' of GOD) or *UNHAD-NAD* (Limitless Sound or 'WORD').

"It is continuous and is the eternal Root and Continuous Cause of all causes and effects." ^{8.56}

The surge of the urge to know the Self - "Who Am I?" - magnified by the reverberating Divine *Sabd-Nada*, bestirred the divine sound sleep state of God. The Divine *Sabd-Nada* started inter-acting with *Tej-Prana* and *Akasha*. In the ocean of Nothing, the One Unconscious-I, which concealed in its womb innumerable un-conscious-I as its opposite states, started the oscillations of uncertainty in the form of 'I am Nothing' and 'I am Everything'.

It is possible to get a first hand idea about this oscillation by comparing it with the human diurnal cycle of deep dream-less sleep and awaking in the world of forms with a specific form of "I". Being in the Ocean of Unconsciousness, or Nothing, the One Supreme Unconscious-I, with its countless latent I-clones, had absolutely no chance of resolving this uncertainty about itself. Drowned in the Ocean of Unconsciousness, it was impossible to get any answer to the question 'Who Am I?' Acquisition of conscious-consciousness was the only way out. The oscillation 'I am Nothing' and 'I am Everything' not only continued but got increasingly accelerated. This oscillation churned the Oceans of Nothing and Everything. The Whim-Wave of 'Who Am I?', eventually reached the Ocean of Everything, or of Infinite Consciousness, or of Supreme Self-knowledge, or of Absolute Certainty. Being the Ocean of Absolute Certainty, wherein even an infinitesimal uncertainty is not possible, the Whim-Wave 'Who Am I?' vanished and the One Supreme-I, along with infinite number of enfolded Supreme-I, emerged out and was established firmly in "I am God" Super- Consciousness. It remained totally unaffected by the persistent churning in the Ocean of Unconsciousness. On the other end, its counterpart Supreme-I, drowned in Infinite Unconsciousness, commenced gradual waking through a process of progressive expansion of consciousness by creating dream images and being

identified with them. The oscillation "I am Nothing: I am Everything," now in its highly activated form, became "I am nothing: I am this thing' as the crystal of thought-desire impressions, or *sanskaras*, started growing around the Supreme-I clones in Infinite Unconsciousness.

These two polarities - Zero Self-Awareness and Zero Self-Knowledge: Absolute Self-Awareness and Absolute Self-Knowledge - generated a transcosmic mega scale movement of the Supreme-I. The Supreme-I started pulling out itself from the illusory world of images in order to finally merge with its counterpart -the Supreme-I in the Ocean of Infinite Consciousness - and become One. Thus, a transcosmic cycle of supremely profound deep sleep of Supreme-I, or God, and His supremely profound awakened state was established.

This is one way to look at this happening. Perhaps a more profound way, to look at it, would be to understand that this cycle of 'God's deep sleep and God's awakening' was already there and operative. The Whim-Wave, which worked as a trigger to the process of God's awakening, was in fact a part of the program of this cycle, and from this point of view its emergence was not at all 'sudden'. This cosmic program included the order of the creation at three levels - the level of mind, the level of energy and the level of matter. It included the mechanism of temporary sustenance of the creation at the three levels. It also included the order of the annihilation of creation at these three levels.

In the words of Meher Baba:

"In order to grasp clearly the divine sound sleep state and understand more clearly all that follows immediately after the original infinite whim surges in God, bestirring Him from the divine sound sleep, let the divine sound sleep state of God be compared with the sound sleep of man.

This sound sleep state of man is literally the same original divine sound sleep state of God. God in the 'God-Is' state is eternally in the original divine sound sleep state, whereas God in the human state daily experiences alternately the sound sleep state and the awake state."^{8.57}

"This fundamental experience in a normal man gives rise to three basic states in his everyday life. The First State is the sound sleep state or the state of

complete unconsciousness of the 'Self' in man. The Second State is the dream state or the semi-conscious or semi-awake state. The Third State is the completely awake state or the state of complete consciousness of the 'Self' in man as man.

"Now, man's cognizance is life in man, and man's life is made cognizant through the actions of man. Actions are generated by the impressions of man and vice-versa. These impressions of man are picked up and imprinted on the mind of man by actions. Impressions and actions are thus interdependent because impressions are fed by actions and actions are motivated by impressions.

"... the source of impression is traced as far back as the latent NOTHING in the EVERYTHING, which means GOD in the 'God Is' state. When the NOTHING first became manifested as NOTHINGNESS in the shape of creation, the primal manifestation of the NOTHING gave rise to the first trace of consciousness in God and thereupon the first impression of NOTHINGNESS manifested. This first impression procreated impressions with the evolution of consciousness." ^{8.58}

"There exist two Oceans of Everything and Nothing but they are One originally. The Ocean of Everything is indivisible as Divine Knowledge and the Ocean of Nothing is also indivisible as Divine Ignorance. In the Ocean of Everything, although there are innumerable drops (souls), they are always One (One Soul). And in the Ocean of Nothing there are also innumerable drops (minds) which are always one as well, from the beginning to the end. There, in Everything there are innumerable 'everything's', and in Nothing there are innumerable nothings." ^{8.59}

"Nothing is nothing, without substance; therefore its movements and whims are without consequence. But over ages and ages, that movement in the Ocean of Nothing created an impact on the Ocean of Everything and that Ocean of Everything slowly awakened. When the Ocean of Everything was finally awake, It asked Itself only one question, 'WHO AM I?' As soon as It asked Itself that one question It gave itself the only answer, 'I AM GOD', and Infinite Consciousness was established in the Ocean of Everything. But the poor Ocean of Nothing! When

it heard Everything's question 'Who Am I?' it did not know that answer. Thus Infinite Unconsciousness was established in the Ocean of Nothing." ^{8.60}

"So in the Beginning the movement of the Ocean of Nothing was infinitely limited. When Nothing first heard the Word of Everything, it expressed itself as 'I am nothing, I am everything'; when this movement began to gather momentum in the Ocean of Nothing, each drop in that Ocean began saying, 'I am this, I am that'. Thus, innumerable nothings were created by the expression of the drops: 'I am this, I am that'. Every drop then began thinking that it was everything because it was surrounded by these innumerable manifestations of the Nothing." ^{8.61}

God State II descriptive synonyms are:

Beyond God

Original Beyond God

Parabrahma Paramatma of Hindus

Allah of Sufis

God, the Father of Christians

Yezdan of Zoroastrians

These terms are used in a general way and include the dual aspects of Infinite Consciousness and Infinite Unconsciousness.

Sub-state B:

Consciousness as Infinite Consciousness

Paramatma Nirguna-Nirakar

Allah

God, the Father

Over-Soul

Sub-state A:

Consciousness as Infinite Unconsciousness

Ishwar enfolding *Brahma-Vishnu-Mahesh*

Sub-state C:

Paramatma Saguna-Sakar

Vidnyan Bhumika of Avatar and Sadguru

Haqiqat-e-Mohammadi

Christ

Buddha

State III: God as Emanator, Sustainer and Dissolver

In this state God as *Ishwar*, or Consciousness of Infinite Unconsciousness, brings into play His three attributes of emanating, sustaining and dissolving.

In the words of Meher Baba:

"All movements took place in Infinite Unconsciousness, as Infinite Consciousness cannot be affected by anything since it knows Everything. God's state of Infinite Consciousness is named *Parabrahma-Paramatma* in Vedant, *Allah* in Sufism, and *Yezdan* in Zoroastrianism; this state is the state of The Father. This Divine state is of Infinite Consciousness of *Paramatma* (Conscious God). In this Divine state, *Nirvikalp*, Soul is Conscious of being God. *Paramatma* is in the Conscious Beyond, so God is not conscious of Illusion (creation); *Paramatma* is not conscious of being everything and everyone, for Infinite Consciousness is beyond everything. God's state of Infinite Unconsciousness is named *Ishwar* in Vedant. *Ishwar* has three aspects: *Brahma* (the Creator), *Vishnu* (the Preserver), and *Mahesh* (the Dissolver). Thus all creating of creation, all preserving of creation, and all dissolution of creation occurs within Infinite Unconsciousness, the domain of *Ishwar*" ^{8.61}. The *Sufi* synonyms for *Brahma*, *Vishnu*, and *Mahesh*, are *Afridgar*, *Parvardigar*, and *Fanakar*. Archangels, *Israfeel* (the angel who creates life), *Mikaeel* (the angel who sustains life) and *Izraeel* (the angel who destroys life) are other synonyms. ^{8.62}

Meher Baba says:

"The process of emanating, sustaining and dissolving, which is constantly and uniformly going on, may be illustrated by an analogy. Let us imagine that a human

body is God. The human body sleeping with eyes shut may then be compared to the Beyond State of God, as State II A. The very first moment of opening the eyes may be compared to the state of God as Creator. The subsequent condition of remaining awake may be compared to the state of God as Sustainer, and going back to sleep again with eyes shut may be compared to the state of God as Dissolver. Thus God is the Creator, Sustainer and Dissolver, all three in One, at one and the same time."^{8.63}

Infinite Unconsciousness is the domain of *Ishwar*. *Ishwar* is the Supreme-I conscious of only Unconsciousness and, therefore, totally oblivious of his own Self. *Ishwar*, the Supreme-I, together with its countless I-clones, not only fills the infinite field or space of Infinite Unconsciousness, but also feels one with it. Impacted by the original agitator, the original Whim-Wave to know the Self, now in the form of intensified oscillation, 'I am Nothing: I am some-thing', *Ishwar* brings its Trinity of *Brahma* (Creator or Emanator), *Vishnu* (Preserver or Sustainer) and *Mahesh* (Destroyer or Dissolver) in operation. Consequently, *Brahma* starts creating or emanating, by projecting countless formations of *Para Vak*, or *Sabda-Nada*, or transphysical Sound, or *Nam* and *Rupa*, or thought-forms. Initially the worlds of mind, and of transphysical energy or *Prana*, are emanated or created. The drops, or the Supreme I-clones, start getting progressively and cumulatively identified with the contents of these worlds, thereby, accelerating the processes of evolution of consciousness and production of mind-energy-matter formations. Being a clone of the sleeping Supreme-I drowned in the consciousness of unconsciousness, each of these I-drops start oscillating between a state of slumber and a state of dreaming. Since these I-drops were impelled by the original Whim of knowing the Self with absolute certainty, this game of sleep ('I am Nothing'), and dreaming ('I am this - I am that') goes on incessantly till the sleeping I-drop and finally awakes in the awareness of the Supreme Self or *Paramatma*.

In the words of Meher Baba:

"The state of God that exists in the movement of the Ocean is the state of *Ishwar*, Creator, Preserver and Dissolver; it is only in movement that the acts of Creation, Preservation, and Dissolution can unfold.

"Due to this movement innumerable waves and ripples happened in the Ocean of Nothing, whereby wave-bubbles (universes and gross worlds) and drop-bubbles (forms from stone to human) arose.

"Since energy has seven states and energy activates movements, so movement and its ripples (repercussions of movement) have seven states of stir. Six states of the stir in the Ocean created a bubble of energy around each drop, but the stir (movements, whirl) and the bubbles are so subtle and the movement is so exceptionally rapid, that both are absolutely unseen. The seventh state of movement created the bubbles that are seen.

"In the first six states of the movement (in the two mental planes and four subtle planes), the individual drop-soul has a covering (bubble around it) of mind and energy. However, in the seventh state of movement, the drop's covering changes and it becomes a bubble of mind, energy, and gross form; this is *jeev*.

"Every drop is the Ocean Itself, but because of the bubble it thinks that it is only a tiny drop. The creation of the gross bubbles is the gross continuation and accentuation of the original friction between energy and space, for space is now in gross form, and energy is expressed in form. Consequently, the conflict between energy and space is at its height in the gross world. (This is seen as the constant explosion of novae, the constant evolving of planets in the throes of change)."^{8.64}

In the Ocean of Nothing, or the infinite space filled by the One Unconscious Supreme-I, including its countless unconscious I-clones, *Ishwara*, the sleeping God, created the diversity of thought-forms or imaginary forms. *Ishwara's Brahma*, the emanator, creates these thought fantasies by initiating the interactions of *Para Vak* or *Sabda-Nada*, *Tej-Prana*, and *Akasha*. Drop-souls, or Unconscious I-clones, one by one, get associated with these thought-forms, or bubbles, and start oscillating between 'I am nothing: I am this bubble'. In other words, each drop-soul establishes itself in a cycle of dreamless sleep and dreaming and starts functioning as an I-drop-bubble or drop-bubble. Forces of attraction, repulsion and cohesion produce an amazing diversity of the formations of drop-bubbles. Cosmic interactions and consequent mega clusters of these

drop-bubble formations produce diverse wave-bubbles, which are stabilized by *Vishnu*, the Preserver or the Sustainer, and destroyed by *Mahesh*, the Dissolver. The Emanator, Preserver, and Dissolver principles, through mutual interactions, keep the show going. This is how the four sphere – Composite, Mental, Subtle and Gross – are created or emanated and sustained. These spheres contain the worlds of mind, of spiritual energy *Prana*, and of gross energy and matter. These worlds are inhabited by the beings in the form of diverse drop-bubbles. All States of God, along with their internal components and processes, work as One Supra-Cosmic System.

Thus, before the Big Bang – the beginning of the gross universe or worlds – Divine *Sabda-Nada*, *Tej-Pran*, *Tej-Prana* and *Akasha* were consolidated and manifested as the *OM* Point or the Creation Point in Beyond Beyond God. In Beyond God or *Parabrahma Paramatma*, the dual aspects *Paramatman Nirguna-Nirakar* and *Ishwar* were manifested. In *Ishwar*, the Mental sphere, as *Tejomayaprana Mana* (mind)-*Akasha* (space) wave-bubble, and the Subtle sphere, as *Pranamayateja* (subtle energy)-*Akasha* (space) wave-bubble, were formed or emanated.

In the words of Meher Baba:

"The movement went on in the Ocean of Nothing, and every drop started swirling and whirling, dancing and singing, jumping and flying; that is, its imagination began to gather momentum.

"And soon, as a result of all this activity, every drop was enveloped by flames and gases (products of imagination). Every drop then felt surrounded by flames and gases and tried to rid itself of the layers of fire and gas. Those who could not escape the fire of *Tej* stayed in mental form and became archangels; those who could not escape the gases of *Prana* stayed in subtle form and became angels. Those who rid themselves of the fire and gases felt the flames shoot out and the gases explode -bang! The bang of the gross universe - atoms consolidating." ^{8.65}

The mental world is the world of mind in its primal states; and the subtle world is the world of transphysical energy *Prana*. They have no material substance though the gross world, the world of gross energy and matter, has

come out of the subtle and the subtle from the mental. Beings, or I-wave-bubble and I-drop-bubble inhabit these worlds. Meher Baba says that there are five spheres -(1) Gross, (2) Subtle, (3) Mental, (4) Composite and (5) Real. The first four are in the realm of Illusion, while the fifth one is composed of the one and only Real Existence. About these spheres, and the worlds contained by them, Meher Baba has said:

"The first, the gross sphere, although entirely depending for its existence on the subtle, is distinctly different in very many respects from the subtle. The gross sphere consists of numberless worlds, suns, moon, stars, and in fact everything material from the crudest to the finest.... The point of prime importance in the gross sphere is our world (Earth).

"The second, the subtle sphere, is the sphere of energy, and although it is divided into seven divisions, it is one world by itself. Its subsistence depends upon the mental sphere but it exists entirely independent of the gross sphere. In the parlance of time and space, the domain of the gross sphere, with its infinite space comprising universes of innumerable suns, planets and worlds, including our earth, is but a speck as compared with the subtle sphere...The subtle sphere through its energy, its angels, and above all through man's partial and full subtle-consciousness (human consciousness partly or fully freed from the gross, in the gross), while penetrating the gross sphere itself, also penetrates infinite space with its suns, stars, planets and, in fact, every thing and every being in all the worlds within the gross sphere." ^{8.66}

"What I mean by the subtle is that although it is a million times more tangibly and substantially existing order of things than the gross, there is absolutely no trace of matter or material in the subtle.... In the gross sense it is right to call very fine substances such as ether, space, atoms, vibrations, light etc. subtle, yet all these are unquestionably matter though in a very, very fine form. In the spiritual sense, the subtle, as already said, is absolutely and completely something quite different from the material and the physical, however fine or faint they may be." ^{8.67}

"The third, the mental sphere, is the sphere of spheres. It is absolutely independent of both the subtle and gross spheres and is independently sustained by Divinity. The mental sphere is the very abode of MIND, individual, collective and universal. The Mind pervades its own sphere as much as it does throughout the subtle and gross spheres... Nevertheless, the mental sphere does not and cannot touch the Real Sphere, as nothing can touch it save its own Reality, conscious of itself in the eternal 'I Am God' state of God.

"The fourth, the composite sphere, is the most named and the least understood one. It is composed of twenty-one sub-spheres and as such, it is both a sphere and not a sphere by itself... The twenty-one connecting links are made up of seven sub-gross and sub-subtle spheres between the gross and the subtle spheres; seven sub-subtle and sub-mental spheres between the subtle and the mental spheres; and seven sub-mental and sub-supramental spheres between the mental sphere and the Real Sphere."^{8.68}

Meher Baba has classified seven sub-spheres between the gross and subtle spheres as lower; seven between the subtle and mental spheres as middle; and seven between the mental and the Supramental, or the Real, as higher sub-spheres. About the different categories of beings, inhabiting these spheres, Meher Baba has said:

"From the seven lower to the seven middle sub-spheres, inclusive of the subtle sphere, amongst other things there are the abodes of the disembodied souls (spirits) and the un-embodied souls (angels). From the seven middle to the seven higher sub-spheres, inclusive of the mental sphere, amongst other things there is the abode of the Archangels... The spirits (disembodied souls), both good and bad, have to remain in the 'state of waiting,' both before and after experiencing the states of pleasure and pain - states commonly known as heaven and hell."^{8.69}

Angels and Archangels are also called '*Devi*' and '*Devata*'. About them Meher Baba has said:

"The angels (un-embodied souls) are mere automatons for the will of God and they do nothing which is not desired or prompted by God. These wishes happen

to be mere expressions of divine power and activity which are all pervading. In short, angels are pure and not contaminated with physical embodiment... The Archangels are the mediums for the expression of God's principle divine attributes of creating, preserving and destroying limited life on an unlimited scale, and communicating unlimited Knowledge on a limited scale. Archangels are entities who always enjoy and never suffer." ^{8.70}

Meher Baba says that an Archangel and an angel can never see God as long as they are in the form of an Archangel or an angel. Man is unique in being endowed with fully developed consciousness capable of traversing and transcending the four spheres of Illusion and reaching the Real Sphere. This is due to man's unique capability of functioning through a gross body, through an astral body in a disembodied state, and through the subtle and mental bodies.

About these bodies Meher Baba has explained:

"There is also another body, called the Astral body, which persists long after death and belongs to sub-subtle or lower of the seven regions of the subtle plane. It is connected with the subtle and gross planes or worlds. The Astral body is exactly the replica of human body in all details. As is the Astral body so will be the gross body. The former is vapory or smoky in appearance, unlike the subtle body, which has form but no defined organs. The experience of Heaven and Hell, enjoyment and suffering, is undergone by this body and no sooner the *Sanskaras*, acquired while in the gross body are spent up, the Astral body is destroyed, leaving faint impressions on the subtle body... The Subtle body represents desires, Ego and Energy." ^{8.71}

Meher Baba says that subtle bodies of the Subtle Sphere have forms of light (*Tej* or *Noor*) and angels who inhabit these spheres have these forms of transphysical light. The light of the Sun, of our gross world, is just a shadow when compared to the dazzling brilliance of these subtle light forms.

Mental body in the Mental Sphere is a point of dazzling light and becomes the supramental body in its willfully expanded state. Meher Baba says: "The Mental or Seed body is a point of light (causal body) on this plane and the same extended or magnified is called the Supramental body." ^{8.72}

"The Archangels are creation by itself and are embodiments of God's qualities. In order to realize God, unlike angels... who are all evolved beings, the Archangels after a cyclic period, quickly take the human form and achieve the object in one lifetime.

"The reason why is as under: -

The Ocean of Divinity consists of drops and waves in latent form. No sooner the surface of the Ocean was ruffled with motion the waves came into being and these waves have all the attributes of Ocean in them. These big waves are the Archangels - the manifestations of principal attributes of God such as *Brahma*, *Vishnu* and *Mahesh*."^{8.73}

The totality of creation – composite, mental, subtle and gross spheres – is a dream of the sleeping God, *Ishwar*, in the process of gradual awaking. The three latent attributes of *Ishwar* – Emanator, Preserver and Dissolver – manifest as gigantic un-embodied I-waves ('I am *Ishwar*: I am the Emanator'; 'I am *Ishwar*: I am the Preserver'; 'I am *Ishwar*: I am the Dissolver') which generate diverse movements leading to the fabrication of this dream. *Brahma*, the Emanator, is the controller and emanator of forms, or patterns, or structures. *Vishnu*, the Preserver, is the regulator of the forces of *Ananda*, or Love, in the form of attraction, cohesion and cybernetics. *Mahesh*, the Dissolver, is the inducer of unconsciousness or dream-less sleep. The creation of this Trinity, in the forms of *Brahma*, *Vishnu* and *Mahesh*, was the very first act of creation, which preceded the emanation of mental and other spheres.

The super-activated sphere - the OM Point- was already swirling with the Divine Word, with *Teja-Prana-Akasha*, and with countless bubble-less I-drop souls oscillating between the crests and troughs of the "Who Am I? - Whim-Wave" in the form of "Am I Nothing?" and "Am I Everything?" oscillations. No sooner *Brahma-Vishnu-Mahesh* started their operations, the creation started oozing as I-drop-souls trickled out and started associating and dissociating with their bubbles. An I-drop-bubble is the imaginary boundary created by the I-drop-soul when it defines it-self in terms of an imaginary 'external entity', or thought-impression, called '*sanskar*'. Meher Baba says, "Imagination creates

sanskaras, impressions of separation which cause division, and *sanskaras* create movements which create mental, subtle, and gross bodies".^{8.74}

Meher Baba says that the movement generated by the clash between *Tej-Prana* and *Akasha* affected the Infinite Unconsciousness, or *Ishwar*, and "... as Infinite Unconsciousness was affected *Ishwar* began to create, preserve and dissolve". And, "When the question of Everything 'WHO AM I?' was heard in the Ocean of Nothing, Nothing began saying, 'I am this, I am that,' and creation began to issue forth drop by drop out of the *OM* Point into the Ocean of Nothing."^{8.75}

This created first the fire and light states, and later *Prana*-energy's 276 subtle states as bubbles of these I-drop-souls. A few of these last 276 *Prana*-energy states were semi-subtle, which led to the evolution of electrons and protons as gross bubbles of I-drop-souls. A bigger material bubble manifested as the 277th state in the form of hydrogen gas. Approximately ten million *sanskaras* go into the making of one atom. These 276 gases or states of *Prana*-energy are subtle. This infinite energy fills the subtle world. The Ego, Desires and Energy constitute the subtle body, or the I-drop-soul-bubble. Ego is the soul, or the self-limited Supreme I which includes Everything and Nothing as *Sat-Chit-Ananda*. Energy is the spiritual *Pranic* energy, which is transphysical light containing the seven major energy states and their movements. This spiritual energy in its active state draws relevant information components of the Divine Cosmic Program out of *Sat-Chit-Ananda* repository. This information package is latently existing in the form of 'Beej' or Seed *Sabda-Nada* vibrations in the oceanic Divine Word, or *Para Vak*. It has the innate capability of self-germinating and self-sprouting. Desires are the movements generated by the *sanskaras* which are thought-impressions. *Sanskaras* and Desires are the mental components integrated with the *Pranic* energy. The gross energy states, which are 276 in number, are the products of the transformations of *Pranic* energy.

In the words of Meher Baba:

"Each *Jeevatma* has to pass unconsciously through two planes of fire and light in the mental world (*Brahmaloke* and *Shivaloke*), and four planes of 276 gases in

the subtle world (*Suryaloke*). These 276 subtle gases turn very gradually into gross gases. The 276 subtle gases are weightless and cannot be measured.

"This subtle gas is *Prana*, and it turns into gross gas only after evolving through the 276 forms of subtle gases. In the 276 states of gas are contained subtle energy (*Prana*) and infinite space (*Akasha*); subtle consciousness is 276 different gaseous states.

"Subtle energy manifests fully (activates) in the subtle world through infinite space, and *Prana* is contained in the total 276 states of gas in the four planes of the subtle world. In all these 276 states of *Prana*, the *Jeevatma* considers itself to be only gas.

"These 276 gases are subtle and constitute infinite energy and they fill the subtle world. A few of these last 276 gases are semi-subtle, and they exist in the sub-subtle or astral plane that connects the gross world with the subtle world. *Prana* is what the subtle world is made of and can only be experienced in the subtle body, which is of a gaseous nature, not a physical state.

"There are seven major subtle gases of the 276, and they are of seven colors, but these colors are purely subtle: subtle gaseous blue, subtle gaseous purple, subtle gaseous indigo, gaseous green, gaseous orange, gaseous yellow and gaseous red. The seven gross colors of matter are shadows of the subtle gaseous colors.

"... In the subtle world, energy activates matter, which is in subtle form (*Akasha*, infinite space), and matter is forced to manifest fully. This action creates the gross world and this sphere is the full manifestation of matter activated by the energy of the subtle world, *Prana*.

"Matter manifests first in the form of gross gas, and the 277th state of subtle gas is the gross gas hydrogen. After hydrogen, evolve the other gross gases made up of gross molecules and atoms.

"First evolves the proton, then the electron; and with the electron, an atom is formed. After so many atoms consolidate (the dust of the gross) the state of

stone originates. It requires approximately ten million *sanskaras* to form one atom, and approximately ten million atoms to form dust - a particle of stone." ^{8.76}

I'm with you once more under the stars
and down by the shore, and orchestra's playing
and even the palms seem to be swaying
when they begin the beguine.

Suddenly the stream of statements, appearing in the space of Meher Baba's picture frame, ceased to appear. The divinely beautiful form of Meher Baba gazed at us, with love and kindness, from the picture. The profound silence of Meher Baba's Samadhi engulfed us from all sides. It was an ecstatic experience beyond all words.

Silence was still engulfing us from all sides. It had taken possession of our ever-restless minds. We had become silent from within, experiencing inner joy and bliss. We were in a unique state of consciousness, which was so full of its own fullness that it appeared as if all desires had ceased to exist. We were floating in the eternal 'Now'.

Sitting at the two corners of Meher Baba's Samadhi, Mika and Ram appeared to be engrossed in deep meditation. Mary was dancing, drowned in silent ecstasy. Merwan was lying prostrate in front of Meher Baba's picture.

Rahim, with a beautiful and fragrant rose in his hand, was humming a tune. Sharing his joy with us, he said, 'Listen everybody, I am singing this beautiful Urdu couplet for my *Rahanuma*, my Beloved Meher Baba.'

"Tu hee hai matlab-i-jumlah taalib,
Tu hee hai maqsad-i-jumlah aalam,
Tujhi se naghmaa hai bulbulon mein,
Tujhi se khusboo gulab mein hai."

Rahim sang it in the form of a traditional '*kavaali*', and the pace of this lilting song made Mary dance now more vigorously. Ever exuberant Mika and Ram, abandoning their meditation, also joined her. Clapping in a synchronized manner we all sang it as a chorus and danced together.

"Tu hee hai matlab-i-jumlah taalib,
Tu hee hai maqsad-i-jumlah aalam,
Tujhi se naghmaa hai bulbulon mein,
Tujhi se khusboo gulab mein hai."

Mary overflowing with joy insisted upon Rahim to explain its meaning.

Rahim said, `Mary dear, it means:

"Thou art the heart's desire of all that lives,

Thou art the goal of all life's endless strife,

Thou art the music in the nightingale,

Thou art the luscious fragrance in the rose."

`It is really a lovely song,' Mary said, `And singing it for Meher Baba makes it all the more lovely. It was an out-of-the-world experience for me when Meher Baba took hold of my hands and danced with me. I saw Him coming out of the picture, and, for a moment, I thought that He was just a figment of my imagination. But I was wrong. The splendor of His beautiful form dazed me. Maddening joy filled me when He touched and hugged me. I felt that He is mine and I am His, since ages. Then one of the figures painted in the Samadhi mural became an angel, shining like lightning. Draped in snow-white clothes, he came down and whispered softly in my ear: "Mary Magdalene was very dear to Jesus. Jesus rose from death, early on Sunday, and He appeared first to Mary Magdalene. None of her companions believed in this happening. I know you love Jesus. Meher Baba is Jesus, the Christ. And you are His Mary Magdalene." Ram, Rahim, Merwan, Mika, and Professor, believe me please, I am speaking the truth.'

`Mary, you are the fortunate one,' Merwan said. `Inner experiences and revelations of Meher Baba have changed the course of the lives of hundreds and thousands of persons all over the world. Let me tell you the experience of one other Mary -Mary Backett- who first met Meher Baba in April 1932, at her friend Kitty Davy's home in London. After this meeting, which caused a great spiritual upliftment in her consciousness, Mary Backett had an almost prophetic insight into her and her husband's future work. She saw Meher Baba, in a vision, standing before her and suddenly growing to a very tall stature. Divine love poured forth from His eyes and Mary had a feeling as if she is bathing in it. Meher Baba said, "feed my sheep". This was not an easy task as the Backetts had no car and this meant in and out of buses, in and out of sub-ways, and miles on foot. Mary and

her husband Will were convinced that these were the words of the Great Shepherd. Didn't Jesus say: "I am the good shepherd, who is willing to die for the sheep. When the hired man, who is not a shepherd and does not own the sheep, sees a wolf coming, he leaves the sheep and runs away; so the wolf snatches the sheep and scatters them. The hired man runs away because he is only a hired man, and does not care about the sheep. I am the good shepherd. As the Father knows me and I know the Father, in the same way I know my sheep and they know me. And I am willing to die for them" ^{9.1}. Mary and Will Backett dedicated themselves whole-heartedly in the service of Meher Baba's "sheep" throughout their lives. Meher Baba lovingly called them, "my dear archangels." ^{9.2}

'Mary it seems we all have been blessed with divine and profound experiences of Meher Baba's divinity,' said Mika. 'In my case, Meher Baba, glowing with dazzling divine radiance, kissed me on my forehead. Instantaneously, I found myself under the eternal tree of enlightenment. Beneath this tree, I saw the Lotus Throne and, in place of Buddha, I saw Meher Baba seated on it with palms turned upwards. He was surrounded by four *Dhyani*-Buddhas in four *mudras* or hand gesture: Buddha in *Bhumi-sparsha*, Buddha in *Dana*, Buddha in *Abhaya* and Buddha in *Dharma mudras*. Now, the lotus is the prototype of all *mandalas*, all centralized systems of a spiritual universe of intricate relationships. It is the prototype of all *Chakras* or psychic centers, in which the chaos of unconscious forces is transformed into a meaningful cosmos, and in which individual existence finds its fulfillment in the final realization of Enlightenment, the state of completeness or wholeness. A deep conviction is growing in me that Buddha and Meher Baba are one and the same.'

Ram said, 'I had a different experience. I saw Meher Baba stepping out of this picture. His long hairs were furling like waves of light in a vast limitless ocean of dazzling radiance. Holding my hand, He took me along with Him over the waves. He played with me joyously and we splashed around drops of light. We sang a song together, "I am the Ocean of Light and Truth, I am the Ocean of Love". Then I saw the form of *Vishnu* rising from the Infinity of Being as a wave arises on the surface of ocean. Then from the Lotus-Heart of *Vishnu*, sprinkled with thick

crowding stars, was born the *Brahma*, Knower of the Word of Scripture and of Scripture-meaning, encircled by *Devi*, *Devata* and ancient *Rishis*.'

'This divinely beautiful rose is a gift from Meher Baba,' said Rahim. 'He hugged me and kissed me like my father. I asked Him, "Are you my father?" He said, "Of course, I am your father. I am your mother too. I am your brother. I am your sister. I am your friend. I am your enemy. Since I alone exist, I am everything'. I said, " My *Mujibuddavaat*, Benevolent God, kindly be my *Khaleel*, my friend, and be my *Rahanuma*, my guide. Lead me to the abode of Truth". He said, "I am the secret of all secrets. Come on, I will take you to the Land of Truth."

'We found ourselves in a garden of roses. There were countless varieties of roses over there, and their fragrance filled the air all around. Meher Baba plucked a rose and said, "It's for you, Rahim, my beautiful rose". He took me to a place where I saw people in great distress and pain. I asked who they were and they said - "We are those who did not follow real teachings, who were not true to our understandings, who revered self appointed teachers."

'Then Meher Baba took me to a place where everyone was attractive and full of joy. I asked who they were and they said - "We are those who did not follow the real Signs of the Way." "But if you have ignored the Signs, how can you be happy?" I asked. Moreover, to this they said, "We are happy because we chose happiness instead of Truth, just as those who chose the self-appointed also chose misery." "But is happiness not the goal of man?" I asked. Meher Baba replied, "The goal of man is Truth and Love. Truth is Love. Truth is greater than happiness. I am the Ocean of Truth and Love."

'Then He said, "Come on, we have to move on and reach our destination." I asked, "Where are we going?" Meher Baba said, "We are returning to the ordinary world, the world of lies and hatred, for that is where I have to be - and you too my sweet liar - if I am to do my work". He called me a liar because my lie had been in seeking personal gratification and posing as if I am seeking Truth. Thus, Meher Baba revealed to me that the ordinary world is the cherished Land of Truth.'

'What was your experience, Professor?' Mary asked.

'It was really an exhilarating and invigorating experience,' I said. 'Meher Baba lovingly took me in His lap and uttered the primal oceanic sound as *OM*. It was an extremely high pitched sound which permeated the totality of my being. He then asked me to utter it without opening my lips and without using my vocal cords. For a moment, it appeared impossible, but then after a while, I did succeed in producing the sound. *OM MEHER OM* reverberated in the infinite space of my heart, and this pleased Meher Baba immensely. Meher Baba then said, "I am the *WORD* and the *WORD* is the reality of all beings and things".'

'Tell us your experience Merwan dear,' Mary said.

'Meher Baba kissed me and said, "Merwan, you taste sweet like a sugar-doll candy". He then said, "Why only you! All of you -Mary, Ram, Rahim, Mika, and Professor - are sweet little sugar dolls. I want you to take a plunge and dive deep into Me to fathom out the depths of all that I have conveyed to you in the form of statements on, 'Before the Beginning of the Beginning'." In response to this, I sang this *Arati* for Him:

"How can one fathom Your fathomless Being?
 How can we know You we see with gross eyes?
 A glimpse of Your shadow has blinded our seeing
 How can Your glory e're be realized?
 Consumed is my mind in Your fire and flame
 Accept it, O Meher, in Oneness
 Consumed is my heart in the sound of Your Name
 Accept O Meher, my *Arati*
 Accept O Meher, my Song
 Accept O Meher, my *Arati*
 Accept O Meher, my Song" ^{9.3}

`Meher Baba then asked me to kiss Him,' Merwan narrated with great excitement. `When I did this, Baba asked, "How do I taste Merwan?" I said, "Baba, you are the ocean of sweetness and sweetness itself". Meher Baba then said, "It is true. No body can ever fathom Me. I am the sweetness of the sweetness. Right now, I am in a playful mood. Take a plunge and dive deeper and deeper, in your own way, into all that was communicated to you. Do you know what will happen? Your illusory doll-forms will finally be dissolved in my sweetness. Have no fear in your hearts and take a dive."

Ram said, `Death is no cause of fear. God is the milieu of the soul, as water is the milieu of the water lily. Kabir says:

Why do you wither, O Water Lily?
Your stem is full of water
In the water you were born, in the water you live
In the water, you have your dwelling
O Water Lily! ^{9.4}

`These are beautiful images,' said Mika. `But in Zen we are more down-to-earth, and call it as getting your bottoms knocked-off. The story goes that a nun Chiyono studied Zen under Bukko of Engaku. In spite of an unusually long stay with her Master, she was unable to attain the fruits of meditation for a very long time. One moonlit night she was carrying water in an old pail bound with bamboo. The bamboo broke down, the bottom fell out of the pail and at that moment, Chiyono was set free. In commemoration of the great event, Chiyono wrote this poem:

In this way and that I tried to save the old pail
Since the bamboo strip was weakening and about to break
Until at last the bottom fell out
No more water in the pail!
No more moon in the water! ^{9.5}

`How should we begin this intellectual exploration of the Statement on "Before the Beginning of the Beginning & Thereafter". The spiritual holistic vision reveals that in the Eternal Now, Beginning and End are simultaneously co-existent, and are therefore inseparable. Meher Baba has insisted that we should dive deeper in Him and explore the Statement in its entirety. His command need be obeyed now,' I said.

`We can make a beginning by enlisting the key-words used in the Statement and try to understand them better in a comprehensive manner,' said Ram. `Some of these words or terms are from Hindu scriptures and Meher Baba has picked them up and used them in his own way. The Statement itself is structured in an interesting manner. It is a mixture of quotes of Meher Baba and of some sort of a commentary on them. One may ask, "Who has authored the commentary?" However, this is irrelevant because the way the Statement was flashed before us puts it in the category of Divine Revelations. I have a feeling that the Statement was structured and presented in this manner by some mysterious power with the sole intention of making it more intelligible to all of us.'

`There are some words, which find repeated mention. For example: "Everything" and "Nothing"; "Divine Vacuum"; "Infinite Consciousness" and "Infinite Unconsciousness"; "Nothingness"; "Gas", "most most finite gaseous form" and "most most finite gross gaseous form"; "Trios of Paired-opposites"; "Knowledge" and "Ignorance"; "Original Whim" and "Original Urge"; "Waves" and "drops"; "Wave-bubbles" and "drop-bubbles"; "Evolution"; "Involution"; "Re-incarnation"; "Sphere", "Worlds" and "Planes". In addition to these, there are terms picked up from the ancient Hindu scriptures and incorporated. These are: "Paratpara Parabrahma"; "Parabrahma"; "Paramatma"; "Atman"; "Ishwar"; "Brahma", "Vishnu" and "Mahesh"; "Om" and "Pranav"; "Para Vak"; "Sabda" and "Nada"; "Prana" and "Akash"; "Tej or Taijas"; "Sanskara"; "Vidnyan Bhumika"; "Avatar" and "Sadguru". Though the Statement includes the meanings of these terms and words, but I feel that some sort of a minimal dictionary would indeed be of great help in understanding the Statement.'

`The Hindu scriptural terms are highly "polluted" words because of their prolonged use by the various philosophical sects of Hinduism. I do not think that Meher Baba has used them in a scholastic comparative manner for gaining support for whatever He intended to communicate. Meher Baba has used terms not only from Hinduism, but also from Christianity, Sufism, Buddhism and Zoroastrianism. Perhaps this was His way to tell us that all religions are fundamentally based on the knowledge of Truth and share a common spiritual world-view.'

`But Ram, even to understand these key-words,' I said, `we need a master key to unlock the door that leads us to the inner sanctum of the Statement.'

`I agree with Professor,' Rahim said. `Without taking hold of the centrally running thread, we would just be groping in the dark. What could be the most significant statement in the Statement? If eventually we succeed in extracting it out, our task would then become much easier. Mary, what is your opinion on this?'

`I think you are right,' Mary said. `In my opinion, the most significant statement is the one in which the relationship between the sound sleep state of God and the sound sleep state of man is revealed. Meher Baba has stated that the two are literally the same. If I have understood this correctly, then I can say quite emphatically that this indeed is a great revelation. This revelation compels us to take a fresh look at all that was communicated to us. Perhaps, Merwan would help us in recapitulating what Meher Baba has said on this.'

`Meher Baba has revealed the relationship between the God's sound sleep and the sound sleep of man in His two statements,' Merwan said. `The first statement is:

"... the original sound sleep state of God is that state of unbounded absolute vacuum where God 'is' and consciousness 'is not'. This state is the original divine sound sleep state of God beyond the beginning of the Beginning of Creation."

' The second one is:

"This sound sleep state of man is literally the sound original divine sound sleep state of God. God in the 'God-Is' state is eternally in the original divine sound sleep state, whereas God in the human state daily experiences alternately the sound sleep state and the awake state."

'It is so clear,' Mary said. 'The human state got fully materialized when the human form manifested as the climax of the processes of production and evolution of forms, and the drop-soul, expanding its self-consciousness through the process of evolution of consciousness, got attached or identified with it. Human state encompasses within itself at one end the so-called "awake state", wherein it operates as a gross body and mind in the gross world, and a dreamless state of sound sleep at the other end. This sound sleep state of man is in reality the original divine sound Sleep State of God - the Beyond-the-Beyond State of Existence, which existed before the beginning of the Beginning of Creation. Being the Beyond-the-Beyond, that is beyond and before everything -the Whim and *Sabda-Nada*, the *Taijas* and *Prana*, the *OM-Point*, the *Ishwar* as *Brahma-Vishnu-Mahesh*, the Creation as the outcome of *Sabda-Prana-Akash* interactions- and the one that remains after all things get dissolved, the divine sound sleep state of God is ever existent as the fundamental substratum. It was existent before the beginning of the Beginning and it will ever remain as "Here and Now", even after the created and even the entire creation are dissolved. A deep understanding of God's "sleep" and "awakening" and Man's "sleep" and "awakening" is that master-key which will unlock all the doors that, right now, are blocking the Path leading to Supreme Knowledge.'

'The relationship between these two - God's sleep and waking and man's sleep and waking - would become more clear if we probe further the sound sleep and waking in the case of man. Now we know that man's sound sleep state is the divine sound Sleep State of God. What about man's awaking? Awaking in the case of God, as well as man, takes place in response to the original Whim in the form of the question "Who am I?". The final and real awaking in the case of man occurs when the light of Self-Consciousness lights the gloom of unconsciousness as "I am God". This is also how God wakes up. Man is not only one with God in the initial state but also in the climactic awake state. What should we conclude from this?'

`It is so clear,' said Rahim. `We should conclude that God's sleep and waking and man's sleep and waking are not different phenomena. Man's sleep and waking are the states existing within the cycle of God's sleep and waking.'

We all agreed with Mary and Rahim. Merwan, however, added another dimension to the discussion.

Merwan said, `Between the sound sleep state and the final awakened state are the states of dreaming. Dreaming, actually, is a part of the process of awaking. God's dream is the totality of Creation created by God as *Ishwar* - the system of Consciousness existing as *Vishnu*, *Brahma* and *Mahesh*. All drop-souls, along with their drop-bubbles, are the creation in God's dream. Since each drop-soul is also in the process of waking, it also engages itself in dream states. The process of creation of dreams in the drop-souls and the process of creation of God's dream are not two processes, but are one and the same. How can they be two separate processes when, in reality, all drop-souls and their dreams are the states existing within the cycle of God's sleep and waking! Thus in the case of man - a drop-soul attached to a drop-bubble - a dream creation is a semi-conscious state emerging out of his sub-conscious repository of *sanskaras* or thought-impressions. Similarly, in the case of God, a dream creation is also a semi-conscious state emerging out of the Supreme Repository of Everything, through the sub-conscious. Man's subconscious, therefore, is a part of God's sub-conscious.'

`In the words of Meher Baba:

"Just as a man, who wakes up from his sound sleep state, has invariably to pass through the state of dreaming first and then wake up completely, gaining full consciousness after the semi-conscious state of the dream (which may last for a very long duration or may last only for a split second), so, too, is it the case with God in the `God-Is' state. Before completely waking up from His original divine sound sleep state, God necessarily experiences the divine semi-conscious state which is the divine dream state or the creator state."^{9.6}

"... Thus the first trickle of consciousness in the `God-Is' state infused God with the divine sub-consciousness which in turn bestowed the divine semi-conscious state upon God Who was in the divine sound sleep state. In this

divine semi-conscious state, God dreams divinely and experiences the divine dream, or the Creation, much before the real, divine awakening state, which state, awakening Him completely, would give Him the experience of God fully conscious of His infinite, unbounded and unlimited divine nature."^{9.7}

"This divine sub-consciousness of God also emerged from the NOTHING which was latent in the 'God-Is' state of the EVERYTHING, and necessarily was projected through the 'creation point,' or 'OM point,' in the original absolute vacuum of the EVERYTHING."^{9.8}

'About the similarity between the process of dreaming in man and the process of dreaming in God, Meher Baba says:

"For example, when God in the man state, as man is in sound sleep state, and when TIME and SPACE as the day and the universe of the man have all been apparently destroyed for him, then what is it that every day unfailingly creates his daily morning for him? And again, when man wakes up every day, then what is it that unfailingly creates for him his universe and all the things that are of it and in it? It is man's own dormant impressions gathered during the course of the evolution of consciousness and also during the process of re-incarnation, that incite his own dormant consciousness during sound sleep to wake him up inadvertently every day, so that man's own dormant impressions may have the necessary scope to become exhausted through conscious experience during his awake state. In this manner man's own impressions in the dormant state create for the man his own morning and his own universe everyday."^{9.9}

'More on this by Meher Baba:

"Hence in regular unfailing succession, God in the man state as man, consistently asserts Himself as the Creator of His own Creation through the dormant impressions of man; as the Preserver of His own Creation through man's leading everyday life in the awake state, procreating the impressions of creation; and as the Destroyer of His own Creation through the opposite impressions of man when he falls asleep and ultimately passes away in the sound sleep state. Everyday, finally destroying the very creation as individualized by his consciousness, man once again creates, preserves and destroys the whole

creation through the play of impressions. Even through the very being of every thing and every creature, God consistently asserts His infinite triune attributes as the Creator, the Preserver and the Destroyer." ^{9.10}

Ram said, 'This description about the states of God's sleep and of man's sleep is quite interesting. The ten states of God in His sleep-dream-awake cycle are the states of God's consciousness. Man's sound sleep, dreaming and the so-called awakened states, viewed integrally, are the states of God's consciousness. In other words, the diverse states of Consciousness, constituting the entirety of Creation, are in reality the states of the sleep-dream-awake cycle of God, which includes the sleep-dream-awake cycle of man.'

'Ram, that is an observation of great importance,' Rahim interjected excitedly. 'This makes sleep-research, exploring the inner and outer dimensions of man's sleep-awake cycle, supremely important. A study of man's sleep-awake cycle is in reality is the study of God's sleep-awake cycle and the states of God's consciousness.'

'You are right, Rahim,' Ram said. 'Modern psychology, after an eclipse period of about 30 years, is endeavoring to solve the mystery of Consciousness through research on the sleep-dream-awake cycle of man. In psychology, there is no fully agreed definition of Consciousness and its states. Attempted definitions are either tautological, which define Consciousness as awareness, or they are descriptive and define it in terms of sensations, thoughts or feelings.'

'Historically speaking, philosophical discussions of Consciousness arose from the mind-body issues posed by the French philosopher and mathematician, Rene Descartes, in the 17th Century. Descartes had asked, is the mind or consciousness, independent of matter? Is consciousness physical or non-physical? Is consciousness determinative or is it determined? The English philosopher John Locke equated consciousness with physical sensations and the information, which they provide. European philosophers such as Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz and Immanuel Kant gave a more central and active role to consciousness.'

'The 19th Century educator and philosopher, Johann Friedrich Herbart, was the one who most directly influenced subsequent explorations of the subject of

Consciousness. He proposed that ideas had quality and intensity and that they may facilitate one another. Ideas pass from "states of reality" or consciousness, to "states of tendency" or unconsciousness. The dividing line between these two states was described as the threshold of Consciousness. Herbert laid the foundation for psychological measurements of sensation thresholds by Gustav Theodor Fechner, and for the concept of the unconscious as developed by Sigmund Freud. Experimental analysis of consciousness started from 1876 with the establishment of a research laboratory by the German psychologist, Wilhelm Max Wundt. Wundt defined the task of psychology as the study of the structure of consciousness that goes beyond sensations and includes feelings, images, memory, attention, duration, and movement.'

`1920 to 1950 was the period of eclipse for consciousness research as the study of behaviorism, for some time, captured the field of psychology. Late 1950s witnessed a renewed interest in the subject of Consciousness, specially in those subjects and techniques related to the altered states of Consciousness, sleep and dreams, meditation, bio-feedback, hypnosis and psychedelic drug induced states. Much of the surge in the study of sleep and dream states was accelerated when a physiological indicator of the dream-state was found. At roughly 90-minute intervals, the eyes of sleepers were observed to move rapidly, and at the same time the sleeper's brain waves would show a pattern resembling the waking state. This was identified as the REM or Rapid Eye Movement State. People awakened in this state always reported dreams, whereas if awakened at other times, they did not.'

`Brain waves of a person go through certain constant changes classified as 1 to 4 in the course of the sleep. The brain's alpha waves of 8 to 12 cycles/ sec and low voltage activity of mixed frequency characterize the wake-state, whereas sleep onset involves a disappearance of this activity. Stage 1 is the lightest stage of sleep characterized by low voltage desynchronized and sometimes by low voltage regular activity as well, at 4 to 6 cycles per second. Stage 2, that follows after a few seconds or minutes, shows spindle-shaped tracings called sleep spindles at 13 to 15 cycles/ sec and certain high voltage spikes known as K-complexes. Stage 3 marks the appearance of delta waves showing high voltage

activity at 0.5 to 2.5 cycles/ second. Stage 4 is characterized by the predominance of delta waves. This and other research clearly indicated that sleep, once considered a passive state, was instead an active state of consciousness. Thus sleep broadly consists of two periods: D (desynchronized or dreaming sleep) with REM (rapid eye movement) and remainder of sleep as S (synchronized) sleep with NREM (non-rapid eye movement). NREM synchronized sleep is characterized by low pulse and blood pressure, little activation of the autonomous nervous system; while REM desynchronized sleep shows an activation of the autonomous nervous system, rapid eye movement and frequent dream reports. The nature of dreams has also been investigated. Studies have shown that dreams are more perceptual, than being conceptual. Things are seen and heard rather than thought. Visual experience is common to all dreams; auditory experience occurs in 40 to 50 %; and touch, taste, smell and pain in a relatively small percentage. American sleep researchers Eugene Aserinsky and Nathaniel Kleitman have shown that a dream does not consist of fleeting imagery that occurs while a person awakens from sleep, but instead it has a biological state of its own.'

`In 1960s an increased search for "higher levels" of consciousness through meditation techniques, such as TM or Transcendental Meditation of Maharishi Mahesh Yogi, led to self-directed procedures of physical relaxation and focused attention. Meditative state revealed a common brain wave-pattern similar to alpha rhythms. As the concept of direct, simple linkage between environment and behavior became unsatisfactory in recent decades, the interest in altered states of consciousness may be taken as the renewed interest in consciousness. A new area of research called cognitive psychology has emerged. It appears that sleep-dream-awake cycle should be a universal biological phenomenon. Perhaps, Rahim would like to comment on this.'

Rahim said, `All creatures have periods when they rest. Protozoan, planarians, crabs, squids, houseflies and butterflies have everyday periods of rest. Fish have cycles of stillness during which their senses, however, keep working. Among certain seagoing mammals - dolphins, pilot whales and others - only one hemisphere of the brain sleeps at any given time, so that the animals can keep swimming to the surface and breathing. Recording of the electrical activity of

their brains, taken during sleep, show the frequency of brain waves gradually slowing, bottoming out, and then quickening. In the quickened state, the mammal's eyes move beneath closed eyelids, muscles twitch, and the electroencephalogram resembles that of the waking brain. This REM or Rapid Eye Movement State of these animals appears to be similar to that of humans. Neuroscientist Jerome M. Siegel points out that the complicated brains evolved REM sleep or the state of dreaming. It appears that the resting or synchronized state, in some way or the other, is common to all organisms; while REM desynchronized dreaming states are shown by a wide variety of organisms. Their innately established relationships with the body based physiological parameters are also significant. It appears that the functions of the gross body are tuned to mental states.

The synchronized rest or sleep-state appears to be a universal biological phenomenon. Heart beats, blood pressure, eye movements and brain waves are only the impacted physiological parameters. It is a state of quiescence in which the inner perceptual, auditory, olfactory and tactile faculties become dormant. De-synchronization, a spontaneous break in the synchronization of that, which exists in the deep sleep-state, reactivates the mind and its faculties. All these assume a new significance in the light of what Ram has explained, and above all in the light of the spiritual holistic vision. The sleep-dream-awake states of man being among the ten states of God, as described by Meher Baba, provide us with an experimental tool to dive deeper into the mystery of Consciousness.'

'Sleep-dream-awake cycle research, supported by the development of appropriate bio-feedback and related technology, would lay the foundation of the Science of the Transcendental,' Mary said. 'Studies on human consciousness and its states attracted the attention of the Welsh physicist Brian David Josephson, who shared 1973 Nobel Prize with Japanese physicist Leo Esaki for their work on the tunneling effects in semiconductors and superconductors. Josephson did this research in 1961. In 1971, Brian became deeply interested in Transcendental Meditation and the states of Consciousness. Brian then worked for synthesizing modern physics and mathematics with the study of intelligence, language, higher

states of Consciousness and the paranormal. With Indian chemical engineer V. S. Ramachandran, Brian edited a treatise "Consciousness and the Physical World".'

Mary said, 'I am thrilled by this talk about synchronized and desynchronized states in relation to deep sleep and dreaming. In physics the Grand Unification Theory of Weinberg-Salam, which unites the electromagnetic force and the weak force, is based on Gauge Symmetry considerations. Weinberg and Salam constructed a Gauge Invariant Theory to explain their unification theory in a way similar to that of symmetrical equations in quantum electrodynamics. The basic idea in gauge invariant theory is the Noether's theorem in which the symmetries of space and time entail conservation of energy and angular momentum. Gauge symmetry can be explained with the help of a simple example of cliff-top ascent. One can take a vertical path (the shortest one) or the longer path (gradient way), but both paths need only same amount of energy. Thus energy expended via both paths is path invariant and this is called Gauge Invariant Symmetry. Salam invoked the idea of spontaneously broken symmetry that occurs in ferromagnetism to unify the weak and electromagnetic force. In ferromagnetism, a bar magnet having north and south poles does not have a preferred symmetry in space. When it is heated, it loses its magnetic property and becomes symmetrical. However, when cooled it regains the asymmetry revealing that symmetry is hidden. Weinberg-Salam's new theory predicted a new type of weak interactions which is long in its electromagnetic form and short in weak interactions, clearly demonstrating the grand unification of electromagnetic and weak forces. In the same manner, one can say that the deep sleep is a state of symmetry of the *Khsetragya*; while the states of dreaming and wakefulness are its activated asymmetrical variants. We are face to face with perhaps the most fundamental pair of opposites - Symmetry and Asymmetry of *Khsetragya*.'

'Meher Baba's revelations on the intricacies of the process of sleep and dreaming in the case of God, which includes the sleeping and dreaming in the case of man, are therefore of paramount importance,' Mary said. 'The importance of sleep-dream-awake cycle goes far beyond a mere understanding of some of the states of Consciousness. It is the correlation of this cycle with mind's dissolution, with the emergence of the diversity of creation comprising of visual,

auditory, olfactory and tactile contents, and with the transcendental Super-Consciousness, that makes it unique and highly significant.'

`Induction of sleep is dissolution, induction of dreaming is creation, and continuity of a dream in terms of space and time is preservation. God is asserting these attributes -*Brahma*, *Vishnu* and *Mahesh* - through every thing and through every creature. Day and night oscillations of the planets, appearance and disappearance of sub-atomic particles, and so on - all entities in the Creation are subject to this primal oscillation. God through this oscillation is seeking knowledge of His own Self.'

`In the same manner, each entity in the Creation is also seeking the final certainty on the question "Who am I?" through this oscillation. This is how the processes of Creation, Preservation and Dissolution are simultaneously operative at the level of discrete entities, or states, and at the level of the Whole System or God.'

`Mary, you are right,' said Merwan. `Meher Baba has said:

"As in the nature of the man state, so also in the nature of every state of God, God consistently asserts directly and indirectly, apparently and really, His infinite triune attributes of Creator, Preserver and Destroyer at one and the same time. Even in the very pulsation of the heart and in the functioning of the lungs, the three aspects of the infinite triune attributes never fail to assert. With every pulsation of the heart, the heart expands, relaxes (in the refractory period) and contracts, simultaneously heralding the advent of the birth of a being on the one hand, and sustaining the life of the being on the other hand, and finally, with the eventual and final contraction, leading to the physical death of the being." ^{9.11}

"Thus it is that the triune attributes of God, as God the Creator, God the Preserver and God the destroyer (*Brahma*, *Vishnu* and *Mahesh* or *Shiva*), assert independently as well as simultaneously in all things and in every creature and in all beings, in every state of God at every stage in the evolution of consciousness, and on every plane in the involution of conscious-ness, until eventually the original cosmic Creation, having sustained the ages, cycles and periods, and being preserved by the play of cosmic impressions, is finally destroyed by the play of

cosmic opposite impressions of God. This final destruction is generally known as 'MAHA-PRALAYA,' meaning the 'Greatest of the great event of absorption,' when the whole cosmic Creation as NOTHINGNESS is absorbed infinitely by the EVERYTHING." ^{9.12}

Rahim said, 'Meher Baba's revelation that the creation, preservation and destruction of individualized creation is the result of the play of impressions is quite a thought provoking statement. This cycle of creation, preservation and dissolution, in the case of living organisms, is a diurnal cycle. It is amazing that the period of deep sleep, the state of unconsciousness, is synchronized with night or darkness. Everyday some parts of this individualized creation are being lost for ever, while at the same time some new parts get created and added.'

'This cosmic play of impressions is really revealing,' Ram said. 'There is God's creation created through *Brahma*. What it is in reality, no body knows. Entities, or states of that Which-Alone-Is, are creating their own personalized creations through the interactions of currently active impressions and the sensory impulses received through their own body channels. These individualized creations, therefore, are the patterns of impressions, which are crystallized as a system of mental states of the individual and their relations with the external environmental factors and states. These desire based relationships result in diverse criss-cross flows or movements. Consummation of a set of desires leads to the erosion of its corresponding set of impressions and relationships, and cessation of all related movements. New impressions also keep on gathering in this system of individualized creation, and become operative by creating new relationships and movements.'

'There is a beautiful word in *sanskrit* - "*Padaartha*". "*Padaartha*" means "entities perceived as existing". Etymologically speaking, "*Padaartha*" consists of "*Pada*" meaning a state of, that which alone is existing, and "*artha*", meaning "our interpretation of that state". For example, let us take the case of a form-state perceived by us as that of a "woman". In what manner this form-state is perceived by other creatures, we do not know. But in our case this single woman becomes the intersection of diverse flows of desire based relationships -

relationship as a mother, as a sister, as a friend, as a wife, as a mistress, as a living creature, as a physical object and so on. Individualized creation, therefore, is a world of "*Padaartha*" and our desire based relationships with them. Unconsciousness is the Supreme Repository that stores all such impressions. Sub-conscious is that part of this Repository in which impressions, currently identified as useful and significant, get clustered. Thus, this periodic reversal to the Unconsciousness - the Supreme Repository - is essential for the activation of the sub-conscious. This repeated contact with the Unconsciousness, the Beyond-Beyond State of God, is also necessary for imposing the regime of the Cosmic Divine Program of Creation.'

'I think we are moving in the right direction,' Mary said. 'When Meher Baba says that the original Beyond-Beyond State is the original divine sound sleep state of God, He is not talking symbolically. He is stating a fact. All the ten states of God are the states assumed by God because of His waking from His original sound sleep. This should not surprise us, because, as human beings, we are well aware of the state of deep sleep, dreaming and wakefulness, and do not seek their scholarly confirmation, or scientific validation. Meher Baba reveals that all states of Creation, and all states in Creation, are the states of God. This again should not baffle us because we know, from our own experience, that human state includes unconscious state of deep sleep, semi-conscious state of dreaming in which we create dream worlds of dream entities, and the conscious state operating in the gross universe. Human state also includes this state of final and irreversible awakening in which man becomes conscious of his real Self or God. God, therefore, is a system of ten states broadly falling under four categories - unconsciousness, semi-consciousness, disembodied full Self-consciousness without the consciousness of illusion, and embodied full Self-consciousness with the consciousness of illusion as well. In the same manner man is also a system of unconsciousness, semi-consciousness, conscious state of false wakefulness in the gross world, and truly awakened state of God Consciousness. Since human state is a system within the system of God, all these states of man are in reality the states of God.'

`This perception of all things - mental, subtle and gross - as the states in the God's cycle of deep sleep and waking changes the entire perspective. Ultimate Reality is neither "It" nor "Is", but Him or God, the Supreme Being. The totality of the Creation constitutes His Body and Mind.'

Rahim said, `I am thrilled by this systems vision in which God is perceived as the Supreme Being, Who is a diffuse System of systems and contains within Himself all other systems. It is a Supra-Holistic Vision, which liberates us from the clutches of the reductionistic materialism.'

`But Rahim, how could an entity or a being can be a diffuse System of systems?' Asked Ram. `I think a living entity, apart from self-awareness, exhibits a capacity to receive the sensory pulses and to process them in an integral manner in order to respond accordingly. It also exhibits a compact form with well-coordinated movements.'

`Ram, you are talking in terms of biological individuality,' said Rahim. `Even the biological individuality is fundamentally based on the interaction of systems. Take the case of a multicellular organism as complex as man. A cell itself is a highly complex system, and billions of such cells, or systems, assemble to constitute this multi-system organism. Consolidation and processing of sensory perceptions, and integration of responses, are not possible without this organism working as a System of systems. Thus biological individuality, being a System of systems, is a diffuse organism system. Moreover, the question about God responding to the external challenges in an integrated manner does not arise. There is nothing like an external environment for God. He Himself is the Seer-Sight-Seen, or, Observer-Observation-Observed in His own Creation.'

`This reminds me of famous *Gaia* hypothesis of renowned British scientist J. E. Lovelock. In his book, "*Gaia: A New Look at Life on Earth*", Lovelock interprets the entire Earth or biosphere as a "super diffuse organism". *Gaia* is the Greek term for Mother Earth, and Lovelock points out that the materials with which it is made are designed and aligned in such a way that make it a distinct entity with a composite identity, and which is not mere a sum of its parts.'

`Rahim, this sounds quite interesting,' said Ram, `but it would help if you could further elucidate this concept of a "diffuse organism".'

`I would love to do that,' said Rahim, `but before that let me talk about another holistic ecological concept - the concept of "*noosphere*". Influenced by the French mathematician and Bergsonian philosopher Eduard Le Roy (1870-1954) and the French geologist and paleontologist Pierre Teilhard de Chardin (1881-1955), Russian minerologist V. I. Vernadsky developed the concept of the "*noosphere*" as a psychological state of knowing and communicating that permeates the biosphere. The *noosphere* or the sphere of thought, according to Vernadsky, "is a new geological phenomenon on our planet" and "in it for the first time man becomes a large scale geologic force" ^{9.13}. Drawing consistently out of this sphere of collective thought, knowledge and communication, man is rebuilding the providence of his life by his work and thought, rebuilding it radically in comparison with the past. Man propagates the *noosphere*, and through it extends and transforms the biosphere. According to Vernadsky, "... face of our planet, the biosphere, is being sharply changed by man consciously, and evermore so unconsciously." ^{9.14}.

`Vernadsky model is simple and quite convincing. Permeating with the biosphere is the *noosphere* or the sphere of thought, knowledge and communication. This mental sphere, or the global repository of thought and information, is working as a global mind. *Noosphere* is the mind of *Gaia* - Mother Earth. It had its own evolution. Before the advent of modern technology of mass communication, this repository was just a mosaic of human individuals and other intelligent organisms in which each dot, or the organism, represented a state of knowledge as information. Communication or transmission was through person to person. Continuity could be achieved through generation to generation transmissions. The turning point came when man discovered the electromagnetic waves existing as a component of the external physical energy environment. Messages or information could then be transmitted across vast distances, received and used. Knowledge or information could now be made to exist in the

form of free as well as embodied states of physical energy: free, as electromagnetic pulses, and embodied, as tapes and floppies where it could be engraved as a pattern on a cobalt or iron-oxide film.'

`*Noosphere* gradually developed into a global pool and network of information and communication, and became the most dynamic component of the external physical environment of man. Today, we all are working as components, or organs, of a single diffuse super-organism along with many non-biological components such as tapes, floppies, radio-receivers, television sets, computers, satellites and so on.'

`Closely similar to these ideas is the new interpretation of natural selection by Richard Dawkins, fellow of New College, Oxford, Darwinian thinker and author of popular science books. According to Dawkins: "The principle of natural selection doesn't have to be tied to genes, just happens to work on genes. Any kind of self-copying information can give rise to Darwinian selection and, therefore, evolution. There is what passes from brain to brain, a bit like genes that pass from body to body. If this has to be a unit, then let us call it '*meme*'. Someone whistles a tune that catches in the brain, almost as if it were a virus, and some one else replicates the same tune, the information has been passed on through '*memes*'. This is not something exclusive to human beings. Birds learn to sing from their parents and neighbors." ^{9.15}. Dawkins narrates the story of the Blue Tits in England. These little birds learnt to open the silver caps of milk bottles that stand at the doorsteps of every household in the morning. Initially, only a few clever birds learnt the trick that was imitated by others later. Dawkins believes that ascent to superiority is not linear. Conditions change and what it takes to superiority is constantly changing. Dawkins is emphatic that Darwinian evolution did not progress in a linear pattern. It branched out like a tree. Dawkins' '*meme*' and Meher Baba's '*sanskara*' are quite close, if not similar. Their storage, replication and transmission are not like those of genes. They are the things of the mental sphere or the *noosphere*. It is through them the evolution of consciousness takes place at the spiritual level, and the acquisition of selective advantage occurs at the level of the biological individual.'

`Rahim, it appears to me that the major developments in the areas of science, technology, art and culture are neither chance developments nor original developments,' Mary said. `They are the restricted replications of the factors, states and processes of Cosmic Super System, or God, which have materialized out of the inter-actions of man's conscious, sub-conscious, unconscious and supra-conscious states. All these developments are the happenings in and of Cosmic Super Organism System -the Supreme Being- and are controlled through *Brahma*, *Vishnu* and *Mahesh*. The Cosmic Super Organism System contains the Sphere of Unconsciousness, which includes 'Everything' and 'Nothing'; the Sphere of Supra-Consciousness, which includes the original Creative Energy; the Spheres of Mind, of Subtle Energy, and of Gross Energy-Matter. This Cosmic Super Organism System is characterized by the various transformations of the original Creative Energy of Consciousness leading to creative productive explosions, information flows, energy flows, and cycles of its components. Man's artificial world, created by man by the application of the mental energy of consciousness on gross energy-matter forms, mimics the Creation of the Supreme Divine Being. It is the world where man functions as the Creator, Preserver and Destroyer. Man's innate appreciation of order, symmetry, beauty in form and movement, music, creative arts, love, compassion, ethics and values is rooted in his Sat-Chit-Ananda Supra-Consciousness.'

`Mary dear, you have made Rahim's holistic version of the Statement, much more holistic,' said Ram. `It sounds quite convincing. But Rahim, I would still insist upon some sort of an objective example to explain what you mean by a "diffuse organism".'

Rahim said, `Ram, let us assume that one of your friends, from a remote village, comes to meet you and be your guest for some time. This friend of yours, though literate, doesn't know anything about a radio-set and a television set. In order to entertain him, you plug in the television set and that transports him to a world of dance, music, movies, sports and information. It would indeed be quite natural and logical for him to assume that all those programs of music, dance, movies, sports and information have originated inside the TV set and were generated there, powered by the domestic supply of electricity. In the absence of

any visible physical connection, it would indeed be impossible for him to believe that in reality those programs originated at different places in the world and were transmitted to the TV set from there. The TV set worked only as a signal receiving and audio-video reproduction instrument. It is impossible for a TV set to contain this enormous quantum of information and all the objects and their surroundings, shown as images, in their natural states.'

'Television, therefore, is a system of diffuse states. The spread of the fields of these states is extendable to enormous distances. Man is also a system of diffuse states that cover gross, subtle, mental and supra-mental spheres. Man's bodies -gross, subtle and mental - are mere receiving and reproduction instruments. His individualized mind - a composite package of feelings, thoughts, desires as thought-impressions or *sanskaras* - exists in a disembodied state in the Universal Mind. A part of this package gets transmitted to the gross level as a translation in biochemical terms, and exists in a molecule-embodied state as functional memories.'

'The Central Dogma of Molecular Biology reveals that the intra-cellular genetic information flows from the central DNA (Deoxyribose Nucleic Acid) to a mobile messenger RNA (Ribose Nucleic Acid) and from a messenger RNA to a protein. Proteins are an enigma in them, and there are reasons to believe that there should be some other channels of information flow, in addition to what we know at this point of time. I think, so far, we have missed the trans-organism channels of information transfer. The integral spiritual vision of information flows reveals that the information is flowing from the Supreme Repository to the eternal Unconscious State in Supra-mental Sphere, from the eternal Unconscious State to the Mental Sphere, from the Mental Sphere to the Subtle Sphere, and from the Subtle Sphere to the Gross Sphere. Stated in specific terms this should mean that information flows to Universal Mind from the Supra mental, from the Universal Mind to the individualized minds, and from the individualized minds to elementary particles, atoms, simple molecules and complex molecules such as nucleic acids and proteins. Reverse flow is also taking place. Collapse of the biological system, resulting in the biological death of the organism, exterminates the molecule-embodied memories. But 'I-drop-soul' continues to exist in a gross

body dissociated state as a discrete individualized mental-package in the Universal Mind.'

It was indeed quite a thought provoking narration from Rahim, which gave us a glimpse of the inter-relations of the principal states of Cosmic Super Organism System.

`Listen,' Merwan said, `what Meher Baba says on this. He says:

"God's imagination begets Universal Mind, Universal Energy and Universal Body in which are contained the individual minds, individual energies and individual bodies of every thing and being in Creation.

"Universal Mind, Universal Energy and Universal Body are because of the existence of God's Imagination which exists as Non-existence within the Infinite Eternal and All-pervading EXISTENCE (God).

"Individual minds, individual energies and individual bodies have no existence in themselves, but exist only as effects in existing Non-existence.

"In my Universal Body are contained all the gross bodies of all the innumerable beings and things in Creation. Individual subtle bodies (energies) and mental bodies (minds) are part of my Universal Energy and Universal Mind. In both Universal Energy and Universal Mind, there are no divisions.

"Distance between a drop here and a drop there in the ocean makes no difference to each drop's relation to the ocean. Any drop within the ocean is within the entirety and homogeneity of the ocean.

"There are no divisions in Paramatma; only the One Indivisible Ocean of Reality exists as Eternal Existence." ^{9.16}

`Rahim, in the Spiritual Holistic Vision, beings are things and things are beings,' Mary said. `Meher Baba has said that electron like particles are most finite gross bubbles of 'I-drops' or souls. Through these bubbles *Atman*, the drop, begins knowing the universe and accumulates *sanskaras*. This points out towards some additional trans-physical channels of information flows in which nucleic acids and proteins are not involved.'

`Mary, I would like to put it this way,' said Rahim. `All things and beings in the gross world, from a physical point of view, are the fields of energy and the patterns emerging out of them. Thus, the actual sequence of this cosmic information flow should be from the Universal Mind, where it exists as a latent field of mental energy, to Subtle Sphere as an active field of subtle energy, and from the Subtle Sphere to the Gross Sphere as an active field of gross energy. Whether this flow from the Mental to the Subtle, and from the Subtle to the Gross, is impelled through transcriptions, or translations, or mould-moulded effect, we do not know.'

`Rahim, you have given us, perhaps unconsciously, a great equation,' Mary said beaming with excitement and joy. `If all things are the fields or the patterns of energy, and, if information also exists - and flows too- as a field or a pattern of energy, it then becomes quite clear that each thing exists as a specific pattern or configuration of information. Since all beings are things and all things are beings, the same should hold true for beings as well. Beings should then also be patterns or configurations of information. Carrying this logic further, one can say that since energy is also a "thing", or a perceived entity, it should also be a pattern or configuration of information. Beings, things, energy, and information should, therefore, be one and the same thing.'

`These configurations of information are created out of that Which-Alone-Is by the Consciousness Which-Alone-Is. We now know, that Which-Alone-Is is neither "Is" nor "It", but "Him" -the Supreme Divine Being. Thus, these configurations of information are imaginary creations of the Supreme Divine Being, when He starts waking up from His deep sound sleep. They all are dissolved, or destroyed, when this Supreme Divine Being reverts to His deep sound sleep. We can now say that all beings and all things are created by the Supreme Divine Being within Himself, and out of Himself.'

`Mary, how we define information?' Ram asked. `Dictionary meaning of the word "information" is "what is told"; "knowledge". Can we then say that "information" is the communicated quantum of knowledge?'

`I think you are right, Ram,' Mary said. `Technically 'information' is that which results from the thoughtful analysis, manipulation and presentation of data in a form that will enhance the decision making process. Information is, definitely, the communicated quantum of knowledge. Alternatively, knowledge is the communicated quantum of information.'

`The Supreme Divine Being was in deep sleep, when suddenly the original Whim or *Lahar* sprung up and created in Him an urge to know about His own Self with absolute certainty. 'Who am I?' 'Who am I?' He kept on asking. All this stirred His Infinite Unconsciousness, leading to the creation of subconscious. The subconscious, then, started projecting, in a kaleidoscopic manner, 'things' as spatial patterns of information, or knowledge, or *sanskaras*, or energy as *Prana*. The Supreme Divine Being, being the System of systems of paired opposites as One-and-Many, got multiplied into countless I-drops, *atmans*, or souls. They immediately got engaged in the process of knowing about 'Who am I?' through associations-dissociations with 'things' or 'beings'. Each 'I-drop-soul' oscillated as 'I am this thing' and 'I am not this thing but that thing'. This generated more and more of *sanskaras*, or information, and created enormous diversity of 'beings' as 'things' and 'things' as 'beings'.'

`Mary, equating *sanskaras* with "information" -which they really are- gives us better insight to understand some of the statements of Meher Baba,' said Rahim. `Meher Baba has said, "It requires approximately ten million *sanskaras* to form one atom." *Sanskaras* are the memories or thought-impressions of desire born interactions. Desire can also be viewed as a choice between the opposites. Since thought is structured by characters or symbols, often as letters and words, *sanskaras* are assemblages of characters as mentally analyzed and chosen postulates.'

`Counting of *sanskaras* in terms of numbers reminds us of "bits" and "bytes". A "bit" is a unit of information expressed as choice between two possibilities, while a "byte" is computing group of 8 binary digits or "bits". A particular sequence of bits in the byte encodes a unit of information such as a keyboard character. One byte represents a single character such as a number, letter, or

symbol. *Sanskaras*, therefore, are the units of transphysical information and constitute the transphysical informational content of the individualized minds and the Universal Mind.'

`Not only that,' Mary said, `Meher Baba has revealed that *sanskaras* are the causal factors for mental, subtle and gross bodies, and, mental, subtle and gross worlds. The Statement makes this point quite clear. Perhaps Ram would like to explain the word "*sanskara*" etymologically, and Merwan would help by telling us more about its use by Meher Baba.'

`Meher Baba has called them mental impressions which have the capability of sprouting as thought, desire and action,' said Merwan. `Meher Baba says:

"The evolution of the limited individual is completely determined by the *sanskaras* accumulated by him through ages; and though it is all part of imagination, the determinism is thorough and automatic. Every action and experience, howsoever ephemeral, leaves behind it an impression in the mental body. This impression is an objective modification of the mental body; and as the mental body remains the same, the impressions accumulated by the individual are capable of persisting through several lives. When the *sanskaras* thus accumulated begin to express themselves (instead of merely lying latent in the mental body), they are experienced as desires, that is, they are apprehended as being subjective. The objective and the subjective are the two aspects of *sanskaras*; the former is a passive state of latency, and the latter is an active state of manifestation.

"Through the active phase, the accumulated *sanskaras* determine each experience and action of the limited self. Just as several feet of film have to pass in a cinema to show a brief action on the screen, many *sanskaras* are often involved in determining a single action of the limited self."^{9.17}

`In their objective latent and passive state *sanskaras*, therefore, are neither thoughts nor desires. It is only when they germinate that they sprout as thoughts, desires and actions. A chosen set of *sanskaras* constitutes desire and leads to its experience. Exercising of choice converts the objective state of *sanskaras* into an active subjective state.'

`This is similar to information coded in a floppy, or music coded in a tape cassette,' Mary said. `In this objective state music does not exist as music. Information does not exist in the form of a letter-and-word-based language. Handling of a floppy, or a cassette, by different subjects, exercising differing choices brings out the desired block of information or music in forms acceptable to the subjects. Since a *sanskara*, as an impression, objectively modifies the mental body, the mental body itself should then be a configuration of *sanskaras*. Could we then say that *sanskaras* are the units of the paired opposites, which exist as impressions in the mental body? Imposition of choice separates the paired opposites and simultaneously creates space and movement. Choice is exercised when the I-drop-soul attaches itself, in imagination only, to one of the two opposites.'

`*Sanskara* is a *sanskrit* word,' said Ram. `It is better spelled as "*samskara*". Etymologically speaking, "*Samskara*" and "*Samsara*" have "*sam*" as common between them. "*Sam*" means together, simultaneously one with another and "*kara*" means action, to put together, to combine, to compose. Thus, "*samskara*" means a unit of two states existing together and capable of becoming active to sprout in a formation or composition. "*Sara*" means flowing. "*Samsara*" is flowing together. I-drop-soul identified with "this thing" or "that thing", and the two flowing together is *samsara*. The passage of this unit in the cycle of births and rebirths is *samsara*. I-drop-soul as a wife and I-drop-soul as a husband, and the two flowing together is also *samsara*.'

`Dr. Bhagwan Das has described the interrelations of *sanskara* and *samsara* in his, "Atma Vidya: The Science Of Self", in these words:

"Infinite Self, having (illusorily) made itself Finite, out of Lila -*Avidya*, Willful Playful Forgetfulness, loses Its inherent Omniscience, Omni-potence, Omni-presence; and then, as individual self identified with finite body tries (desires) to recover its Infinity and appurtenant attributes, by `encompassing', step after step, `successively', all experiences, all science, all `knowledge' (omni-science) of all objects; and also of `action', all sorts of movements and presence everywhere (omni-presence, `I' am `this' and `this' endlessly); and

thereby prove itself possessed of all power, all potency (omni-potent) to fulfill all its `desire'.

"Even after putting off one `this' to take on another `this', the self still retains ownership, potency, latency, seed-germ, *vasana*, *samskara*, `id', or `gene', of each and every former (and also future) `this'; witness fact of recapitulation or palingency by foetus in womb, and of power of recollecting long-past experiences, and also becoming so absorbed in them as to `live them over again' and feel all the emotions of them freely. Supra-conscious Omniscient Memory of Supreme Self, *Chitih* (from *chi*, to gather) is the eternal `store-house' where all experiences, all things, are preserved everlastingly (in seed-form). Sproutings, branchings, leafings, flowerings, and re-seedings, take place periodically, perpetually, endlessly (and illusorily)."^{9.18}

Merwan said, `In the beginning the soul had no *sanskara*, therefore, had no consciousness. First thought, "Who am I?" emerged and created the first *sanskara*. About *sanskaras* being the causal factors of creation, Meher Baba has said:

"In the beginning the soul had no impressions (*sanskaras*) and no consciousness. Therefore at this stage or in this state, the soul had no gross form or body, subtle body or mental body, because only the existence of gross, subtle and mental impressions (*sanskaras*) can give existence to gross, subtle and mental bodies, and only the existence of these bodies can make possible the existence of gross, subtle and mental worlds. Hence in the beginning the soul had no consciousness of gross, subtle and mental bodies and was also unconscious of its own self, and the soul then naturally had no experience of the gross, subtle and mental worlds and also had no experience of the Over-Soul (*Paramatma*).

"This infinite, impression-less, unconscious tranquil state of the soul reverberated with impulse which we call The First Urge (the first urge to know Itself).

"... Simultaneously with reverberations of the first urge, the most gross first impression emerged, objectifying the soul as the most absolute opposite and most finite gross counterpart of the Infinite."^{9.19}

`Mary, I am still not very clear about what you mean when you say that things and beings are the patterns or configurations of information,' asked Ram. `I am sure, you and Rahim would like to explain this further.'

`Ram, let us pick up any object from the artificial world of man,' Mary said. `Take, for example, this guitar. It is a gross object created by man making use of wood, metal and chemical paint. A lot of information has gone into its making. Information about its precise size and form. Information about the number and the type of metallic wires and information about the pitch and the quality of notes, which each one of them will produce. Moreover, you cannot create a guitar without making use of certain tools and other things. Those are also the products of information. It is only because of this guitar being the product of 'consciousness-information-matter' interaction that one can replicate such objects by translating them in terms of the information implicated in their structure and function. All objects of man's artificial world, ranging from the tiniest to the largest and from the simplest to most complex, are the products of 'consciousness-information-matter' interactions and carry the required information implicated in their structures and functions.'

`The spiritual holistic vision tells us that human state is a state of God, and man can only mimic the states, processes and functions of God's creation. In other words, man could make use of 'consciousness-information-material' interaction to produce diverse objects, only because God has produced the diversity of objects in the same manner. All structures and entities -things and beings- in God's Creation are the products of 'consciousness-sanskara-medium' interactions, and their structures and functions are the states or patterns of *sanskara* or information.'

`Mary, there cannot be any doubt about this,' said Rahim. `All living beings, even from the points of view of materialistic biological sciences, are the products of transcriptions, translations and consequent 'form-differentiation' emerging out of the flows of genetic information from the nucleic acids to proteins. Gross bodies and functions of living organisms are, therefore, the products of biological information.'

`Mary, we have been instructed to dive deeper and deeper until we are dissolved,' Rahim said. `I have another question. The First Urge to know Himself, which emerged out of Beyond-Beyond God State, disturbed the homogeneity and tranquility of *Paratpara Parabrahma*. It immediately created the trios of knower-knowledge-known. But this happened long before the beginning of Creation. It was even before the emergence of the pair of *Paramatma* and *Ishwar*. The process of knowing, it appears, started in the absence of the instruments of knowing, and in the absence of things to be known. How we explain this?'

`This indeed is a tricky question but not the one which cannot be answered,' said Mary. `We have to concentrate exclusively and intensively on the sequence of first three happenings. Meher Baba says that the initial state was the Beyond-Beyond State, which was a state of "unbounded absolute vacuum". This, however, was not a state of absolute void. It was 'ORIGINAL UNBOUNDED ABSOLUTE VACUUM STATE OF GOD'. It was not that the God filled the vacuum. It was not even that the God existed in a latent state in this vacuum. This original, unbounded, absolute vacuum was a State of God' dreamless Deep Sleep.'

`The spiritual vision tells us that things exist only when we think that they exist. It also tells us that when we say that 'this thing' exists, it really means that we only perceive "Who-Alone-Is" existing as 'this thing'. Beyond-Beyond God cannot be understood and described. Thus, when we say that Beyond-Beyond God State was a State of Unbounded Absolute Vacuum, we only perceive 'Him' as 'Unbounded Absolute Vacuum'. We are calling it as 'Vacuum' because we presume that since it is a State of God's Sleep, it must be a 'State of Absolute Vacuum or Absolute Unconsciousness'. So, there was 'Original Unbounded Absolute Vacuum' because God was in Deep Sleep. Though an 'Unbounded Absolute Vacuum' on account of 'God's Sleep', it contained the Everything and the Nothing from where emerged the Creation. All this description should not sound as Greek or Latin, because daily we are experiencing this bizarre state of unconsciousness or nothingness or the vacuum, which begets everything. Physicists also believe that the Initial State was the State of Vacuum. Buddhism also believes that. Meher Baba also talks about that. I remember that in his

monograph, "Causality, Cardinality and Conditioned Reality", the eminent physicist Dr. Raja Ramanna has stated:

"Early Buddhist Philosophy has much in common with scientific philosophy, a fact referred to by Bertrand Russell and many other students of philosophy... From these works, one can get an idea of the standpoint of early Buddhism and the meanings of the words 'Conditioned Reality', 'Nothingness' (*SUNYATA*), the creative void out of which everything comes into existence, and 'Kshana' (instant), and all these have a relevance to modern physics though it is not very well known in Western countries.

"The concept of 'Nothingness' is profound and is due to logician of the 2nd Century A.D., Nagarjuna. Many books have been written about him and it is remarkable how close his writings come to recent publications in Physics, especially the book entitled 'Something called Nothing. Physical Vacuum, What is it?' by Podolny (1986). This book points out that the vacuum state is the fundamental one for the beginning of all physical activities by the formation of virtual states..."^{9.20}

'*Sunyata* is not different from the Beyond-Beyond State,' Mika said. 'It forms the central concept of *Prajnaparamita Sutra*. In Nagarjuna's Madhyamik Philosophy the word, "*Sunyata*" is treated as a relational term. The term does not mean "emptiness" in an absolute sense. Being a relational term, one can ask, "empty of what?" Nagarjuna answers it by classifying eighteen kinds of emptiness: emptiness of inner things (*adhyatma sunyata*); emptiness of outer things (*bahirdha-sunyata*); emptiness of inner and outer things (*adhyatma-bahirdha-sunyata*); emptiness of emptiness (*sunyata-sunyata*); great emptiness (*maha-sunyata*); emptiness of ultimate truth (*paramartha-sunyata*); emptiness of created things (*samskrita-sunyata*); emptiness of uncreated things (*asamskrita-sunyata*); ultimate emptiness (*atyanta-sunyata*); emptiness of limitlessness (*anavaragra-sunyata*); emptiness of dispersion (*anavakara-sunyata*); emptiness of primary nature (*prakrita-sunyata*); emptiness of selfhood (*svalaksana-sunyata*); emptiness of things (*sarvadharmasunyata*); emptiness of unattainability (*anupalambha-sunyata*); emptiness of non-being

(*abhava-sunyata*); emptiness of self-nature (*svabhava-sunyata*) and emptiness of the non-being of self-nature (*abhava-svabhava-sunyata*)^{9.21}. But this *Sunyata* can be realized and experienced. Conscious experience of this *Sunyata* is *Nirvana*. Those who attain this state are called Buddha -the Enlightened Eternal Supreme Being. Eternal Buddha has a three-fold body. There is an aspect of Essence or *Dharma-kaya*; there is an aspect of Potentiality or *Sambhoga-kaya*; and there is an aspect of Manifestation or *Nirmana-kaya*.^{9.22}

‘This emptiness, however, cannot be realized without being conscious of its opposite pole, that is, without realizing form. Nor can the function of form be realized without emptiness. Emptiness and forms are coexisting inseparably. Hence, *Sunyata* has aptly been circumscribed by the expression "plenum-void", the all-containing-all producing-emptiness. Hui-Neng, the Sixth Patriarch of the Ch'an School once said:

"When I speak about the void, do not fall into the idea that I mean vacuity... The illimitable void of the universe is capable of holding myriads of things of various shapes and forms, such as the sun and the moon and the stars, as well as worlds... heavenly planes and hells, great oceans and all the mountains... Space takes in all these, and so does the voidness of our nature. We may say that the Essence of Mind is great because it embraces all things, since all things are within our nature."^{9.23}

‘*Sunyata* or emptiness as a state of the Supreme Being - Eternal Buddha - is indeed a refreshing revelation of Buddhism which, unfortunately, is still perceived by many as a religion of *Sunyata* or emptiness,’ said Merwan. ‘Buddha, being the great teacher, deliberately over-emphasized the *sunyata* aspect of *Nirvan*, only to prevent indulgence in useless polemics. He repeatedly instructed through beautiful parables that a lifetime, being so fleeting, is most precious and should not be wasted in solving the unsolvable riddles. It would be self destructive to do that.’

‘You are right Merwan,’ said Mika. ‘Buddha did reveal the positive face of his teachings. In his famous teaching known as "Building a Buddha Land," Buddha says:

"It seems an impossible task to empty an ocean with a single scoop, but the determination to do it, even if it takes many, many lives, is the mind with which one should receive Buddha's Enlightenment.

"Buddha is waiting on the other shore; that is, His world of Enlightenment, wherein there is no greed, no anger, no ignorance, no suffering, no agony, but where there are only light of wisdom and the rain of compassion.

"In this Pure Land there are boundless Light and everlasting Life. Those who reach this haven will never return to the world of delusion.

"Indeed, this Pure Land, where the flowers perfume the air with wisdom and the birds sing the holy *Dharma*, is the final destination for all mankind." ^{9.24}

`It is quite interesting to find Nagarjuna trying to describe *sunyata* in terms of eighteen types of emptiness including *sunyata-sunyata* or emptiness of emptiness,' said Ram. `Nothing is achieved by describing the indescribable. Vedas took this position. Rigveda says, "There was neither non-reality nor reality then..." and then, as if sensing the futility of describing the indescribable, ends the quarry with the questions: "What covered in and where?" and "Whose shelter was there?"' ^{9.25}

`Vedas reveal about the Supreme Being. Rigveda sings the glory of the Divinity, as an all-pervading Being, in these words:

The Supreme Being, Thousand-headed,
Thousand-eyed, Thousand-footed;
He pervading the earth on all sides,
Transcends the ten directions.
Purusha is all that has been and that will be;
And He is the Lord of immortality, which transcends
Through matter (food). ^{9.26}

`Mahanarayanopanishad reveals about the Supreme Being -*Purusham Mahantam* or the Great Person or *Paramatma* or *Parabrahma*- beyond all relations, attributes and particularizations. It says:

"No person ever grasped by his understanding the upward limit of this *Paramatman*, nor His limit across, nor His middle portion. His name is 'great glory' for no one limits His nature by definition.

"His form is not to be beheld; none whosoever beholds Him with the eye. Those who meditate on Him with their minds undistracted and fixed in the heart know Him; they become immortal." ^{9.27}

`This Supreme Divine Being is Self-luminous and it is His Light which dispels the gloom, when creation begins. Mahanarayanopanishad says:

"This universe is truly the Divine Person only. Therefore, it subsists on Him -the self-effulgent Divine Being- who has many heads and many eyes, who is the producer of joy in the universe, who exists in the form of the universe, who is the master and the cause of humanity, whose forms are the various gods, who is imperishable, who is the all-surpassing ruler and savior, who is superior to the world, who is endless and omniform, who is the goal of humanity, who is the destroyer of sin and ignorance, who is the protector of the universe and the ruler of individual Souls, who is permanent, supremely auspicious and unchanging, who has embodied Himself in man as his support (being the indwelling Spirit), who is supremely worthy of being known by the creatures, who is embodied in the universe and who is the supreme goal." ^{9.28}

`About the Supreme Divine Being, worthy of being known, the sage of Yajurveda declares:

I have known this Mighty Being
Refulgent as the sun beyond darkness;
By knowing Him alone one transcends death,
There is no other way to go. ^{9.29}

`The Brahma-samhita reveals that *Bhagvan*, the Supreme Divine Being, is *Sat-Chit-Ananda*. He is the Supreme *Brahman* (*Parabrahma*) and the source of *Paramatma*.' ^{9.30}

`Adi Shankaracharya has described this Supreme Being in his work entitled "Atma-Bodh":

"All the various forms exist in the imagination of the perceiver, the substratum being the eternal and all pervading Vishnu, whose nature is Existence and Intelligence. Names and forms are like bangles and bracelets, and Vishnu is like gold." ^{9.31}

Merwan said, `This description of the Supreme Divine Being as "Great Person", "*Bhagvan*", "*Vishnu*", "*Parabrahma*", and as the source of *Paramatma* helps us a lot to understand what Meher Baba has revealed to us.'

`Coming back to the initial Beyond-Beyond State the important point is that it was a state of "unbounded absolute vacuum", only because this is how it was experienced by the sleeping God. Or this is how we think that the sleeping God perceived it. Deep sleep is not a destruction of consciousness. It is just a not-particularly-conscious state of consciousness. In the words of Meher Baba: "When man seeks freedom from the ennui of the waking-state by losing consciousness in the sleep-state, no slightest destruction of consciousness occurs. Deep sleep is an inward withdrawal of consciousness into a condition of temporary oblivion." ^{9.32}

`Now, we come to the second state, which is the stage of the emergence of the knower, or the observer, with the faculty of knowing,' Mary said. `In the divine sound sleep state, the knower or the observer was absent. The Whim-*Lahar* stirring the unconsciousness and initiating the process of waking, and the Urge to know about Himself, were latent in the unconscious state. Who wakes us up every day? No body. We do it ourselves. Who tells us, in our deep sleep, `Come on wake up by dreaming first and then go back to gross consciousness'? No body. We do it ourselves, and do it quite unconsciously because we are innately programmed for all this. The Supreme Divine Being is also self-programmed for this cycle of deep sleep, dreaming and waking.'

`Dream objects and the dream world are not the products of our conscious effort. Information and the forces, latent in our subconscious, create them and project them in our inner mental space. In the same manner, the virtual or imaginary creation, in the case of God, is also the working of His subconscious. The moment the Supreme Divine Being regains some sort of partial and relational self-awareness, the Observer, who is the Knower and the Enjoyer, is reborn with the faculties of perception, knowing, enjoying, and the ability to have access to the Supreme Repository. The waking God finds Himself in an environment of virtual or imaginary states. He starts objectification or actualization of these states and in the process objectifies or actualizes His own Self. States are actualized in terms of *sanskaras* or information, and this leads to the accumulation of new *sanskaras* or impressions that, as a conglomeration, constitute the newly actualized mental body. The Supreme Divine Being gets splintered into countless quanta of consciousness or I-drop-souls actualized as drop-bubbles. This conversion of the objective state of information, or *sanskaras*, to subjective or observer-actualized states, as explained by Meher Baba, creates the mental, subtle and gross bodies and the mental, subtle and gross worlds.'

`Our approach to these happenings in man and God is materialistic. We feel that all this can happen in man because of that wonderful physical instrument, the human brain. But it baffles us, when we start thinking about God in Whom these happenings took place much before the creation of gross universe. Obsessed with the belief that the knower and knowing are the products of the activities of brain, we refuse to believe in non-materialistic, trans-sensory and trans-cerebral origins of knower, knowing and known. Here I would like to quote the eminent physicist Professor Bohm:

"The word `reality' is derived from the roots `thing' (res) and `think' (revi). `Reality' means `everything you can think about.' This is not `that-which-is.' No idea can capture `truth' in the sense of `that-which-is'.

"The ultimate perception does not originate in the brain or any material structure, although a material structure is necessary to manifest it. The subtle mechanism of knowing the truth does not originate in the brain.

"There is similarity between thought and matter. All matter, including ourselves, is determined by 'information'. Information is what determines space and time." ^{9.33}

'Mary you are right in stressing the similarity between man's waking and God's waking,' Merwan said. 'Meher Baba has said:

"When a man wakes up daily from his sound sleep state he normally just wakes up for no reason whatsoever except that his own dormant consciousness of impressions urge or excite his sub-consciousness to eject out the consciousness, and experience the dormant impressions which apparently vanish in sound sleep. Therefore, as soon as the man wakes up, he invariably and simultaneously gains consciousness at first of his surroundings and gradually then of his own 'self' with all of its paraphernalia of the limited 'I', the mind, energy, the body and the world.

"Similarly, no rhyme, no reason and no cause other than the original, infinite whim of the absolutely independent God was the actual 'CAUSE'- the original cause- for God in the original divine sound sleep state to wake up out of the unbounded, original vacuum." ^{9.34}

'This brings us to, what I feel, most paradoxical and mind boggling part of our discussion,' said Rahim. 'Meher Baba has said, "This original whim can also be called the first 'WORD' uttered by God -WHO AM I?" Word, as we understand, is a meaningful element of speech. The signs or alphabets of a language structure it. I am now, with all seriousness, posing the question: In what language, God uttered the first "WORD"? This puts alphabets, syllables, words and languages before the beginning of the Beginning. Can we say that all languages existed in latent forms in the Supreme Repository?'

'It would help us if we read the statement of Meher Baba, quoted by Rahim, with another one, in which he has explained this more explicitly,' Merwan said. 'Meher Baba has said:

"The very vibrations of the projection of the divine sub-consciousness of God, through the 'creation point' in the original absolute vacuum, bestirred the divine

sound sleep state of God and made manifest the original breath of God, or the original Word - the divine `NAD'- together with space, time and the cosmic universe, with all of its paraphernalia of the limited finite ego, mind, energy and the individual and multiple forms." ^{9.35}

`Obviously, the original Word was the divine `Nad'. God in the Beyond-Beyond State is like a soundless, shoreless ocean and the Whim of God manifested as the `Nad' or sound. This primal oceanic sound emerged through the *Om*-Point. Its creative utterance produced the worlds of Mind, Energy and Matter. The Statement describes this as a sudden reverberation of the first WORD as *Para-Vak*, or the transcendental *SABDA-NADA* (limitless primal Sound). *Om*-Point is the point of origin of this divine `Nad'. This divine `Nad' emerged out along with *Tej*, the original fire that is also the original light and original gas or medium, and with *Prana* and *Akasha*. *Om*-Point, or the creation point, is the point of emergence of the primal oceanic Sound, dazzling original Light and *Prana*, the creative energy of Infinite Consciousness.'

`*Sabda*,' Ram said, `means the Word or the first sound and is claimed to be eternal. "*Nada* or *Nad*" means resonating sound. Thus, original Word or the divine *Nada* or *Sabda* manifested out of Supreme Divine Being without the instrumentality of any type of body - mental, subtle and gross. *Vak* or *Vac* is speech or spoken word. "*Para Vak*" is transcendental Word or speech. Rigveda has mentioned about four types of *Vak*:

Speech of four types has been measured;

the sages who are wise know them.

Three that are hidden in the cave (i.e. are mystic),

are ineffable,

men speak the fourth (type of) speech. ^{9.36}

Speech of four types is classified as *Para*, *Pasyanti*, *Madhyama* and *Vaikhari*. *Vaikhari* is the one spoken by men.'

'I think we should now dive deeper into what Meher Baba has called as the "OM-Point" or "OM-Bindu",' said Ram continuing his exposition of samskrit words as used by Meher Baba. 'The concept of "OM" in Hindu philosophy, in my opinion, has been a subject of great speculation. This resulted in a plethora of diverse interpretations. Syllable OM significantly absents from oldest Vedic texts. It is first recorded in the Yajurveda Samhitas like the Vajasaneyi and the Maitrayani.'^{9.37}

'The Upanishads and eventually the Bhagvadgita look at *Om* as the symbol of the *Brahman* and the means to attain it by meditating upon it. Identifying OM with *Pranava*, the Mundaka Upanishad has built the famous metaphor of the bow and the arrow, and advocates its single-minded contemplation in order to merge in the ultimate Reality. The Bhagvadgita, besides pointing out that OM is the Divinity among all the Vedas, calls the triad "Om-tat-Sat" as the threefold name of the *Brahman*.'

'Pranavopanishad in the Gopath-Brahman derives OM from the samskrit root "ap" (to attain), while the western scholars like Muller and others derive it from samskrit "avam". In the Aitareya-Brahman, OM is derived from three sounds a, u and m, which *Prajapati* or *Brahma* finally produced from the three mystical words "bhur", "bhuvah" and "svar", which mean the earth, atmosphere and sky. OM was explained as the essence of these three and hence identified with the whole universe and the Over-Soul. The Ahirbhudhnya Samhita analysed OM into "O (ta) m (ita)", meaning "(everything) limited (mitain) is threaded (otam) (on Him)".'^{9.38}

'Mandukya Upanishad glorifies OM and its spiritual significance in these words: " OM: This Syllable is the whole world. The past, the present and the future - everything is just the word OM. And whatever else that transcends threefold time -that, too, is just the word OM." Mandukya Upanishad says that OM does not merely consist of the three sounds, a-u-m, but also a fourth mystic soundless sound. This Upanishad brings into correspondence with the four parts of OM the four states of consciousness: *jagrat* (wakefulness), *svapna* (dream), *sushupti* (dreamless sleep) and *turiya* (super-consciousness) on the one hand,

and, the four subjective states of the Soul: *Vaisvanara* (gross world enjoyer), *Taijas* (dream world enjoyer), *Pragya* (sound sleep enjoyer) and *Paramatman*-on the other.'

`Tradition splits *OM* into five components: a, u, m, *nada* and *bindu*. *Omkara* or *OM* is also called as the "Five-fold Abode" of *Shiva* who is said to have five parts. Theological interpretation of *OM* is that within it, *Vishnu* is the "a", *Brahma* is "u" and *Rudra-Shiva* the "m"; the *bindu* is the integrating fourth, and the *nada* is at the center signifying transcendence.'^{9.39}

`Vedanta, ignoring the etymological or phonetic analysis, identifies the Word, which is *OM*, with God. In trying to reconcile the conflict between the Mimamsakas, who believe in the supremacy of the Word, or Sound, and the Naiyayikas, who believe in the supremacy of God, the Vedantins identify the Word with God. The significant terms "*Sabda-Brahman*" expresses this identity. Vivekananda, the great exponent of Vedanta, has adopted this attitude. He based his argument on the "*sphota*" or explosion theory of Panini, who said that the *Sabda Sphota* or Sound Explosion, was the primal energy of the universe. Patanjali, the author of Yoga-sutras and of Mahabhasya, has said that "study (*abhyas*) is the repetition of the sacred syllable *OM*" and "It is from the *Sphota* as the ultimate Reality that all existence in the universe spring. Patanjali, setting aside all philological explanations of *OM*, says that God's manifesting word is *OM*. The Gospel according to John also presents God as the eternal Word. Perhaps Mary would like to tell us about that.'

`Ram, the Gospel according to John begins with this very revelation,' Mary said. `It says:

"Before the world was created, the Word already existed; he was with God, and he was the same as God. From the very beginning, the Word was with God. Through him, God made all things; not one thing in all creation was made without him. The Word was the source of life, and this life brought light to mankind. The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has never put it out."^{9.40}

Ram said, `Thus the Gospel also says that *Sabda* or the Word was with *Brahman* or God, and *Sabda* or the Word was *Brahman* or God. Coming back to

Sabda-Sphota or the creatively exploding Word. The theory of *sphota* is very significant both semantically and metaphysically. And this may be of particular interest for Rahim, who has posed the question about the language and the original Word. Bhartrhari has discussed this at length in his *Vakyapadiya*. Basic to his general philosophy is the concept of Brahman, the ultimate being, whose very essence is *Sabda* or Word, and from whom evolves (*vivartate*) all that there is. In the first chapter of the *Vakyapadiya*, Bhartrhari states:

"... that the eternal Word is the Supreme Reality; it is transcendental and devoid of all qualities. *Sabda-Brahman* is the originator of *Sabda-prapancha* as well as *artha-prapancha*. From this *Sabda-Brahman*, the whole universe evolves. It does not change nor does it cease. Both the denoter (*Vachak*) and the denoted (*Vachya* that is supreme existence) should not be looked upon as two realities. But these are the two aspects of the one ultimate Reality and, therefore, it is identical with them in essence. The whole phenomenon of material existence is only an appearance (*vivarta*) of the *Sabda-Brahman*." ^{9.41}

`Bhartrhari has discussed the different levels of speech or *Vak*; the highest of which is *Para*, or the transcendental one, where there is no longer any distinction between the *Vachya* (denoted) and the *Vachak* (denoter), everything being One, the unitary *Brahman*. Chandogya Upanishad declares that all speech is interwoven on the syllable *OM* in the same manner as the leaves of a tree are woven together on a stalk. Jnandeva, author of "Jnaneswari", stated: "*OM* is *ekakhsara brahman*, or one syllabled Reality. It is the sprout of the seed of the *brahman* which appeared as Sound (*ghoshdhvaninadakara*), and which was the Supreme Being itself." Jnandeva says that *OM* is *anahad nada*, the unstruck or unbeaten limitless eternal Sound." ^{9.42}

`In Buddhism too, the *Mahamantra* - "*OM Mani Padme Hum Hrih*" - begins with '*OM*,' said Ram. 'It is the *mantra* of the supremely compassionate Avalokitesvara Bodhisattva. It is known as "*mani*", the jewel. Mika should explain this better.'

'This *mantra* is a real "*mani*" or jewel, there is no doubt about that,' Mika said. '*OM MANI PADME HUM HRIH* is the powerful six-syllabled *mantra* of

Avalokitesvara. This *mantra* has filled a millennium of Tibetan history with a superhuman aspiration, reflected by countless inscriptions, carved on stones and rocks. The whole country was saturated with the consciousness of the great compassionate Bodhisattva, the emanation of the infinite light of Amitabha's *Dharmakaya*. In the religious parlance of Buddhism, *Mani* or *ratna* or jewel is associated with the Buddha, his doctrine or *dharma* and his order or *sangha*. The whole *mantra* symbolizes the "Three Bodies" and their corresponding "Three Mysteries" - Mysteries of Body, Speech and Mind. In the *OM*, we experience the *Dharmakaya* and the mystery of the Universal Body; in *MANI* the *Sambhogakaya*, the jewel of the inspirational "Body of Bliss," in which the Enlightened Ones appear before the inner eye. In *PADME* is experienced the spiritual unfoldment of *Nirmanakaya*, and in *HUM* is experienced the integration of the "Three Bodies" and "Three Mysteries". In *HRIH*, we dedicate the totality of our transformed personality -now the *Vajrakaya* -to the services of Amitabha. Body here is not the physical body but the whole universe, which represents our cosmic body and of which our physical body is only a miniature replica. The Enlightened One, whose mind embraces the universe, thus lives in *Dharmakaya*, the universal body.'

`*OM* in Buddhist tradition is the original or first *beej-mantra* or seed-syllable. *Mantra* connects our peripheral consciousness with our depth consciousness, which represents the totality of our past. However, this past reaches back to a time before the creation of structured language and fixed word forms or concepts. Thus *beej-mantras* are primordial sounds and *OM* is the very first of these primordial sounds. Thus in Buddhist tradition *OM* is placed always at the beginning of a mantric formula, but never at its end. *OM* is the primal sound of timeless reality that is experienced in the depth of the human heart. In meditation, the outflowing sound is closed off and turned inward, where it merges from the audible into the externally inaudible inner vibration. This inner vibration is the real *Sabda* or inner sound which sets in motion the psychic forces and disentangles the entanglements.'

`Mika, the entire tradition of spiritual masters, Gorakhnath, Kabir, Nanak, and others, hands down the mystery of *Sabda*,' Ram said. `A couplet from the Gorakhbani says:

The *Sabda* is the lock, the *Sabda* is the key,
 the *Sabda* woke up the *Sabda*.
 In the *Sabda*, through the *Sabda*,
 the Experience was obtained
 and the *Sabda* merged into the *Sabda*.^{9.43}

`Kabir credits the "*Sabad*", the Word, with the capacity to illuminate. Here the word "illuminate" should be taken in its literal sense. Eminent scholar Ranade has coined a new term, *Sphotism*, to signify the idea conveyed by Kabir and others. He calls *Sabda*, "Luminous Sound". In simple terms, the Word explodes into illumination or mystic radiance. This mystical experience is called "*paricha*", meaning mystic perception. The four-fold mystery of *Vak* or Speech conveys the same thing. *Vaikhari* is the spoken word, *Madhyama* is word as thought-formation, *Pasyanti* or mystic perception is the word exploding into illumination or visible light-form, and *Para* or transcendental is the objective state of *Vak* latent in the Beyond -the-Beyond.'

`The Mystery of Speech in Buddhism is the mystery of *mantra* power and creative imagination from which dreams, ideas, thoughts, art and culture, religion and science are born,' Mika said. `From the initial level of the Universal Law (*Dharmadhatu*) to the plane of ideal perception and ideation (*Sambhoga-kaya*) of *mantra* sound and inner vision, consciousness finally crystallizes on the plane of human realization (*Nirmana-kaya*).'

Ram said, `Let us now recapitulate the events leading to the emergence of *OM-Bindu* or Point, as revealed by Meher Baba. The process of waking started in the divine sound Sleep State of the Supreme Divine Being. Mahanarayanopanisad describes this Supreme Divine Being as *Parabrahma*, as *Prajapati* or the Lord of Creation, as the One Who is Greater than the great (*Mahatah Mahantam*), Who is the Ancient One (*Puranam*) and Who is Highest of the Highest (*Paraat Param*) and Who is *Parameshwara* (*Paramatma-Ishwar*). He is

also described as *Bhagvan*, as *Maha-Vishnu*, as *Narayana* and as *Purushottam*. The waking process, in the Supreme Divine Being, began with the activation of *Para-Vak* manifesting as a vibration. This vibration marked the "Creation Point" and activated the latent original breath or *Prana Shakti* of the Supreme Divine Being to let *Para-Vak* vibration manifest the original Word or *OM-Nada* as the primal *Beej-Nada* or Seed-Sound. This *Om-Nada* as the Seed-Sound contained within itself the three functional deities (*Brahma*, *Vishnu*, *Mahesh*); *Taijas* or *Tej* (original Fire as original Light); *Prana* (spiritual energy), and other orders of energy; *Akasha* (space); *Kal* (time), as the Program of the manifestation of the Cosmic Universe of mental, subtle and gross worlds; and, *Antahakaran*, the original inner mental organ, consisting of *Ahamkara* (ego), *Buddhi* (intellect), and *Mana* (mind as repository).'

`With the emergence of *OM-Nada*, the creation point became the *OM-Point*. The latent *Tej*, *Prana* and *Akasha* exploded out of *OM-Beej-Nada* that was now transformed into "Luminous Seed-Sound or Word". This brought down *Para-Vak*, or the original Word, to the level of *Pasyanti Vak*, which manifested the perceptible subtle and gross worlds at *Madhyama* and *Vaikhari Vak* levels. Simultaneously, *Antahakarana* manifested the Observer-Knower-Enjoyer, and started growing and expanding.'

Mary said, `Christianity also reveals that the supreme Reality is the Supreme Divine Being who is the Father of entire cosmos. And God, the Father, has created all things through the Word. God, the Father, and the Word, and the Christ, the Son of God, are one and same. In John's Gospel, there is a mention about Jesus praying for his disciples in these words:

"Father, the hour has come. Give glory to your Son, so that the Son may give glory to you. For you gave him authority over all mankind, so that he might give eternal life to all those you gave him. And eternal life means knowing you, the only true God, and knowing Jesus Christ, whom you sent." ^{9.44}

Jesus Christ, the only Son, who is the same as God, was the Word himself. John's Gospel reveals this in these words:

"The Word was in the world, and though God made the world through him, yet the world did not recognize him." ^{9.45}

"The Word became a human being and, full of grace and truth, lived among us. We say his glory, the glory which he received as the Father's only Son." ^{9.46}

`Ram and Mary, for the time being, I would like to forget about these high-sounding *sanskrit* terms and this way of describing things in a mystical manner,' said Rahim. `However, it is not my intention to belittle their great significance and utility. I am aware of the fact that when we talk about "Original Word", or "*Om-Beej-Nada*", or "*Para-Vak*", or "*Sabda*", we have to remind ourselves repeatedly that these things are of transphysical realms. In these realms, the word is not the word and the sound is not the sound of our gross world experience. At the same time, I am of the view that the original Word and the *OM*-Point should be within each one of us. If *Vak* has spread itself between *Para-Vak* of the transphysical realm and the *Vaikhari-Vak* of our gross world, then a more direct, and perhaps more fruitful, approach would be to take hold of the *Vaikhari-Vak* end and retrace *Vak* to its origins.'

`Rahim, this sounds quite logical,' Mary said, `but the problem would be how to take hold of the *Vaikhari Vak* end.'

`Let us begin with the term "word" itself,' Rahim said. `Word is the very foundation on which we have built the sky-scrappers of art, literature, science, technology and culture. We all are swamped by written and spoken words. The moment we take away this amazing capacity of ours to create words, to write them, to speak them, to process them, and to transmit them to vast distances, the whole edifice of modern civilization comes tumbling down.'

`Word might have been the mightiest thing at the beginning of all beginnings, but it is no less mighty in our contemporary world. Nevertheless, a word, in itself, is just a tiny structural element of the spoken and written language. It is this amplitude of the word, covering the totality of spoken and written language, which has infused in it all its magical qualities. Spoken word is just a sequence of specific audible sounds capable of being produced by an organism, or a machine. Written word is a specific sequence of visible form-symbols that we have mentally

correlated with the sequence of sounds in its spoken-counterpart. A word enfolds within itself the unity of sound and form. This magical tale of the word does not end here. Intelligence has assigned specific meanings to words. Fundamentally speaking, all words are seed-words that encapsulate not only the sounds and forms, but also the complex of meanings assigned to each one of them. A single word-seed, therefore, sprouts in the consciousness as a sound-formation, as a visual-formation, and as a package of information that lead to diverse activities. Words are also the building blocks of thoughts or mental impressions. As thoughts, they have amazing creative capabilities. For example, I go to sleep repeating mentally just one word - Mary, Mary and Mary. And this one word, in the form of a deeply engraved thought, eventually creates a dream-Mary for me along with all of her possessions and other related things, including myself. In the dream, she plays her guitar, and we sing and dance together. Dream is an audio-visual creation created in the inner mental space. There is something like inner light which eventually splits into different colors and in a dream we see them through some unknown mechanism, without using our eyes. Besides, there are inner sounds as well, which are produced, in some unknown way, without using the vocal cords. And all these inner forces and diverse sets of memories were triggered and brought into action by that just one word -Mary. No wonder, that the original Word as *OM Beej-Nada* triggered the creative, preservative and destructive capabilities of consciousness and activated the entire complexity of the latent information content to manifest the mental, subtle and gross worlds. As the word "Mary" is the seed-sound for Mary -her body, mind and inter-relations; similarly, the original Word *OM* is the seed-sound for Supreme Divine Being's Cosmic Body, Cosmic Mind and Cosmic interrelations that are manifested, sustained and controlled by His own attributes, ensembled as the preserver, the creator, and the dissolver.'

`Word activates words. Since word and thought are one and the same, one can say, thought activates thoughts. How the recall of a single memory can trigger the recall of countless associated memories on one hand, and bring into action the inner mechanism of light and sound production on the other? Some clarity on this can be obtained by the study of neural activity in the human brain. The

components of human brain are staggering in number: some 30 billion neurons or nerve cells, and five to ten times that number of neuroglial cells. Each of these 30 billion neurons connects with others - some as many as 60,000 times!'

` The primary functioning areas of the brain are vision in the rear, hearing on the sides, and a distinct "pleasure center". A tickle of electricity in one place in the brain, and Ram might see a long-forgotten school day friend. Stimulated in other places, and Mary would hear a train whistle or a recitation of nursery rhyme. If word activates word, then this could only be done by it by generating an electric pulse and targeting that on a specific word or memory site. And, if a word has the capacity to activate countless associated memories or words, then this could only be done by positioning itself at the center of a highly complex net-work; and, by generating an electric pulse, strong enough to flow into numerous channels, and reach the diverse sites of memories. It, therefore, appears that words or memories are located in the nerve cells or neurons. Studies on hologram encoding of data in a PAP or photo-addressable polymer suggest that the protein-structured membranes of a living cell are perhaps the most probable sites of memory encoding and storage. A neuron looks like a spider attached to a filament. The spider is the cell body called a soma, filament the axon, and the legs dendrites. Communication between neurons is both electrical and chemical and always travels from the dendrites of a neuron, through its soma, and out its axon to the dendrites of another neuron. Most axons are covered with a protective sheath of myelin, a substance made of fats and protein, which insulates axon. Myelinated axons conduct neuronal signals faster than do unmyelinated. The dendrites, or the legs, pick up a signal from the axons of other neurons through chemicals known as neurotransmitters. The neurotransmitters set off electrical charges in the dendrites, which then carry the signals to the soma or the body. The soma integrates the information, which is then transmitted electrochemically down to the axon to its tip. At the tip of the axon small bubble like structures called vesicles release neurotransmitters that carry the signal across the synapse or gap between two neurons. The neurotransmitters released from the presynaptic neuron are received by the postsynaptic nerve cell. The released neurotransmitter combines with the specific proteins or receptors of the

membrane of the postsynaptic nerve cell. This combination in activation increases the voltage of the neuron; while in inhibition, it decreases the voltage. A resting neuron is at about -70 millivolts. In activation, its voltage is raised to zero. If enough receptors have been activated, the postsynaptic neuron responds by firing -generating a nerve impulse that causes its own neurotransmitters to be released in the next synapse or gap. After each signal passes, it takes the filament about 1/2000 of a second to recharge chemically. As neurons do not touch another, the signals are passed spark-gap fashion. What could be the objective state of a word or a thought or a memory in a nerve cell? In what manner this neuron-network is linked up with the spiritual transphysical organ or *Antahakaran*, which consists of mind as a reservoir of *sanskaras* or impressions and functioning as word or memory processor, ego, and intellect? These are the grey areas and we, at this point of time, know just too little for any rational visualization. It appears that the non-genetic information, in the form of words or memories, is loaded on an altogether different vehicle which, at least in our case, is anchored to the neuron-network of the brain. The relationship between the electrical pulses generated by the neurons and this information carrier-vehicle is perhaps similar to that between a floppy disc and the electric current.'

'Rahim, I think, this analogy can be improved further,' Mary said. 'The relationship between the non-genetic extra-biological information and the brain can also be compared with that prevailing between the mind of an author and the computer system used by him.'

'Mary, it's really a far better analogy,' said Rahim. 'However, in the case of the Supreme Divine Being, engaged in the process of waking, the time of the emergence of the original Word or *Om-Nada* preceded the creation of mental, subtle, gross bodies, and worlds. There were no material tools and instruments around, then how could this primal *Om-Nada* be produced?'

'For a while let us forget all this and sing a song together,' Mary insisted. 'But this time we will sing our favorite song only mentally in our hearts.'

And, we did just that. It really surprised all of us how our claps and dance steps got automatically synchronized with the tune and the rhythm of the song, which we were singing only mentally within ourselves.

`See, even at our gross level the totality of a song – lyrics, tune and rhythm – can exist as mental impressions,' Mary said with joyous excitement. `Even at our gross level, we can sing without actually singing, see without actually seeing, and hear without actually hearing. At the level of the original Word, Word itself was the Sound, and the Light, and also the Mechanism that produced them. At that level, the Word was also the Singer and the Listener, Who enjoyed His own Song. Word was not only with God, Word was God Himself.'

`Ram, I seek clarification on *Brahma*, *Vishnu* and *Mahesh* as these are *sanskrit* terms, and it would help us a lot to know how this Trinity is visualized in Hinduism,' Mary asked. `God's State II is a bi-polar State with *Ishwar*, the Divine Infinite Unconsciousness, positioned at one end, and *Paramatma*, the Divine Infinite Consciousness, at the other. *Parabrahma*, as *Ishwar*, is unconscious of His own infinite power, infinite knowledge and infinite bliss as He is drowned in divine sound sleep of self-ignorance. *Parabrahma*, as *Paramatma*, is conscious of His own infinite trio-nature of infinite power, knowledge and bliss but He does not use them. Emergence of conscious-consciousness, therefore, is needed at the *Ishwar* end. Who, consequently, starts waking by bringing into play His three principal attributes of emanating, sustaining and dissolving through *Brahma*, *Vishnu* and *Mahesh*. The goal of awaking *Ishwar* is complete awakening as *Paramatma*, with Whom He is bound by bonds of Eternal Love. *Parabrahma*, in order to remain Eternally Awake in His Sat-Chit-Ananda Self-Consciousness as *Paramatma*, keeps Himself eternally drowned in Self-Unconsciousness as *Ishwar*.'

`I would like to ask the difference between the Beyond-Beyond State of God and the *Ishwar*. The Beyond-Beyond State is the state of divine sound sleep of God. This is the state of God in which the infinity of infinitude is manifested as the unbounded, absolute, infinite Divine Vacuum. *Ishwar* is unconscious *Parabrahma*, God experiencing the divine sound sleep or unconsciousness. How do they differ? How the Supreme Divine Being, described by such names as *Parabrahma*,

Purusham Mahantam, Ancient One, Highest of the High, *Bhagwan*, *Mahavishnu*, *Narayana* and *Purushottam*, is related with *Ishwar*, *Paramatman*, *Brahma*, *Vishnu* and *Mahesh*?'

`Mary, as I understand all this, the Supreme Divine Being is *Ishwar*, *Paramatma*, *Brahma*, *Vishnu*, *Mahesh* and all the rest, and also Beyond-the-Beyond,' said Ram. `These are the states of the Supreme Divine Being, which are existing within Him. He is the container and the contents. The One existing in various forms and states. As *Maha-Vishnu*, He is preserving Himself and by doing that, He is preserving *Ishwar*, *Paramatman*, *Brahma*, *Vishnu*, *Mahesh*, all the rest, and the Beyond-Beyond. Being the Supreme Preserver, He has to sustain His own-self even in *Maha-Pralaya* when *Maha-Shiva* dissolves all things and beings. It would indeed be a blunder on our part, if we postulate, that there was anything like a sequence of various happenings commencing from the eternal Beyond-Beyond. That would be putting the Supreme Divine Being, Who is also *Maha-Shiva* or *Maha -Kala*, the mighty dissolver of *Kala* or Time itself, under the control of Time. Being the Supreme Dissolver, the mighty *Maha-Shiva* has to dissolve His own-self and *Maha-Vishnu* as well. It is an interesting situation because *Maha-Vishnu* must preserve all things and beings, while *Maha-Shiva* must dissolve all of them.'

`This great trick is performed by *Maha-Vishnu*, Who sustains Himself by merging in *Maha-Shiva*; and by *Maha-Shiva*, Who dissolves Himself and all things in *Maha-Vishnu*. The Supreme Divine Being is the totality of the eternally existing Everything, and the Beyond-the-Beyond State, and Nothing that includes all things and beings as self-limited quanta of the Supreme Divine Being.'

`Ram, how beautifully you have described the indescribable', Merwan said overflowing with inner joy. `Between the Infinite Unconsciousness and Infinite Consciousness there are no distances of time and space. The One, who alone is, has become all this by imagining Himself as many, and all this is that One, Who always exists as the One, and the only One.'

`Now let us understand how these terms - *Maha-Vishnu*, *Maha-Shiva*, *Ishwara*, *Brahma*, *Vishnu* and *Mahesh* - are defined and described in Hindu

philosophy and tradition,' Ram said. 'The word '*Ishwara*' was developed from the *sanskrit* root '*ish*' which means, to be the Master, the Lord of creation. In Kashmir Shaivism, *Ishwara* is the fourth category *tattwa*, which accounts for that condition when the subject or *aham* recognizes the object or *idam*, the state of complete self-identification. *Ishwara*, therefore, is the centrifugal flow of consciousness from 'I am or *Aham*' to 'this or *idam*'. In *Ishwara* 'I am or *Aham*' believes that its own existence is because of 'this or *idam*', and would continue so long 'this or *idam*' continues to exist. That is why, *Ishwara*, who is infinitely unconscious of His own Self, uses creation for the perpetuations of his own imaginary selves. *Ishwara*'s opposite but complementary polarity is *Paramatma* in which consciousness is centrally and exclusively focussed on the Supreme Self. If *Ishwara* is 'I am (because of) This', then *Paramatma* is 'I am (because of) I am'. *Paramatma* and *Ishwara* are the opposite and mutually sustaining complementary polarities of *Parabrahma* or *Parameshwar*. Vivekananda, the great exponent of Vedanta, has described *Ishwara* -spelled also as '*Ishvara*'- in these words:

"In *Brahman* there is no part. It is for the sake of easy comprehension that parts have been imagined in it. That part of *Brahman* in which there is the superimposition of creation, maintenance, and dissolution of the universe has been spoken of as *Ishvara* in the scriptures, while the other unchangeable portion, with reference to which there is no thought of duality, is indicated as *Brahman*. But do not, on that account, think that *Brahman* is a distinct and separate substance from the *jivas* and the universe." ^{9.47}

Also this: "The *jiva* is an individual and the sum total of all *jivas* is *Ishvara*. In the *jiva*, *avidya*, or nescience, is predominant, but *Ishvara* controls *maya*, composed of *avidya* and *vidya* (knowledge), and independently projects this world of movable and immovable things out of 'Himself'. But *Brahman* transcends both individual and collective aspects, the *jiva* and *Ishvara*." ^{9.48}

'Now, let us talk about *Maha-Vishnu* and *Mahadeva* or *Maha-Shiva*. *Maha-Vishnu* and *Maha-Shiva* complementary bipolarity is the Supreme Divine Being Himself. *Maha-Vishnu* means: *Prajnanam* or Cosmic Intelligence, *Shuddha*

Chaitanya or Pure Consciousness as Eternal Awareness. But, like the experience of dumb, as it is an incommunicable state. *Maha-Vishnu* is *Prabodham* or Integral Awareness. *Maha-Vishnu* as *Anantasayanam* is the transcendental divine sound Sleep State. *Ananta* is also the name of the snake on which *Maha-Vishnu* is shown in divine sound Sleep State in mythological symbolic pictorial presentation of *Maha-Vishnu*. *Ananta*, the seven-headed snake, represents seven powers of *Yoga-Maya*. As *Achyuta*, *Maha-Vishnu* is eternally Whole or Complete. He is *Adi-Mulam*, the original root cause of all beginnings in the sense that His passive proximity is sufficient to activate His counterpart *Yoga-Maya Laxmi*, the *Chit-Samkalpa-Shakti* of *Maha-Vishnu*. She is inseparable from Him and that is why He is also named as *Laxminarayana*. *Maha-Vishnu's* serpent-bed is in *Khseersagar*, the Ocean of Milk or trans-cosmic Essence or the 'Everything'. He has a *Shankh*, or a Conch Shell, in one of his four hands, representing *Sabda or Nada Brahman*. He holds a *Chakra*, or a Wheel, in the other hand that represents cyclic movement of Timelessness and Time. He has a *Gadaa*, or a Club, in his third hand and a *Padma*, or a Lotus-bud, in the fourth. Club represents the material medium, substance and energy, while the Lotus-bud stands for the un-blossomed state of consciousness. *Ishwara* is the active counterpart of *Maha-Vishnu*. *Ishwara*, as *Vishnu*, sleeps over a white lotus that sprouts from *Maha-Vishnu* and is nourished by the surrounding *Khseer Sagar*. *Vishnu* as *Ishwara* preserves creation. He creates through *Brahma* and dissolves through *Mahesh*.'

'In the *Anushashan-parvam* of *Mahabharata*, Bhisma narrates *Vishnu Sahashranama Stotra* - Thousand names of *Vishnu* - to Yudhister. The *Vishnu of Vishnu Sahashranama Stotra* is no doubt the *Maha-Vishnu*, the Supreme Divine Being, and not the mythological deity of that name. Among one thousand names of *Maha-Vishnu*, the name *Satya-Shiva* describes Him as the true *Maha-Shiva*. As *Ranganatha*, *Maha-Vishnu* is the stage Director and Manager of this light and sound spectacle, called Universe.'

'*Brahma* is the first born of *Laxmi-Narayana* or *Maha-Vishnu*. He is the supervisor of the material mode of passion or desire (*rajo-guna*). *Brahma* creates the multiplicity of life forms in the universe under the direction of *Vishnu*. *Brahma* is lotus-born, which means that He is the child of the union of *Laxmi* and

Narayana and emerges as the ever-expanding conscious-consciousness. This first born initially introverts into his source, and finds that his *Adimulam* or the original fundamental substratum transcends him. So he becomes extrovert and cogitates as how to project the Universe. Etymologically, the word "*Brahma*" is from *sanskrit* root "*brh*", to expand, the expander, the designer, and the creator of the Cosmic System. *Brahma* sprouts with four heads from the navel of *Maha-Vishnu*. His each head represents a "*disha*" or a spatial direction. Thus *Brahma*, with his four heads, creates the imaginary spatial boundary of his Creation - the *Brahmanda* or the Cosmic Sphere. *Brahma's* four heads also denote that the four forms of *Vak* (*Para*, *Pasyanti*, *Madhyama* and *Vaikhari*) constitute the body of *Brahma*. Vedas, Upanishads and Yoga-Vashistha describe *Brahma* as the Lotus-Born *Hiranyagarbha*, the golden radiant womb of *Para Vak* or the original Word. *Brahma* is the Self-effulgent Original Word or *Sabda*, and creates through *Sabda*. The spiritual energy *Saraswati*, the Goddess of Speech and Wisdom, is the creative energy of *Brahma*. The word *Saraswati* is derived from *saras*, meaning 'lake ' of the waters of *Vak* or Knowledge, and *vati*, meaning 'possessing', 'owning'. *Brahma*, as *Hiranyagarbha*, has entered inside every being as the inner most Self or *Sutratman* - the One *Atman*, Who is the thread running through all beings and things. About *Brahma* says the Mahanarayanopanishada:

"The resplendent *Prajapati* was born at the beginning of creation from the Supreme potent with the power of *Maya*. Having been born, He became the one sustainer and nourisher of all beings. The same *Paramatman*, here designated as *Hiranyagarbha*, supports the earth as well as heaven. May we worship that shining One with offerings - who is of the nature of bliss or whose characteristic nature cannot be interrogated." ^{9.49}

"The Self-luminous Lord renowned in the scriptures pervades all the quarters of heaven. Having been born as *Hiranyagarbha* in the beginning, He indeed is inside the universe represented as the womb. He alone is the manifold world of creation now springing into existence and causing the birth of the world of creation yet to come. As one having face everywhere, He dwells also as the innermost Self leading all creatures." ^{9.50}

`*Maha-Vishnu*, as *Vishnu*, is engaged in the sustenance and control of the cosmic universe created by *Brahma* by imposing order through the control of Time, by manipulating the consciousness through the control of *Sabda* or Word, by sustaining things and beings through the control of different spiritual and material energies or media , and by letting conscious-consciousness to blossom, or expand, to its full potential.'

`The abode of *Maha- Shiva*, or *Maha- Deva*, or *Maheswara* is the holy mount Kailash. His counter-part *Uma* is inseparable from him and because of this, he is named *Uma-Maheswara*. *Maha-Shiva*, the other polarity of the Supreme Divine Being, is the Supreme Dissolver, Transformer and Destroyer. In things and beings *Maha-Shiva*, as *Mahesh*, brings about the dissolution of conscious-consciousness into the deep dream-less sleep or unconscious-consciousness. He is the One who brings about the final dissolution of all things and beings in *Maha-Pralaya* or Great Dissolution. *Brahma* creates through the expansion of the original *Sabda* or *OM-Nada*, and *Maha-Shiva* dissolves through the contraction of the original *Sabda* or *OM-Nada*. *Maha-Shiva* also controls the involution of consciousness in human beings leading to its *laya* or merger in the Infinite Consciousness of the Supreme Divine Being. He is called *Maha-Kal*, being the Great Destroyer; *Pasupati*, the Lord of all things and beings bounded by imaginary identifications; *Rudra*, the giver of knowledge, with benign and ferocious forms.'

`The word "*Shiva*" is derived from "*shi*", to sleep, he who sleeps in the heart, who causes the world to go to sleep. He is the beneficent one because he is the bestower of restful sleep on one hand, and blissful merger in the Infinite Consciousness on the other. *Shiva*, being the Great Destroyer, also generates the fear of destruction. For all these diverse functions, *Maha-Shiva* needs the help and support of all forms of spiritual energy.'

`In the mythological symbolic pictorial presentation of *Shiva*, as *Nataraj*, he is shown with a "*Damroo*" or dumb-bell shaped mini-drum, representing discrete Seed-Sounds or *Beej-Sabda*, in one hand. He has burning fire, representing all forms of the transcendental retractile spiritual energy, in the other hand. He has serpents coiling around His body showing His control over the *Kundalini* or *Prana*

Shakti. As *Gangadhara*, *Shiva* supports and guides the flow of Ganges -the River of Knowledge that purifies. He has "*ardha-Chandra*" - crescent moon - poised on His head revealing His control over *Om* or *OM*, the radiant original Word or *Sabda*. *Shiva* is also named *Triambaka* or *Trilochan*, the one with three eyes. His third eye is located on the forehead just above the eyebrows. This reveals His control over the outer and inner spheres of creation. *Shiva* is *Nataraj*, because as the Lord of the Cosmic Dance of Dissolution, he regulates the movements of all forms of the transcendental retractile Spiritual Energy. He is also called *Hari-Har* to reveal His oneness with *Maha-Vishnu*. In another symbolic pictorial presentation, *Shiva* is shown sitting in yogic cross-legged posture, with eyes half-open, revealing His absorption in the transcendental Infinite Consciousness State or Beyond God State B. A *Trishul* or trident, in the form of *Om* and symbolically representing the Triple-World (Mental, Subtle and Gross) transcendence or *Nirvikalpa* State, is proximate to Him as His flag-staff.'

`Mahanarayanopanishad reveals the mystic knowledge about *Maha-Deva* or *Maha-Shiva*. Revealing that the Supreme Divine Being is *Maha-Vishnu* and *Maha-Shiva*, the Upanishad says:

"May we know or realize the Supreme Person. For that, may we meditate upon *Mahadeva* and to that meditation may *Rudra* impel us." ^{9.51}

"He is the Supreme Lord (*Maheshwar*), who transcends the syllable *OM* which is uttered at the commencement of the recital of the Vedas, which is well established in the Upanishads and which is dissolved in the primal cause during contemplation." ^{9.52}

"Salutations to *Rudra* and to *Vishnu* (or *Rudra* who is *Vishnu*). Guard me from death." ^{9.53}

`Swami Vimalananda has quoted the Skandopanishad which declares the mutually complementary identity of *Vishnu* and *Shiva* by such expressions "*sivamayo vishnur*" (*Vishnu* as *Shivoham* State of Supreme Divine Being) and "*vishnumayah shivah*" (*Shiva* as *Vishnoham* State of Supreme Divine Being).^{9.54}

`Mahanarayanopanishad describes the attributes and multi-level functions of *Maha-Shiva* in these words:

"Salutations to *Vamadeva* (beautiful and shining one). Salutation to *Jyestha* (the Eldest existing before creation). Salutation to *Shrestha* (the most worthy and excellent). Salutations to *Rudra* (the one who causes creatures to weep at the time of dissolution). Salutations to *Kala* (the one who has the Power of time responsible for the evolution of Nature). Salutations to *Kalavikarana* (the one who causes changes in the evolution of universe beginning with *Prakriti*). Salutations to *Balavikarana* (the one who is the producer of varieties and degrees of forces). Salutations to *Bala* (the one who is the source of all forces). Salutations to *Balapramathana* (the one who suppresses all forces at the time of retraction). Salutations to *Sarvabhutadamana* (the ruler of all the created things and beings). Salutations to *Manonmana* (He who is the kindler of the light of the soul)." ^{9.55}

`Mahanarayanopanishad also describes *Maha-Shiva* by these names: *Hiranyabahu* (who has arms of golden radiance), *Hiranyavarna* (who contains all *Sabda* or *Vak* forms shining with golden radiance), *Hiranyarupa* (the one whose form shines with golden radiance), *Hiranyapati* (the lord of mystic golden radiance and its various forms), *Ambikapati* (the lord of *Ambika*, Mother of Universe, being the *Para-Shakti* who projects), *Umapati* (the lord of *Uma*, Mother of Universe, being the *Para-Shakti* who withdraws the universe and conceals it within Herself), *Pasupati* (the lord of all created things and beings).'

Ram said, `In my opinion understanding of the mutual inclusiveness of *Maha-Vishnu* and *Maha-Shiva*, and that of *Hiranyagarbha* is important. The Supreme Divine Being, as sleeping *Maha-Vishnu*, is *Shivomayavishnu*, and, as *Nirvikalpa* Awake *Maha-Shiva*, is *Vishnumayashiva*. The Supreme Divine Being is in semi-conscious dreaming state at the point of naal, and acts as *Brahma* or *Hiranyagarbha* - the *Para-Vak* Womb, shining with Golden Radiance, and concealing within *Maha-Vishnu*, as *Sutratma* or *Atma*, in the garb of His own self-limited state as *Antahkaran*.'

`Ram, that's really a wonderful exposition of the three attributes of God,' said Merwan. `Meher Baba has said that these three attributes - *Brahma*, *Vishnu* and *Mahesh or Shiva* - assert independently as well as simultaneously in all things, and in every creature and in all beings, in every state of God at every stage in the evolution of consciousness, and on every plane in the involution of consciousness. *Shiva* brings about the final destruction *Maha-Pralaya*, the "Greatest of the Great Event of Absorption."^{9.56} *Shiva* also leads to the final and irreversible merger of *Jivatmas* in *Paramatma*. *Jivatma* then becomes *Shivatma*. Only a select few of these *Shivatmas* attain the highest divine status of living the life of God consciously in human-form by becoming one with Beyond-God State C. This super climax of the cosmic processes of expansion and contraction has also been described by Meher Baba as realizing the "*Shivoham -Sarvoham*" state of super-consciousness.^{9.57} About the attainment of this state, Meher Baba has said:

"The highest divine status of living the life of God consciously in human form is attained very, very rarely by very, very few *Shivatmas*, after the unconscious Atmas pass through the process of evolution, reincarnation and involution of consciousness as *Jiv-Atmas*, and attain *Nirvan* immediately followed by *Nirvikalpa Samadhi* of super-consciousness asserting as *Shiv-Atmas*."^{9.58}

Mika said, `*Brahma*, *Vishnu* and *Mahesh*, in *Tantric* Buddhism, represent the state of becoming, the state of being and the state of dissolving. These states are re-enacted in every *Tantric* Buddhist meditation, which begins with the productive state -the *Brahma* state of *srishti karma*, as called in samskrit, or *skyed-rim* as called in Tibetan. In this meditation certain aspects of the inner world, in the form of symbols, are manifested and visualized consciously. After their experience, they are dissolved and re-integrated into the plenum Void from which they sprang. This process of dissolution and re-integration is known as *Shiva* State of *laya karma* in samskrit, and *rdzogs-rim* in Tibetan.'^{9.59}

`Mika, what about this "*Shivoham-Sarvoham*" super-consciousness which blossoms after the attainment of *Nirvana*,' asked Mary.

`Mary, Buddha observed deliberate silence on what happens after Nirvana or what happens in Nirvana,' Mika explained. `When we say that the transcendental realm cannot be described, then why this obstinate insistence on its description? This is the clever trick of the ego, which seeks self-perpetuation through such assurances. Buddha's stand was clear: Gates of Nirvana will ever remain closed for those who insist that they would enter, only after being assured that Void of Nirvana is not really a Void. Mary, is it not significant that Buddha remained firmly fixed in Nirvana, at the same time, lived amidst all of us with the consciousness of the world! If we postulate, that the consciousness of the world ceases for the one in Nirvana, or, that Nirvana ceases for the one in the consciousness of the world, then poor Buddha should have lived a miserable life of endless swapping between the state of Nirvana and the consciousness of the world!'

`Mary, this state of *Shivoham-Sarvoham* reminds me of what Buddha has said about the Essence of Buddha or His *Dharmakaya*: "In the aspect of Essence, Buddha has no shape or color, and since Buddha has no shape or color, He comes from nowhere and there is no where for Him to go. Like the blue sky, He arches over everything, and since He is all things, He lacks nothing." ^{9.60}

`Mika this is poetry at its best', said Mary. `Though this discussion has cleared a lot on *Brahma*, *Vishnu* and *Mahesh*, but I am still quite confused about the real difference between *Brahman*, *Paramatma*, and *Atman*. Whatever little I have understood, after listening to Ram and others, makes it clear that in Vedanta the statement about the identity of *Atman* with Brahman is most significant. We now know about, what can be called, at least for the sake of intellectual convenience, a hierarchical sequence of Divine States or perhaps mighty beings. It begins with *Paratparabrahma* or the Supreme Divine Being, the Highest of the High and the Ancient One, existing as mutually complementary *Maha-Vishnu* and *Maha-Shiva*; then emerges, *Parabrahma*, existing as mutually complementary *Paramatma* and *Ishwara*; and thereafter, *Ishwara* becoming functional through the Trinity of *Brahma*, *Vishnu* and *Mahesh*. I am still somewhat confused about these entities. If the entire expanse of Cosmic Creation is the semiconscious dream-creation of the Supreme Divine Being then all things are beings, and all beings are just One Supreme Divine Being. Whether *Maha-Vishnu*, *Maha-Shiva*, *Para-Brahman*,

Paramatman, Ishwar, Brahma, Vishnu and Mahesh are the states of Supreme Divine Being, or they are the beings created and contained by Him? The word 'state' is a static concept, which rules out functional independence and replicative continuity, while the word 'being' indicates self-continuity and independence. I find it as highly significant that the Gospel should address the Eternal Word, which existed before the world was created, as a "He".

'Mary, Meher Baba did not make use of the words "*Maha-Vishnu*" and "*Maha-Shiva*," Merwan said. 'That simplifies your hierarchical sequence, which should now begin with *Paratparabrahma*, the Beyond Beyond state of divine sound sleep of *Parabrahma Paramatma*, the Supreme Divine Being. The *Parabrahman Paramatma*, when looked at from the existential point of view, exists as *Parameshwara*, the pair of *Paramatma* and *Ishwara* bound by Supreme Love or *Paramananda* and mutual inclusiveness. The same *Parabrahman Paramatma*, when looked at from the functional point of view, exists as *Brahma, Vishnu* and *Mahesh*, bound by Supreme Love or *Paramananda* and mutual dependence. *Vishnu* preserves *Brahma* to create, and preserves *Mahesh* to dissolve all that is created. In reality, they all are One. They appear different because of the limitations of our perceptive and analytical capabilities.'

'We are those five blind men of the famous Buddhist fable, who came out with five different descriptions of an elephant,' Mika pointed out.

'Alternatively the two physicists: one of them looked for the 'particle' and did succeed in finding it, while the other looked for the 'wave' and succeeded in its discovery,' Mary said. 'Since the Reality is the Ocean of Everything, we are bound to find in it all that, which we are looking for. And that includes the "Nothing" as well, if we are seriously after it.'

'Mary, why not include the third physicist as well, who looked for the "virtual reality" and found it as the truth of all things,' said Rahim.

'About the relationship between *Paramatma* and *Atman*,' Merwan said, 'Meher Baba says:

"In order to clarify the relationship of '*Atma-Paramatma*' we compare *Paramatma* with an infinite ocean, a limitless ocean, and the *atman* is never out of the bounds of this limit less ocean (*Paramatma*). ... But just as the iota of ocean acquires its limitation as a drop through being in the form of a bubble on the surface of the ocean, and the bubble bestows upon the iota of ocean an apparently separative existence from the infinite ocean, likewise the *atma*, which is IN *Paramatma* and IS *Paramatma*, apparently experiences separative existence from the infinite *Paramatma* through the limitations of a bubble (of ignorance) with which the *atma* shrouds itself." ^{9.61}

'A 'being', if defined spiritually, is the one who is self-aware, or exists as the awareness of the self. Pure Self-Awareness is the unbroken flow of 'I am - I am - I am' or simply the flow of 'am - am - am' awareness as the 'I' Awareness. Where resides this awareness or consciousness? Meher Baba says, "Throughout evolution, consciousness is developed in and through the mind and expressed through the medium of physical form, but consciousness itself resides in the soul." ^{9.62} What then is the soul, which contains consciousness? Is it different from the consciousness? Is it un-consciousness, the opposite of consciousness? Then, we will have to ask, what we mean by un-consciousness. Who goes through this experience of un-consciousness and reports about it? Obviously the 'I'. It is the "I", who falls asleep, dreams, and wakes up in the gross world. Can we say that this "I" is the container of consciousness? That would make it a container that is different from consciousness, the contained. Perhaps a better way to express it would be to say that Self-Awareness is Consciousness Itself. Self-Awareness is what Meher Baba calls as the "Consummate Consciousness" - the Supra-Consciousness which enfolds within 'Itself' the consciousness that is conscious of the external environment, and the consciousness that is unconscious of the external environment. What appears to be unconsciousness to us is in reality the Supra-Consciousness or the Consummate Consciousness. In the words of Meher Baba:

"We have seen that the possible field of consciousness is limited by the *sanskaras*. This limitation creates a division of the human psyche into two parts. One part falls within the range of consciousness, and the other part falls beyond

it. The unconscious part, in its full extent, is identical with the power that is behind matter. It is referred to as God by the orthodox religions. The ultimate Reality, which is symbolically represented through such concepts, can be known fully only by bringing the unconscious into consciousness. An extension of consciousness consists in being conscious of that which was formerly a part of the unconscious. The progressive conquest of the unconscious by the conscious culminates in consummate consciousness, which is unlimited in scope and unhindered in function." ^{9.63}.

`Could we then say that the Supra-Consciousness is an unbroken flow of I-awareness structured by I-quanta themselves? Let us assume that this is true. Infinite Pure Consciousness could then be visualized as the Infinite Ocean of I-quanta engaged in an endless movement of becoming aware or conscious of each other, thereby remaining in an endless and unbroken flow of unlimited Self-Awareness. This Infinite Ocean of I-quanta or Infinite Pure Consciousness throbs with movement-pause-movement-pause pulses. Since this Infinite Ocean of Pure Consciousness is Beyond-the-Beyond, there is nothing like a time interval between 'I-quanta movement' and 'I-quanta pause'. Moreover, when we say that I-quanta are endlessly engaged in a movement of becoming aware of each other, we are not talking in terms of a movement in or of time. The nearest, though totally incorrect, description would be 'I am I' – 'I am Not' flow of the states 'Self-awareness' and 'Self-forgetfulness'.

This explanation from Merwan made all of us to jump and dance with excitement. Rahim felt that there could be no better visualization of the cosmic and transcosmic Spiritual Holism. Mary said, `This clears so many things. The Supreme Divine Being is the Infinite Ocean of Infinite Pure Consciousness structured by I-quanta in an unceasing throb of Self-awareness: Self-forgetfulness pulses. He is the Supreme Self. After the emergence of the original Whim or *Lahar* in Him, sprouts within Him the *Ishwara* -the state of Infinite Unconsciousness- out of the pause in which I-quanta persist in a quiescent state. His consummate consciousness as the eternal flow of Self-Awareness is His real identity as *Paramatma*. He is One and the Only One. It is on account of our handicapped perceptive and analytical capabilities that we perceive Him as a "sequence" of

Paratparabrahma, Parabrahma, Paramatma, Ishwar, Vishnu, Brahma, Mahesh and so on. Since the entire cosmos is His dream creation, created out of Himself and contained within Himself, He could enter into the subjects, or beings, and the objects or things. He is the Creator, the Preserver and the Destroyer. He is the Observer-Observation-Observed, Experiencer-Experience-Experienced, and now-knowledge-Known.'

'Mary, this clears so many things,' said an excited Rahim. 'I see you in my dream playing your guitar, and there we sing and dance together. In my dream, I am the dream-Mary, I am the dream-Rahim and I am the dream-guitar as well. I am the dream-song and its tune as well. Rahim of the gross world of Rahim, Rahim of the dream world of Rahim, Mary of the gross world of Rahim, Mary of the dream world of Rahim, guitar of the gross world of Rahim, Mary and the guitar of the dream world of Rahim -all are the beads threaded on the centrally running "I-thread". This "I" is not different from the "Supreme I". They are One. Associated with the beads in the forms of *Antahakaran*, subtle and gross bodies, the central "I" is perceived as individualized *Atma* or souls. Seen in its free state, the same "I" is perceived as *Paramatma* or the Over-Soul. All things and beings are threaded on the Supreme Self.'

'Rahim, you are speaking the language of a sage,' Ram said. 'Veda says:

The loving sage beholds that mysterious Existence

Wherein the universe comes to have one nest;

Therein unites and therefrom emanates all.

The Lord is the warp and woof in the created beings.^{9.64}

'Sri Krishna says in Bhagvada-gita: "All this is threaded in Me (the Divine) as pearls on a string."^{9.65}

Each one of us was full of joy, the joy of understanding. However, this was short lived as Mary broke the reverie of ours.

`We have tried our best to obey Meher Baba,' Mary said. `But I have my own doubts about our success in that. Baba had pointed out that the true understanding would start the process of dissolution of His dear "sugar dolls". Nothing like that has happened. On the contrary, this endeavor of ours to understand the Statement is proving to be a big ego booster. I have a feeling that somewhere somehow we have missed something of great significance. What could be that?'

Rahim said, `Conceptualization of Truth creates the illusion of wisdom. Sufis say that the wisdom, which is invisible but which sustains is a hundred times better than the appearance of wisdom, for that has itself to be sustained. Sufi Master Najrani says: "If you say that you can `nearly understand', you are talking nonsense. It is equivalent to saying that something is `almost an apple'."^{9.66} Spirituality equates ignorance with Unconsciousness and Knowledge with Supra-Consciousness. Wisdom should, therefore, transform the consciousness, instead of loading it with concepts.

`Rightly said Rahim,' Mika said. `In the twelfth century the Chinese Master Kakuan drew the pictures of ten bulls, basing them on earlier Taoist bulls, and wrote the comments in prose and verse. The bull symbolizes the eternal principle of life, truth in action. The ten bulls represent the sequence of steps in the realization of one's true nature. This was the state of wisdom at the ninth step:

Too many steps have been taken,
Returning to the root,
And the source.
Better to have been blind and deaf from the beginning!
Dwelling in one's true abode,
Unconcerned with that without-
The river flows tranquilly on and the flowers are red.^{9.67}

Mary, who always kept herself immaculate and highly presentable, gave a disheveled look. It was obvious that she was in a disturbed state of mind. Her eyes were swollen and it appeared that she had been weeping a lot secretly. This had made the atmosphere inside Pushan – which now existed as Meher Baba's Samadhi – quite heavy with sadness.

'What's the problem, Mary dear,' asked Merwan. 'We were so happy and contended with the outcome of our effort. Why this sudden change of mood? What has troubled you?'

'Merwan, it's true that we were happy and satisfied with our effort,' Mary said. 'But then it started becoming clear to me that words and concepts cannot solve our problems. On the contrary, they make us feel much more frustrated. I have made a mess of my marriage and divorced a husband who loved me sincerely. My highly inflated ego and selfishness came in the way of our love and happiness. For my whole life, I remained love starved. My overwhelming greed for personal pleasure had perverted my psyche and made me incapable of loving others. I commenced this voyage, with all of you, with a hope that some day the dawn of true understanding will open for me the floodgates of genuine peace of mind, love and happiness. I was filled with ecstatic happiness and with a surge of real love, when I danced with Beloved Meher Baba. Those few moments, with the Beloved, have changed my entire out-look on life. I now sincerely feel that this over indulgence in the conceptualization of Truth is sheer waste of time. What we need is the experience of Pure Love and Truth.'

All of us assured Mary that we also feel it that way. None of us was chasing a mere conceptual understanding of the Truth. We too were seeking the experience of Pure Love and Truth - the experience that alone would transform our lives, which right now were full of misery and suffering and lacked direction. We deem ourselves as fortunate in being blessed with some divine moments of

togetherness with our Beloved Meher Baba. That momentary but real encounter with the Divine Beloved however has assured us, without any doubt that we are on the right track. Beloved Meher Baba is with all of us as our divine companion and guide. Now, if Beloved Baba says that we should continue our intellectual probe until the processes of 'ego-dissolution' set in, then we have got to keep all that going.

`Mary, I am sure you would agree with me about the importance of the intellectual probes into the nature of the ultimate Reality,' said Rahim. `Science, one of such probes, had believed that our external environment is an assemblage of the fragments of Reality. Science had started with the conviction that if one takes hold of any of these fragments and goes on splitting it into finer and finer portions, until reaching the last indivisible one, then that last one should be the stuff with which all things are made. Science, in its pre-quantum theory phase, believed that the Reality could be objectively explored, understood, described, demonstrated and recreated. It believed that the objective ultimate Reality is fundamentally material and can be understood through the sensory experiences, analyzed through the thought processes, and described completely through mathematical symbols. Science, because of this objective exploration, could acquire great control over the matter and material forces. Widespread application of this knowledge, through technological inventions, could transform the world of humankind. Day to day living became much more comfortable and enjoyable. Amazing increase in the speed of transportation and communication, and the acquisition of technological capability to move and communicate across enormous distances, has given in the hands of man enormous powers. The materialistic world-view of Science not only enamored all of us, but also gradually erased from our minds all the remaining imprints of the age-old world-view that was developed and propagated by the traditional religions. Consequently, Science had emerged as the new religion based on so-called objective and rational foundations. Power, Pleasure and Money became the new values. Greed and selfishness became the virtues to be cultivated and strengthened. Modern education took pride in promoting material ambitions and training in the skills that accelerate the ascent to higher and higher plateaus of wealth, power and

pleasure. God, religion, education, music, art, literature, friends, family, husband, wife, and what not - all things were now perceived as mere stairs leading to the top of this pyramid of Money, Power and Pleasure. Stairs that must be trampled, and made use of. Then came the Quantum Theory with a bang. It smashed the golden citadel of science based materialism by revealing that "That-Which-Is", is in reality "One-Indivisible-Wholeness". Being "One-Invisible-Wholeness," it cannot be understood through its virtual fragments. What we see and feel around are only transitory shadow like formations of the Reality. This new world-view proved to be a turning point. Thus, even an intellectual probe, if pursued earnestly, can become an instrument of profound transformation.'

`I agree with you, Rahim,' Mary said. `The intellectual fallout of the Quantum Theory worked as a catalyst for discovering new ways and means to reach the real abode of 'That-Which-Is' and perhaps, 'That-Which-Alone-Is'. A good number of scientists have passed through a period of great mental turmoil when they discovered that what they had believed as the royal highway to the Abode of Truth, was only a blind alley. A few of them started wriggling out of the materialistic clutches of science. We gasped with disbelief when we found the Nobel Laureate physicist Brian David Josephson engaged in an exploration of the states of Consciousness through meditation practices; and Professor David Bohm, the renowned Professor of Theoretical Physics, engaged in a serious conversation with the eminent philosopher Jiddu Krishnamurti to understand the nature of the Transcendental Intelligence. A good number of scientists became interested in Hinduism, Buddhism, and Islamic Sufism.'

Ram said: `It appears that Science, in its own way, has vindicated what spiritual seers and sages were saying since the time immemorial: Chasing the world is chasing the Illusion. There is no end to this chase and that makes our experience of the world, full of frustration and suffering. By relating ourselves with the illusory discrete, ignoring the all-embracing Whole, we fall into the clutches of uncertainty, insecurity and fear. We cultivate illusory values. All this makes us much more possessive, insensitive, ruthless and selfish. God - That-Which-Alone-Is - is the Infinite Ocean of Love. He is Certainty and Truth. Life,

therefore, should be taken as an opportunity to discover God in all, and all in God. Adi Shankaracharya says:

Sunrise and sunset, daylight and darkness,
Winter and springtime, come and go;
Even the course of time is playful;
Life itself soon ebbs away;
But man's vain hope, alas! goes onward,
Tirelessly onward evermore.
Worship Govinda, worship Govinda,
Worship Govinda, foolish one!
Rules of grammar profit nothing
Once the hour of death draws nigh.^{10.1}

Uncertain is the life of man
As raindrops on a lotus leaf;
The whole of humankind is prey
To grief and ego and disease:
Remember this unfailingly.

Why do all things distress your mind?
Has reason quite abandoned you?
Have you no guide to hold you firm,
Instructing you of life and death?^{10.2}

`We are fortunate to have Beloved Meher Baba as our companion and guide. Adi Shankaracharya conveys that vain and pointless polemics about the Truth

inevitably results in waste of the precious time. Meher Baba has, therefore, rightly asked us to make use of the intellect in a manner that leads to the dissolution of ego.'

`It seems that the process of ego dissolution has already begun with the realization that concepts are not of much help,' said Merwan. `This whole cosmos is the product of God's imagination. The entire process of conceptualizing the Truth is imaginary. Not knowing what really is existing, we keep on postulating and moving from one imaginary concept to another. This impressionistic and imaginary reconstruction of the Truth, through the progressively accumulated mental impressions or *sanskaras*, should now be stopped and all such impressions neutralized. But, all this is not in our hands because the I-drop-soul or *jivatma*, after getting the human form, has to revolve round and round on the merry-go-round of reincarnation to reach at the point from where begins the involution of its consciousness. Even in the involution, while passing through the subtle and mental spheres, there is no release from the hold of imagination up to the sixth plane. It is only when the soul enters the Beyond, then only imagination ceases irreversibly, and *Atma* becomes one with *Paramatma* realizing the Reality. In the words of Meher Baba:

"The spiritual progress of the soul through these spheres is entirely in imagination. The pilgrim's progress in the involution of his consciousness consists in replacing one realm of imagination for a better and higher level of imagination, right from the first through the sixth plane of involving consciousness. In the seventh plane the involving process is complete, imagination comes to an end and Reality is realized and is no longer a concept".^{10.3}

`So, Mary dear, no relief from imaginary conceptualization and imagination until then,' Merwan cheered Mary. `Come out of this depressing mood, smile and tidy yourself.'

Mary did feel greatly relieved and smiled beautifully. In order to tidy her appearance, she searched for her make-up items but without any success. Frustrated she said, `Oh, Baba dear! How can I tidy myself when I have lost all my make-up things, and that includes a mirror as well. Baba, help me, please!'

At that very instant, we were amazed to see Meher Baba stepping out of His picture in response to Mary's prayer, and carrying a beautiful vanity case in His hand. We were drowned again in the ecstasy of His divine presence and close proximity. He hugged and kissed us most lovingly. Then He handed over the vanity case to Mary. Saying something softly in her ear, He went back.

With tears of joy and hands trembling with excitement, Mary opened the vanity case to take stock of the things it contained. Amidst various cosmetic items, she did find a beautiful mirror with an exquisitely carved wooden frame

Mary said, `Do you know what Beloved Baba has said about this mirror. Baba said, "Mary, its a magic mirror. One day it will show you your real face. Keep on looking into it, until eventually you see Me in place of your image." Baba also said, "It is indeed quite funny that we, who have the capacity to see the whole world around us, cannot see our own faces. Even the God lacked this capability, and, when the original Whim surged in Him with the urge to know and see Himself, He desperately needed a mirror. He then created a mirror out of His mind-stuff. He, fooled by His own shadows, took them for real, and was lost in this illusory world of illusory forms that He Himself had created. Mary dear, it is since eternity that I am chasing my own Self in all of you, while all of you are chasing your real Self in Me. This game of hide and seek is being pursued tirelessly, with a hope, that some day this magic mirror of the mind will show us our real face; revealing that in reality we are not We but One."

Merwan said, `The Universe is the eternal playmate of the Divine Beloved Meher Baba. Baba, in what He called as **The Final Decision**, says: "Between God and the Universe, infinite Mercy and unbounded Love act as a link eternally made use of by men who become God (*Sadgurus*, Perfect Masters or *Qutubs*), and by God who becomes Man (*Avatar*, Christ or *Rasool*). So the Universe becomes the eternal playmate of God." ^{10.4} We are the active players of this divine game. Meher Baba says:

"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 that has intrinsic and absolute worth. All other happenings, incidents, and attainments in themselves can have no lasting importance." ^{10.5}

Ram said, 'I am thrilled by this mystical gift of a magic mirror by Beloved Baba. **Svetasvataropanishad** says:

"Just as a mirror, that was covered with dust,
Shines forth like fire, if it is cleansed,
In the same way will he,
Who has realized the nature of the soul,
Attain the goal and liberate himself from grief!" ^{10.6}

'This talk about mirrors reminds me of what we call as the stanza of Shin-shau,' Mika said. 'It says:

"Our body is like a bodhi-tree,
Our mind is like a clear mirror;
From hour to hour it must be cleansed,
So that no dust can collect upon it." ^{10.7}

'But grasping the quintessence of the *Diamond Sutra*, Ch'an masters have amended the stanza of Shinshau:

"The Bodhi is not a tree at all,
Nor is the mind a case of mirrors.
When everything is empty,
Where could the dust collect?" ^{10.8}

This tale of the mirror, which was and which was not, made us laugh heartily.

`Mika,' Mary said, `that is why Beloved Baba gave me a magic mirror that does not need any cleansing at all. He knew how lazy I am! I have only been asked to keep looking into it, from time to time, until I see Him in place of me. Dust or no dust, this magic shall be performed. I have no doubt about that.'

`Why not we look into it right now and see what it shows us,' said Merwan. `Perhaps it can show us how many lives we had and what we were in those lives? Watching that should really be great fun. Who would look into it first?'

Merwan's call for the mirror game infused us with great excitement and happiness. However, none of us was ready to look into the mirror independently of others. So we twined around each other and looked into it as a group of five. Merwan, for reasons best known to him, abstained.

This is what we saw in the mirror:

We saw an absolutely motionless and calm ocean. We wondered how an ocean could be absolutely motionless and calm. Nevertheless, this ocean was. That is why it created an eerie feeling in all of us. We thought that soon something strange would happen. It did not.

As we were looking in the mirror, Merwan asked all of us to say loudly, `Who am I?' and to blow some puffs of air on the mirror. We really enjoyed shouting, `Who am I?', `Who am I?', and blowing puffs of air targeting them on the mirror.

All this stirred the tranquility of the ocean, which looked limitless. Huge waves and splashes of countless drops and bubbles of water emerged out of the ocean. Every drop now looked highly activated. `Who am I?' `Who am I?' reverberated from each of these drops. Immediately each one of them got associated with a bubble of their choice. This led to the formation of innumerable I-drop-bubbles. Each of these 'I-drop-bubbles' had the face of a human child. All of them were singing independently songs of their own.

Who am I? Who am I?

Who I am? Who I am?

I am nothing, or
I am an electron
I am something,
Electron I am.

Who am I? Who am I?
Who I am? Who I am?
I am nothing, or
I am a stone
I am something,
Stone I am.

Who am I? Who am I?
Who I am? Who I am?
I am nothing, or
I am a metal
I am something,
Metal I am.

Who am I? Who am I?
Who I am? Who I am?
I am nothing, or
I am a plant
I am something,
Plant I am.

Who am I? Who am I?

Who I am? Who I am?

I am nothing, or

I am a worm

I am something,

Worm I am.

Who am I? Who am I?

Who I am? Who I am?

I am nothing, or

I am a fish

I am something,

Fish I am.

Who am I? Who am I?

Who I am? Who I am?

I am nothing, or

I am a bird;

I am something,

Bird I am.

Who am I? Who am I?

Who I am? Who I am?

I am nothing, or

I am an animal
I am something,
Could be a dog,
Could be a monkey,
Animal I am.

Who am I? Who am I?
Who I am? Who I am?
I am nothing, or
I am a human
I am something,
I am Mary; I am Rahim
I am Mika; I am Ram
Old boy Professor,
And sweet Merwan.

This song and dance of I-drop-bubbles delighted all of us immensely. Mary played her guitar, Rahim his harmonica and Merwan his *dholak*. Merwan winked and gestured us to look at the picture of Beloved Meher Baba. Baba was looking at us with great love.

Merwan said, 'Our magic mirror has shown us what we were before we assumed the form of a human.'

'I remember a poem by Maulana Rumi, which conveys all that we have seen just now,' said Rahim. 'The poem is entitled *The Ascending Soul*, and it says:

I died as mineral and became a plant,
I died as plant and rose to animal,

I died as animal and I was man.

Why should I fear? When was I less by dying?

Yet, once more, I shall die as man, to soar

With angels blessed; but even from angelhood

I must pass on; all except God doth perish.

When I have sacrificed my angel soul,

I shall become what no mind e'er conceived,

Oh, let me not exist! For Non-existence

Proclaims in organ tones, "To Him we shall return".^{10.9}

'Merwan, what makes an initially infinite, impression-less, unconscious and tranquil soul moving on this path, which leads to the fully developed consciousness of man,' asked Mary.

Merwan said, 'Mary, this movement, characterized by form replacements, cycle of re-incarnation, inner involutionary progression, is propelled by what can be called as the law of opposites. Conscious-consciousness is a game of two, and the Supreme Divine Being plays this game by creating pairs of opposites held together by the forces of *Premananda* or Bliss of Love. When separated, they seek each other. Finally, they succeed in coming close enough to neutralize each other and achieve merger with the Supreme Divine Being. That, which regulated the first emergence, regulated the rest. Meher Baba has described the first emergence in these words:

"Now this infinite, impressionless, unconscious, tranquil state of the soul reverberated with the first impulse, which we called *The First Urge*, 'The first urge to know Itself.'

"Simultaneously with reverberations of the first urge to know Itself, a *most-gross* First impression emerged, objectifying the soul, as the absolutely opposite and most-finite counterpart of the absolutely infinite Over-Soul.

"...Simultaneously with the *most-gross* first impression, the infinitely unconscious soul has gained the *most-finite* First Consciousness.

"...Because of this *most-gross* first impression of the first urge, the infinite, unconscious soul gained the aspects of *experience* for the first time. This experience of the infinite soul was that it (soul, atma) experienced a contrariety (absolutely opposite by nature) in its identity with the infinite, impressionless, unconscious state 'A' of Paramatma.

"...Now if the soul is conscious of impressions (sanskaras), then the soul *must necessarily experience these impressions*. And in order to experience the impressions, the consciousness of the soul must experience them through proper and suitable media... That is to say, the impressions give rise to experiences, and to experience the impressions, the use of appropriate media is essential.

"...The first medium adopted by God in His state 'A' (God as embodied soul) is a first form which, although it is gross, yet it is so inconceivably, infinitely finite that it cannot even be considered as gross. It is so very infinitely shapeless and substance-less, matter-less and formless that it cannot lead one even to imagine that it is gross. Yet, this form is the very first gross form that eventually evolves into the first three of the foremost seven '*gas-like*' forms. If a description of these first three '*gas-like*' forms could ever be attempted they could only be described from the standpoint of density --the first having infinitely negligible density, then in the next stage negligible density, and in the third state as having the first traces of density. The next three forms may come within the scope of our imagination and may be described as '*semi-gaseous and semi-material*' forms. And finally, there is the seventh '*gas-like*' form, of the series of seven foremost '*gas-like*' forms, and that may be said to include the electron." ^{10.10}

'Let us try to understand all this in the context of the Supreme Divine Being who was in divine sound sleep or the Beyond-Beyond State. Now when we qualify the sound sleep -otherwise a familiar experience- by calling it as "divine", we

intend to convey that it was the sound sleep of the Supreme Divine Being and not that of a human being. It is, therefore, impossible to conceptualize this "divine sound sleep". If it is said that the infinite, impressionless I-quanta or I-drops were unconscious, it only means that they were unconscious of impressions. If we are still keen to postulate about the nature of the Beyond-Beyond God State, knowing fully well that its complete comprehension is impossible, then the law of the opposites could prove to be of great help.'

'The sudden emergence of *The First Urge* -the first urge to know Itself- in the Beyond-Beyond State of God, the Supreme Divine Being, was the emergence of "*Absolute Uncertainty*". It indicates that the Beyond-Beyond State of God is the opposite state, which is the state of "*Absolute Certainty*". The original Whim and the original urge emerged out as the opposite state of Absolute Certainty. At the same time, it would be erroneous to identify the Beyond-Beyond State as only the state of Absolute Certainty because the opposite state of Absolute Uncertainty had also emerged out of it. If the First Impression, which emerged, simultaneously with the First Urge, was the most-gross one, it indicates clearly that the Beyond-Beyond State of God is the most-ungross State. And if the first medium, which emerged in the Beyond-Beyond State of God, was the most-finite and the most-gross first medium, then the Beyond-Beyond God State should exist in the form of absolutely infinite and absolutely rarefied medium.'

Merwan was saying all this as if in a state of profound meditation. He appeared totally self absorbed and oblivious of the surroundings. However, all of us were listening with rapt attention.

'The contrariety emerging as the First Impression creating the first consciousness generates the desire to experience it. And this leads to the creation of the first medium or the first form. This reveals another dimension of the law of opposites. A self-limited soul associates itself with a new form in order to experience the 'opposite impressions' generated in its preceding state. This means that if a self-limited soul associates itself with a human form, it does so in order to experience the 'opposite impressions' gathered in its preceding non-human animal-form associated state.'

`Merwan, excuse me for this interruption,' Mary said. `I feel that the law of opposites explains beautifully how the Beyond-Beyond State is the Ocean of Everything. Retracing the chain of opposites from their manifested end should explain this. Having known that an "Absolute Uncertainty" has manifested itself, we conclude that this contrariety could emerge only because of the Beyond-the-Beyond State having its opposite state - the state of "Absolute Certainty". But the Beyond-Beyond State is literally Beyond-the-Beyond. If we have postulated, by looking at the manifested "Absolute Uncertainty" state, the existence of its opposite "Absolute Certainty" state; then, by the same logic, focussing attention on the "Absolute Certainty" state, we should also conclude the existence of its opposite, the "Absolute Uncertainty" state in the Beyond-the-Beyond. The law of opposites makes it possible to visualize an endless regression sequence of paired opposites existing as states, things and beings on one hand, and, its opposite, an endless progression sequence of states, things and beings on the other.'

`Mary, it appears that the law of opposites and what has been called as "*Maya*" by Vedanta are one and the same,' said Ram. `A pair of opposites is actually a triad. For example, let us take a typical oscillation of a pair, say, good-and-bad. Somewhere at the centre is the zone of neutrality, a state which is neither good nor bad and that is equidistant from both polarities. This invisible third - the central state of neutrality - is the container of both polarities or the paired opposites. Take the pair of *Brahma*-and-*Mahesh*, the creator and destroyer pair. The centre is *Vishnu*, the container and the sustainer. The law of opposites, therefore, can also be called as the law of trinities. For example, there is an electron with a negative charge, and its opposite, a proton, with a positive charge. At the same time, there is also a neutron as their central neutral state.'

An excited Rahim said, `This indeed is a great vision. We have two opposite and complementary strands of DNA and the neutral stable DNA itself. If separated, then each strand acts as a template for the production of its opposite and complementary strand; and, this is how a single molecule of DNA reproduces itself and becomes many.'

Ram said, 'The eminent scholar and philosopher Dr. Bhagwan Das, while commenting on the sacred Word *OM*, has quoted a verse from **Manusmriti**:

"The old books indicate that this Sound-Word, re-verberating through akasha, Space, is the primal manifestation of the Unmanifest. It represents the Primal Tri-nity of Self (A), Not-Self (U), and affirmative-negative Relation (M) between the two. A mysterious verse of a very well known scripture indicates this. It may be rendered thus:

'That primal three-lettered *Brahma* by which the ultimate Tri-Unity is indicated, out of which Trinity all the countless triads that make up the Universe are derived, and in which is the foundation of the commonly known triple Veda - that is a *guhya*, Secret, *tri-vrt*, three-fold Veda, Science of countless trinities; it is other than the commonly known Veda; he who knoweth that Veda, Science, Knoweth the true Veda.'

The World-Process has been described as made up of pairs of opposites, the ultimate opposites being Self and Not-Self. If we take count also of the Nexus between these, we may describe it as made up of triads. The Nexus itself is dual, of the nature of affirmation-negation, assertion-denial, acclamation - repudiation, acceptance - rejection, attraction - repulsion, identification-separation." ^{10.11}

Explaining *Maya*, Ram said, 'Vedanta defines *Maya* as *Avidya* and *Ajnana*. These sanskrit terms are usually translated as ignorance, nescience, and illusion. Knowledge, in Vedanta, is not that which is gathered through intellectual process. Knowledge means Self-Knowledge, or *Atma-bodh*, which is revealed only through the direct experience of Sat-Chit-Ananda. Knowledge, therefore, is Absolute Certainty while *Maya*, or *Avidya*, is Absolute Uncertainty. It is in this state of Absolute Uncertainty, which manifests countless pairs of opposites, the self-limited soul starts oscillating between these polarities and forgets its identity with Brahman. Through ignorance or *Maya*, the Vedantic philosopher contends, the non-dual *Brahman* appears to have become the manifold universe; the Absolute, the relative.'

'Swami Vivekananda, the great Vedantin, has stated:

"Thus we find that *maya* is not a theory for the explanation of the world. It is simply a statement of facts as they exist - that the very basis of our being is contradiction, that everywhere we have to move through this tremendous contradiction, that wherever there is good, there must also be evil, and wherever there is evil, there must be some good. Wherever there is life, death must follow as its shadow. And everyone who smiles will have to weep, and vice versa." ^{10.12}

`In the words of Adi Shankaracharya:

"It is only because of ignorance that the Self appears to be finite. When ignorance is destroyed, the Self, which does not admit of any multiplicity whatsoever, truly reveals Itself by Itself, like the sun when the cloud is removed." ^{10.13}

"As the all pervading *akasa* appears to be diverse on account of its association with various *upadhis*, which are different from each other, and becomes one on the destruction of the *upadhis*, so also the omnipresent Lord appears to be diverse on account of His association with various *upadhis* and becomes one on the destruction of these *upadhis*." ^{10.14}

`Ram,' Merwan said, `Meher Baba was very fond of this word *Maya*. Meher Baba says, "Everyone wants to know and realize the Truth, but Truth cannot be known and realized as Truth unless ignorance is known and is realized as being ignorance. Hence arises the importance of understanding *Maya*, or the principle of ignorance." ^{10.15} Explaining further, Meher Baba says: "*Maya* is not illusion; it is the creator of Illusion. *Maya* is not false; it is that which gives false impressions. *Maya* is not unreal; it is that which makes the real appear unreal and the unreal appear real. *Maya* is not duality; it is that which causes duality" ^{10.16}

`Hey, what has happened to my magic mirror,' Mary exclaimed. `I inadvertently looked into it and do you know what I saw in it! I saw an unshaved male face bearing a vermilion dot-mark placed between the eyebrows. He said his name is Atmananda, and he is a Hindu by birth. He was a monk of Ramkrishna Mission Order and worked in a Mission Ashram in Belfast, Northern Ireland. He was killed there in a bomb blast.'

This created a lot of excitement in all of us. An extremely happy Merwan said, 'It is an interesting development. Mary, look again into your magic mirror and in case this Swami Atmananda is still there, ask him about his relationship with you.'

Mary did just that. Surprised, she said, 'Merwan, he is still there and says that he is not related to me, but he is me. Me as he in my previous life, and he as me in this life.'

'How do you do, Miss and Mr. Mary Atmananda,' we all shook hands with her and teased her. She too laughed and enjoyed the fun. At the same time, we were delighted to discover that Mary's magic mirror was now in a mood to reveal about our past lives. We then, one by one, dared to glance into it. And the images, which it had shown, resulted in a riot of fun and pun. Professor was a beautiful and sexy Egyptian belly dancer in his previous life. Ram worked as a call girl in a town in India. Rahim was a Muslim fundamentalist and headed a terrorist organization. Mika was a huge Sumo wrestler.

Merwan, at the first instance, refused to look into the mirror saying that he already knows about his previous and future lives. We insisted upon him to reveal that.

Merwan said, 'I am working as a clown in the Universal Circus of Meher Baba. I was a jester in all of my previous lives, and I will be just that in all of my future lives. I reincarnate, repeatedly, to entertain and make everyone laugh and feel happy.'

And he, as if to prove that, now looked into the magic mirror. We did see the face of an extremely funny looking clown, jesting and pulling faces. This amused all of us immensely.

'But, Merwan,' I said, 'you always appeared as a serene and sober person and a walking encyclopedia of profound spiritual knowledge. None of us ever took you as a clown.'

'Great clowns are serene, sober, wise persons and I am a great clown. God's clown, I should say. Meher Baba had composed an interesting couplet. It says:

"Some seek money
Some seek name,
Some seek power
Some seek fame.
Some want children
Few want God,
Life is a joke
And all is a Game." ^{10.17}

`Meher Baba says, "Life is mighty joke. He who knows this can hardly be understood by others. He who does not know it finds himself in a state of delusion. He may ponder over this problem day and night but will find himself incapable of knowing it. Why? Because people take life seriously and God lightly; whereas we must take God seriously, and life lightly. Then we know that we always were the same and will ever remain the same...the originators of this joke. This knowledge is not achieved by reasoning, but is the knowledge of experience."
^{10.18}

`God is the greatest of all clowns. One good day He Himself creates the Whim or *Lahar*, to know about His own Self, and starts putting all sorts of masks to hide His Real Face. Imitating Him, His own counterparts also put on various masks. This is how the Universal Circus starts and performs this funny and maddening universal show, in which the Real appears with various masks and plays the funny game of, "Unmask Me; if you can".'

Mary said, `That's fine, our very dear great clown. Now please explain, why do we reincarnate? Why this cycle of reincarnation should interrupt and delay the transition from the evolutionary to the involutionary phase of consciousness?'

`Mary,' Merwan said, `the whole cycle of evolution can be divided into three parts. The first is the descending track, which begins from God and ends up at the first human form. This is, what can be called as the evolution of forms. The second

part is the transverse track of re-incarnation comprising a series of human births and rebirths until the soul reaches the threshold of the Divine Path. The Divine Path - the ascending track culminating in the state of final and irreversible union with God - is the third part.'

'About this transverse track of re-incarnation, Meher Baba says:

"The apparent gap between the death and the birth of a human being is that period in which the gross conscious *atma*, in its association with its fully developed subtle and mental body, has experiences of the predominant counter-part of the opposite impressions gathered by the recently dissociated human form. This state of *atma*, in the apparent gap between death and birth, is generally called hell or heaven, and this process of intermittent association and dissociation of consciousness of the conscious soul in human form, now fully conscious, is termed the *Reincarnation Process*." ^{10.19}

'The necessity for re-incarnation arises because the soul's consciousness gets loaded with the fresh opposite impressions on account of its association with the first human form. Soul, through the medium of its mind, gets passionately attached to these impressions and strives for their actual experience. And, since the human-form is the terminating climax form, this leaves it with no other option except to associate with a fresh human form. In this new human form associated state, the soul's mind gathers a new load of opposite impressions and the cycle of birth-rebirth goes on and on.'

Rahim said, 'Merwan, it then appears, that this transverse but circular track of re-incarnation consists of the gross-body associated birth phase, the intermediary gross-body dissociated phase, and the new gross-body associated rebirth phase.'

'That's right, Rahim,' Merwan said. 'But we should not forget that these states of gross body associated existence and disembodied existence are common to form-evolution and re-incarnation phases. In the form-evolution phase, *atma*, or the soul, associates with a lower gross body form, spends some time in a disembodied state, and then associates again with a new gross body form, but now that of a higher order. In the re-incarnation phase, a specialty of human existence, no such transition from lower to higher gross body form occurs. About

this, and the soul's long lasting association with its subtle and mental forms, Meher Baba has said:

"During the course of evolution of consciousness of the soul (*atma*), while *consciously* identifying itself with varied, finite gross forms, the soul was also simultaneously, though *unconsciously*, identifying itself with its finite subtle form and its finite mental form, which associated with the soul in compact, homogeneous unconscious alliance throughout the course of evolution of consciousness right from the first urge.

"While the soul, during the course of its whole evolution, frequently and consciously dissociated itself from the finite gross forms which acted as media to experience the impressions while evolving greater and higher consciousness, the soul could never dissociate itself, consciously or unconsciously, from its finite subtle form and its finite mental form." ^{10.20}

`Merwan, this, what Beloved Baba has called as the soul's simultaneous, though unconscious, association with its finite subtle and mental forms needs further elucidation,' Mary said.

`Mary, our dreaming state should explain this better,' Merwan pointed out. `Meher Baba says: "In a way, even an ordinary dream is also a sub-conscious experience of the subtle, because everyone necessarily makes an actual use of one's subtle body in the dreaming state; but, be it noted, that through that body one experiences different sensations and experiences pertaining to the gross only. In other words the ordinary dreaming state is the experience of the gross, through subtle means in the sub-conscious state."^{10.21} Thus, the daily rhythm of dreaming and dream-less sleep is the mechanism of soul's continuous and long-lasting sub-conscious contact and association with its finite subtle and mental forms during the course of its association with human body forms.'

Ram said, `Merwan, Meher Baba, while talking about the gap between the births, has said that the gross conscious *atma* experiences, through the medium of its finite subtle and mental bodies, the predominant counter-part of the opposite impressions gathered by the recently dissociated human form. What Baba means by "predominant counter-part of the opposite impressions?" Meher

Baba has also pointed out that the incarnating *atma* spends some time either in the heaven or in the hell during this gap period. What he means by "heaven" and "hell"? Are they specific mystic regions or worlds, or mere subjective states of consciousness? How the heaven and hell periods are terminated and the soul is associated with a new human form?'

Merwan explained, 'Ram, impressions or *sanskaras* are gathered as discrete sets of opposites. The relative numerical weightiness of the specific impressions, in a set of opposites, determines their relative predominance. Let us assume that a soul, during its sojourn in a human form, has gathered 100 impressions relating to virtues and, say, 60 impressions relating to vice. Then, for such a soul, the predominant counter-part of the impressions of opposites is that of the virtues. These predominant 'virtue-related-impressions' sprout temporarily in the form of a dream like world based on them and their multifarious interactions. The *atma*, then, goes through the experience of this "heavenly" world and stays in this state until the intensity of these impressions is reduced substantially. That marks the time for its rebirth. In the words of Meher Baba:

"If the predominant counter-part of the impressions of opposites (such as virtue and vice, good and evil, male and female, etc.), as experienced by the *atma* now associated only with the subtle and mental, is of virtue or goodness (i.e. the positive aspect of the opposite impressions), then the *atma* is said to be in *heaven*. If it is of vice or evil (i.e. the negative aspect of opposite impressions), then the *atma* is said to be in *hell*.

"The states of heaven and hell are nothing but states of intensive experiences of the consciousness of the *atma*, experiencing either of the predominant counter-parts of the opposite impressions while the *atma* is dissociated from the gross human body or form. The *atma* itself does not go to heaven or hell, as is the general belief, because it is eternally infinite and eternally in *Paramatma*. It is the consciousness of the *atma*, which experiences the impressions.

"As soon as the predominant counter-part of impressions is experienced and exhausted, and just when equilibrium is about to be maintained between the opposites of impressions of the last human form that was dropped, at this juncture the *atma* automatically associates with the next-most human-form, moulded of the consolidated impressions of opposites which were about to be in a state of equilibrium."^{10.22}

`Giving an over-view of the process of re-incarnation, Meher Baba has stated:

"The life of the reincarnating individual has many events and phases. The wheel of life makes its ceaseless rounds, lifting the individual to the heights or bringing him down from high positions. It thus contributes to the enrichment of his experience. Ideals left unattained in one life are pursued further in the next life; things left undone are finished; rough edges left by incomplete endeavor are rounded off; wrongs are eventually set right. The accounts of give and take between persons receive renewed adjustment by the payment of *karmic* debts and the recovery of *karma* dues. At last, out of the ripeness of experience and through the dissolution of the ego-mind, the soul enters into the sole unity of divine life. In this divine life there is neither the binding of giving nor the binding of taking, because the soul has completely transcended the consciousness of separateness or duality."^{10.23}

"...Therefore, while the gross conscious human soul, which is now fully conscious, undergoes the experience of *opposites* in the gross world, the consciousness of the soul has to identify (or reincarnate) itself innumerable times as a male, then as a female, and vice versa, in varied castes, creeds, nationalities, colors, and in different places; as rich one time and then as a pauper, sometimes healthy and sometime sick, and so forth, all the while reviewing opposite impressions, creating opposite impressions, and simultaneously exhausting them by opposite experiences.

"It is only through these diverse opposite impressions and their respective opposite experiences, that the gross conscious human soul in the gross world could possibly one day, after millions of births and deaths, and through these

opposite experiences of births and deaths, be able to balance or thin out the residual or concentrated opposite impressions.

"It is this cycle of innumerable deaths and consequent births of human forms that ultimately results in inciting the fully evolved consciousness of the gross conscious human soul to *involve* this consciousness to that depth where the fully involved consciousness of this soul realizes the reality of the infinite, eternal state of the Self." ^{10.24}

Ram said, 'There is a beautiful story of one King Padma and his Queen Lila as told in the Hindu spiritual text, **Yoga Vashistha**. Queen Lila was a devotee of Goddess Saraswati. It so happened that King Padma died on the battlefield and his dead body was brought to the palace. A greatly saddened Queen Lila then asked the Goddess the whereabouts of her dead husband. The Goddess, using her mystical powers, took Lila to the new world of her dead husband. This new world of her dead husband was almost a replica of her own gross world where her husband had died. In this new world Lila was amazed to find herself again in her palaces surrounded by the same people. That included her husband, now with a new name. Highly perplexed by this, Lila pondered: "Unaccountable is this *Maya*...Our citizens are there as well as here. And parks, and groves, and hills, too are there in the very image of these I behold here. Even as scenes exist without as well as within a looking-glass, so it seems creation lies within as well as without the mirror of *Chit*. Which of the two *Sargas* (worlds or creations) is false and which is real? I shall ask Saraswati."

'The Goddess said: "My child! there are three spaces - the Common one, the *Chitt-akasha*, and the *Chid-akasha*. The last is subtler than the other two." Saraswati revealed that the new world of dead Padma existed in the sheaths of Chid-akasha. Explaining the illusory nature of both worlds -the new world of her dead husband Padma, and Lila's old world - Saraswati said: "You would say that that world is a fanciful copy of this; that this is in some way the cause of that. But how can a false effect flow from a true cause? Effects are not dissimilar to their causes; and if this world were the cause of that, then that would partake of the nature of this."

"My daughter! As Memory is of the nature of *Akasha*, so too is that which is born of that Memory. The world of your husband, though 'experienced' by you, was only *Akasha*. But while you were in it, was it not to you as real as this is now? Did you not see that world broad-based in space? Did you not see that night succeeded day there even as here?"

"As Space has no real dimension, so Time has none. As all this appearance of an extended Universe is mere *Prati-bha*, 'Appearing', Consciousness, Imagination; so also the appearance of Time, from a *Kshana* to a *Kalpa*, is mere *Pratibha*. And, even as in dreams, so in the case of dying, the *jiva* after passing through the swoon of death, forgets the preceding condition, and awakens into a different set of appearances, with different times and spaces..." ^{10.25}

'Ram, it's a beautiful story full of profound spiritual wisdom,' Mary said. 'Goddess Saraswati has talked about two types of inner spaces, the *Chitt-akasha* and the *Chid-akasha*. What are they and how do they differ?'

Ram said, 'Mary, *Chit* or *Chid* is the collective Principle of Consciousness which includes the various aspects called consciousness, *sub* and *supra* and *pre* and *fore* and *co* consciousness, individual and collective and universal consciousness. *Chid-akasha*, then, is Space identical with *Brahman* and contained by Brahman as the Principle or seed of Space. *Chitta* is individualized "*Chit*" or the individual mind. *Chitt- akasha* is the space as imagined in and by an individual mind. Mary, Goddess Saraswati is *Chid-Shakti* and that is how She could take Lila in the realms of *Chid-akasha*.'

'Birth, death and rebirth are deep waters,' Rahim said. 'This discussion on "hell" and "heaven" reveals that they are the dream-like creations, which unconsciously and automatically sprout after the physical death. Death is the temporary dissociation of the soul, along with its subtle and mental bodies, from its currently existing gross body. Physical death and physical life are mere punctuations in the script of the life of a soul. However, these are the spiritual grey areas where questions outnumber the answers. Daily we undergo the cyclic rhythm of gross consciousness - unconscious sleep - dreaming state – gross consciousness. In case of physical death, the sequence of the states of

consciousness remains more or less the same but the return to the gross conscious state is terminated. Thus, in death, the gross consciousness through a particular human form is irreversibly terminated, and is followed by a state of swoon or unconsciousness. In the unconsciousness, sprout the various dream-like creations, collectively identified as "heaven" and as "hell" based on highly pleasant and highly painful experiences. It appears that in our daily transition to a dreaming state, our contact with the gross body is kept intact that prevents our physical death, while in death a transition to a dreaming state occurs after the termination of this contact. It would help if somehow we succeed in getting more clarity on this front.'

`When I look at the biological side of the human body, I perceive it as an altogether different regime. It is a regime regulated and controlled by the living cell, which contains the total genetic information necessary for the development and sustenance of the human form. We, who are the soul, ego and mind, are living in this body-home as a tenant for a limited period. That is why, though we call it as "my body", we exercise only a marginal control over it. In the same manner, our body states and functions have only marginal control over our mind processes. It amazes me a lot, when I find, that almost all the points of reference, compacted and shaped as "I" or "Me", are drawn from the external environment. Most of them, such as my name, my caste, my religion, my professional qualification etc., are not even physical. As far as I am concerned, I would like to differentiate between the "I" and the "Me". "I" appears to be similar to a universal mathematical constant in the form of a neutral and unvarying quantity, while "Me" is the variable shaped by thoughts of "mine" and "not mine". In this unit of "I" and "Me", in my opinion, "I" is the soul and "Me" is the consolidated unit of "I" and mind. I would say that "I" carrying the bag of the "mind", as its precious possession, is the ego, and this ego and the mind together is the "Me". In what manner this unit of the soul, ego and mind is tied up with the human body, and why these ties are not snapped when we enter our daily sleep-dream cycle, and why they are snapped at the time of death, I have no idea.'

`Rahim, this has been explained by Meher Baba,' said Merwan.
`Meher Baba says:

"Through its association with the gross body, the soul seeks to exhaust its previously accumulated opposite impressions, but rarely succeeds in doing so. On the contrary, it often accumulates *fresh* impressions of opposites. When the gross form is about to exhaust the impressions which brought it into existence, it is dropped. The residual opposite impressions lead the soul to heaven or hell, in accordance with the predominance of virtue or vice. In discarnate existence also, all opposite impressions seek to be exhausted through the subjective experiencing of vivified impressions. But even here, in the states of heaven or hell, the equipoise of 'impressionlessness' is generally approximated but missed, and the residual predominant opposite impressions goad the consciousness of the soul to associate with a new gross medium. Complete equipoise is lacking in death as well as in birth. It can only be achieved in the gross world. Therefore an endless chain of lives in the gross sphere is sustained by residual impressions, until consciousness succeeds in getting established in impression less equipoise."^{10.26}

'About the ties and their snapping, Meher Baba has said: "Ordinarily at the instant of death the subtle body and vital force are separated completely from the gross body. But the mind maintains the connection with the gross body for the first five days after death and, to a slighter degree, for seven days more after death."^{10.27} In some cases, the disconnection of the gross body with the subtle body is not complete for the first few days, as after death, the subtle body retains its connection with the gross body by a thread like link from one to three days, but never more than that.'

'Meher Baba has stated that there are four movements of life after the final disconnection. These are, Upwards, Immediate re-incarnation, Heaven or Hell, and, Downwards. In Upwards, only the spiritually advanced beings go above and beyond the lunar sphere, and stay there till they are in a position to re-incarnate, since God realization is possible only through the gross human form. Immediate re-incarnation comes in the way of those whose good and bad *sanskaras* almost balance each other but are not exactly equal. Heaven is for those who have a large proportion of good *sanskaras*, and Hell is for those with a large proportion of bad *sanskaras*. Downwards go those who possess extremely bad *sanskaras*

resulting out from deeds like murder for lust etc. They go downwards to the region of animal or gross world attached spirits or ghosts which are disembodied and suspended beings.'

Ram said, 'Rahim has asked about the gross body links of the unit of soul, ego and mind. There are interesting descriptions of these links in ancient Hindu spiritual texts. **Mahānarāyaṇopaniṣad** states: "In the citadel of the body there is the small sinless and pure lotus of the heart which is the residence of the Supreme. Further, in the interior of this small area there is the sorrow less Ether. That is to be meditated upon continually." By Ether is meant the clear sky or space.

The ancient Hindu Spiritual texts describe in detail the human body location of the Supreme *Atman*. There is the tradition of daily recitation of these verses as *Mantra Pushpam* in temples of all sects uniformly from Cape Comoron to the Himalayas. This is accepted as the common creed of all Hindus namely, that *Atman* resides in the human heart and that it is also omnipresent. This *Mantra Pushpam* is from the *Narayan Prasna* of **Taittiriya Upanishad**. It also appears, almost verbatim, in the **Mahānarāyaṇopaniṣad** in section thirteen:

"Whatsoever there is in this world known through perception (because of their proximity) or known through report (because of their distance), all that is pervaded by *Narayana* within and without. One should meditate upon the Supreme - the limit-less, unchanging, all-knowing, cause of the happiness of the world, dwelling in the sea of one's own heart, as the goal of all striving.

"The place for His meditation is the ether in the heart - the heart which is comparable to an inverted lotus bud. It should be known that the heart, which is located just at the distance of a finger span below the Adam's apple and above the navel, is the great abode of the universe.

"Like the bud of a lotus, suspends in an inverted position, the heart, surrounded by arteries. In it, there is a narrow space (or near it, there is a narrow space called *susumna*). In it, everything is supported.

"In the middle of that (narrow space of the heart or *susumna*) remains the undecaying, all-knowing, omnifaced, great Fire, which has flames on every side, which enjoys the food presented before it, which remains assimilating the food consumed, (the rays of which spread scattering themselves vertically and horizontally), and which warms its own body from the insole to the crown. In the centre of that Fire which permeates the whole body, there abides a tongue of Fire, of the color of shining gold, which is the topmost among the subtle, which is dazzling like the flash of the lightning that appears in the middle of a rain-bearing cloud, which is as slender as the awn of a paddy grain; and which serves as a comparison to illustrate subtlety. *Paramatman* dwells in the middle of that flame. (Although He is thus limited) still He is the four-faced creator, *Siva*, *Visnu*, *Indra*, the material and efficient cause of the Universe and the Supreme Self-luminous Pure Consciousness."

`This is how Swami Vimalananda translates these verses in his translation, critical and explanatory interpretation of **Mahanarayanopnishad**. *Ayurvedacharya* Dhirendranath Banerjee has included a separate chapter entitled '*Hridaya* - Its position and Function', written by Dr.A.Lakshmi Pathi, in his treatise '*The Nervous System In Indian Physiology*'. Dr. Lakshmi Pathi translates the *Mantra Pushpam* verse, relating to the location of the *Hridaya* or Heart, as: "The *Hridaya* has like an inverted bud of a lotus with its apex downwards. It lies at a spot which is 9 inches (*Vitasti*) below the knot or the elevated portion in front of the neck (*Nishti* -Adam's apple) in the middle of the front of the neck and also nine inches above the navel -that is, at a place, midway between these two points. This lotus like heart hangs like a purse from the blood vessels (*Silaabhistulambati*). Here the blood vessels are compared to the strings of the purse and the heart to the purse itself." But, Dr. Lakshmi Pathi differentiates between the muscular heart and the Spiritual Heart, the abode of Supreme *Atman* within the human body. He cites Charak, one of the all time greats of Indian Ayurveda, who had described two hearts -the muscular and the Spiritual. Charak *Sutra* 30 treats Spiritual Heart as the seat of the embodied or quality-full Soul (*Saguna Chetah*) known only to Yogis. This apex heart, the Spiritual *Hridaya*, is felt in an area of 2 inches in front of the chest. Dr. Laxmi Pathi is of the view

that the muscular heart has been used in the *Mantra Pushpam* only as a flagpole, marking the proximate position of the Spiritual Heart. For its experience, the spiritual aspirant is expected to concentrate and visualize a tiny space (*Sookshmam Sushiram*) at the end of the muscular heart. In its tiny space is concentrated the whole universe. In the midst of that space, there is a great fire, which spreads in all directions (*Viswaachir Viswato mukhah*). In the midst of the *Mahaagni* (the great fire), there is an atomic flame, which is directed upwards. It shines bright like a streak of lightening in the midst of a blue cloud. It is so tiny as a tip of the tail of a grain of a paddy seed and has a brilliant yellowish atomic structure. At the tip of this atomic tail, the *Paramatman* or the great Soul is located.'

'The two hearts, biological and spiritual, and their spatial relationship with the *Atman* - I-drop or I-quanta- has found wide acceptance in the Hindu Spiritual Tradition in the form of Yoga, Vedanta, Tantra and Ayurveda. Upanishads call the human body as "*Brahmapuram*" or the capital of *Brahman*, or Supreme Divine Being, the King. There, in this capital, is the royal mansion in the form of the lotus of the heart where resides the King. The **Svetasvatara Upanishad** says that the individual Soul is of the size of a thumb and resides in the heart of all beings where it is protected or surrounded by the "*manveesh mana*" or the mind, the lord of knowledge. The thumb-size individual Soul has the effulgence like that of the sun and it possesses the *Samkalpa Shakti* or the power of Creative Ideation, *Ahamkara* or ego, *Buddhi* or the intellect aspect of the mind, and attributes of the body. **Svetasvatara** says that this individual Soul is so minute that if we divide the head-end of a hair into hundred parts and then one such part again into hundred parts, then alone we can have some idea of its actual size. But in reality it is infinite existing in countless forms and sizes. The Upanishad points out that the individual Soul moves with great speed though it has no legs, gathers though it has no hands, sees though it has no eyes, and hears though it has no ears. He is the Knower of all, though none knows Him. Rishis have named Him as the most Ancient, most Perfect and the Greatest. He is minute than the minutest, and larger than the largest.'

`Yoga and Tantra talk about *Shat Chakra* or subtle neural centers in human body. The *Shat Chakra* or six centers can be studied under three categories - the gross anatomical, philosophical and anatomo-philosophical. In terms of gross locations, these six centers are located inside the spinal cord which, according to Tantra and Yoga, again consists of two channels of *pranic* flows - *chitrini* and *vajrini*. The centers are: *moolaadhara*, *svaadhistaan*, *manipura*, *anaahata*, *vishuddha* and *aajna*. These centers are described as lotuses having petals between two (*Aajna-chakra*) to sixteen (*Vishuddha*). The *Sahasraar* or *Sahasradal Kamal*, meaning the lotus with thousand petals, is outside the six chakras. Tantra Shastra describe *Anaahata Chakra*, "Above that in the heart is the charming lotus (*anaahata*). It is known by its name *anaahata* and is like the celestial wishing tree (*Kalpataru*). It is the region of *Vaayu*. He who meditates on this heart lotus becomes (like) the lord of speech and able like *Ishvara* to protect and destroy the worlds. His inspired speech flows like a stream of water." In Tantra, all the *chakras* are the centres of *kala* (attributes), *tattva* (category), *bhuvana* (region) and *mantra* (seed-sound). Being interested in Samadhi or trans-mental states of consciousness; Tantra and Yoga give great importance to the *Sahasraar*.'

`Sri Ramana Maharishi, the sage of Arunachalam, was very specific and emphatic about the nature and the position of the Spiritual Heart. His discourse on this theme has been rendered in *sloka*, or verse form in Sanskrit by Vashistha Ganapathi Sastry, and named as *Hridaya Vidya*. Ramana Maharishi says that the place wherefrom the "I" thought (*Aham-Vritti*) arises is the Heart and this Heart is different from the muscular heart. Spiritual Heart or the *Hridayam* is *Atma Roopa* and is in the right side of the chest. From this spot of the *Hridaya*, light (*jyoti*) passes to the *Sahasraar* (Brain) through the *Sushuman*. Then this light spreads to the whole body from the *Sahasraar* through the Nadis channels. As in the macrocosm (the universe), the *Surya mandala* exists as a centre, so also in the microcosm (the human body), the heart is the centre. Just as, in the universe, the moon receives the rays of the sun and reflects them back, so also *Manas* which has its seat in the *Sahasraar* reflects, whatever it receives from the heart. Since in all living creatures, the place from which all *vrittis* (mental states or modes)

generate is called the heart, the description of its place and size is merely *Bhaavana* or thought-feeling.'

`Raman Maharshi's description of the Spiritual Heart finds some support in the Upanishads. **Prasnopanishada** states that the individual Soul resides in the Heart and the hundred *mana-prana* channels emanating from its centre fill the space of this Heart. Each of these hundred *mana-prana* channels is further divided into hundred sub-channels, and each of these sub-channels is further divided into seventy-two thousand *pranic* channels. Commenting on these, Adi Shankaracharya states that these channels emanate radially, like solar rays, from the Heart Centre, and fill the entire space of the human body. Out of these channels emerges the *Sushumna*, the super *mana-prana* channel, through which flow the mental or *manasic* and *pranic* or subtle energies. Pranic energy named *Udaan* flows upward in *Sushumna*, and carries with it various mental impressions, stored in the mental body, to the brain. If these mental impressions are predominantly virtue based, then the individual soul, after physical death, goes to *Punyamayaloka* (virtue-based world or heaven). If it takes with it the predominant mental impressions of vice, the individual soul goes to *Paapmayaloka* (vice-based world or hell). In case it carries a mixture of almost equal number of good and bad impressions, the individual is reborn in the gross world of humans. The Upanishad says that after the physical death the mental impressions gathered in *Chitta*, the mind in the collective sense, are driven by *Teja-Prana* and taken to the world complementary with those impressions. The Upanishad, however, does not describe the location of the Spiritual Heart either in terms of gross body indicators or subtle body indicators.'

`Question number 4 of **Prasnopanishad** enquires about the states of dreaming and deep sleep. This section devotes itself entirely to a spiritual exposition of the states of dreaming and dream-less sleep. The Upanishad reveals that in the state of *Sushupti* or the dreamless sleep all the gross sensory flows of Pranic energies are withdrawn and are merged with the mind. The mind merges with the individual soul, and the individual soul merges with *Paratpara Brahman*. This process of withdrawal and merger is compared with the setting sun in which all the outgoing light rays are withdrawn and enclosed. The other favorite

Upanishadic analogy is that of the birds returning to their nest for some rest. **Prasnopanishad** and **Brihadaaranyak** Upanishads reveal that in the state of *Sushupti* the individual soul, with its mind, ego and subtle senses, takes rest in the space of the Spiritual Heart. Obviously, the inner path leading to the Supra-mental Consciousness of the Supreme Divine Being is the one that begins from the Spiritual Heart, or the space filled by the resting Consciousness of the Supreme Divine Being, and ends in the *Sahashrar*. *Sushumna* is the super-highway connecting these two ends.'

`There is, what can be called as the most forthright, description of the two hearts in **Yoga Vashistha's Upaasana Prakaran**. This is a description of another magic mirror. Prince Ram puts forth the question, "O Sage! Where is the heart of living creatures which reflects like a big mirror all things of the universe?" In reply, Sage Vashistha says:

"There are two hearts in all living creatures; one heart is to be accepted and other is to be rejected for purposes of *Samadhi* (Yoga). That heart, which is contained in the limited space called chest (*Vakshasthala*) is to be rejected. The heart, which is the embodiment of life or consciousness (*Samvitmaatram-Chinmatram*) is the Heart which should be accepted (*Upaadeyam*). That Heart exists both outside and inside. For this Heart, (*Chit* or *Atma*), there is no distinction of outside and inside as it is present everywhere. This is the important heart. In it, the whole universe is reflected as in a mirror. This is the repository of all riches (*Sarve Sampadaam*). That is to say, that without life, there is no desire or *Ichha*, no knowledge or *Gnyan*, and no action or *Kriya Sakti*.) This is the Yogic heart (*Samvit Hridaya*) of all living beings. It is not merely a part of the body like an inanimate bit of stone (*Jade Jeenopalepanam*). Therefore, controlling the breath (*Praana Spanda*) and released of all attachment, one has to concentrate the mind upon the Heart, which is the seat of pure intellect."^{10.28}

`In Ayurveda the *Hridaya* stands for the muscular heart as well as for the brain. Charak says: "The soul as invested with attributes, the mind and thoughts are all established in the *hridaya*." Sushruta, another great name in Ayurveda,

says: "The *hridaya* is the special seat of consciousness. The channels carrying the vital principles of the body are attached to it".^{10.29}

`In an erudite exposition of death and the Supreme State based on Bhagvadgita, the renowned *Tantra* scholar Pandit Gopinath Kaviraj, defines *Hridaya* as the space filled by the consciousness at rest in a state of absolute vacuum and surrounded by the channels of *mana-prana* flows. *Hridaya*, therefore, is the space filled by *Sushupti* or Dreamless-sleep State of consciousness. Pandit Gopinath Kaviraj explains that there are two bodies in addition to the gross body - *Sukshma Linga Sarir* or *Puryastak-swaroop*, comprising of *mana* or mind, *buddhi* or intellect, *ahamkara* or ego and five *tanmatras* or subtle sense-organs, and *Niravayav Shunya Deha* or Organ-less Vacuum Body-space. In the wakeful state *Prana* reside in the gross body, in the dreaming state they reside in *Puryastak-swaroop*, and in *Sushupti* they reside in *Niravayav Shunya Deha*. The upward flow of *mana-prana* starts from *Hridaya* as *Niravayav Shunya Deha* and flows through *Sushumna* and terminates in the mystic exit-hole in *Sahasrar* called as *Brahmarandhra*. *Brahmarandhra* is the mystic space at the upper end and can be defined as the resting space of *Nada* or seed-sound. In terms of the law of opposites, it appears, that the *Hridaya* or Spiritual Heart is the trinity of *Niravaya Shunya Deha-Sushumna-Brahmarandhra*.'

`But Ram, these statements are contradicting each other,' Mary said. `On one hand the ancient texts assert that the individual Soul in man is of the size of a thumb, while on the other hand they state, with equal emphasis, that it is infinite and can be smaller than the smallest and larger than the largest?'

Merwan said, `All this confusion gets resolved the moment we take an overview. Within the Supreme Divine Being, the point of the emergence of original Fire, *Teja*, *Prana* and the seed-sound *OM* marks the location of the Supreme Divine Heart. Thus, the *OM*-Point is the Spiritual Heart of all the hearts of things and beings. The Supreme Divine Heart, containing the *OM*-Point, is the Beyond-Beyond State of God. The original *OM*-Point has assumed diverse forms and locations in the things and beings of the cosmic universe. The Spiritual Heart or the *OM*-Point, irrespective of its size and location, works as the fountainhead of Intelligence and Energy. It is the center of the centripetal and the centrifugal

flows of Intelligence and Energy. Thus, at the center of the cosmic grid of Intelligence and Energy is located the Spiritual Heart or the original OM-Point.'

Ram, feeling quite excited after listening to Merwan, said, 'This indeed is an all-encompassing vision. The Spiritual Heart, the *OM-Point*, has its own terminals in the things and beings. The heart of an atom is its nucleus. The cell-nucleus is the heart of a living cell. The central nervous system is the heart of higher animals. The Sun is the heart of the solar system. The Big-Bang point is the heart of the gross universe, and the Centre of all such centers is the original *OM-Point* or the Cosmic Spiritual Heart. The Beyond-Beyond State is the Supreme Divine Heart of Supreme Divine Being. And all these centers are within the Cosmic Body of the Supreme Divine Being which is extent from the *OM-Point* in the Beyond-Beyond State, the supreme *Moolaadhar* and *Brahmrandhra*, to the human body, the climax body form, with its own *Mooladhar* and *Brahmrandhra*. This is the total expanse of Supreme Intelligence and His subordinate mental, subtle and gross level energies. I am really delighted by this discussion on the process of re-incarnation and on the existence of Spiritual Heart in all things and beings.'

Mary said, 'I want to ask one more question. Beloved Baba has revealed that there are four types of movements - Upward, Re-incarnation, Heaven and Hell, Downward - of the individual soul after the death of its gross body. Upanishads have also described such movements. Baba says that the upward movement remains available to a select few and involves going beyond the lunar sphere. What sort of movement is this and where is this lunar sphere?'

'Mary, this would become clear if we focus our attention on the sequence of the movement of the individual soul, after the physical death, as influenced by the type of death,' Merwan said. 'Meher Baba says that from the standpoint of its psychic after effects, death can be classified into three broad categories -normal, abnormal and super-normal. Normal death occurs because of the failure of the physiological functioning of the body either due to illness or ageing. The second or abnormal type of death is that which results from accidents, murder, war and suicide. The third or super-normal type of death consists in leaving the body voluntarily but not by suicide. Advanced yogis voluntarily wind up their earthly

career after fulfilling their mission and leave their gross bodies willingly through a specific *yogic* process. This pool of individual souls also includes those who engage themselves in severe penances and self imposed hardships to achieve certain spiritual objectives. Such individuals, after their physical death, go to certain higher subtle worlds of subtle sphere. Terms *solar* or *lunar* are relative terms. Subtle worlds and their inhabiting life-forms are all imaginary creations being created out of subtle lights that are forms of subtle *pranic* energy. They are much more shining than any thing of the gross sphere. It would be quite appropriate to call the subtle energy sphere as the inner '*solar*' sphere. But the Real Sun, the Supreme Source of all types of energies, operative at different levels of the mental, subtle and gross spheres, is the Supreme Divine Being Himself. It is His Light, which illuminates the different levels of Creation. The inner worlds are only reflecting this Light much as the moon that reflects light from the sun as its own. Seen from this point of view, subtle sphere can also be called as '*lunar*'. But this direct placement, in a plane of the subtle world or even of the worlds beyond, is only a temporary affair; and, the individual soul inevitably returns to the gross world, in a human-form, to pursue the remaining course of its spiritual journey.'

'Reincarnation involves exit from the gross body and the gross world, existence in transitory gross-disembodied subtle states, and return to a human body in the gross world. Revealing about the exit sequence, Meher Baba says, "As a result of the ordinary physical death, although the *Astitwa* =subtle body and *Jiva* =life do get separated from the gross body completely, the connection of the mind is closely maintained with the corpse for the first three days after death, and slight connection goes on for seven days more;"^{10.30}. And this: "When any human being drops the physical body, this *jeevatma* is stationed in the astral world from forty to seventy-two hours before entering the heaven or hell state. This is the reason why a person who has just died maintains connection with the physical environment where he or she lived, even if the body is cremated. After this period, the disembodied *jeevatma* enters the subtle state of heaven or hell and begins to balance out its good or bad *sanskaras*."^{10.31}. It is clear that death results in the physiological destruction of the gross body, while the subtle body remains unaffected. About this Meher Baba has said:

"From the physical point of view, death does not involve annihilation of even the body, but physiologically it has become unfit to be the continued dwelling place of the spirit, and has therefore lost all importance. From the point of view of the individualized soul as mind, death does not involve any loss whatsoever, as the mind and all its *sanskaras* remain intact. The individual in essence is thus in no way different. He has only cast off his external coat. Nevertheless, this severance from the physical body is fraught with two important consequences. It is a means of introducing the individual to a new type of existence, and it is also in itself an incident of the utmost importance because of side effects of the greatest practical consequence." ^{10.32}

`About the rebirth sequence, Meher Baba says:

"Life in a new physical body must conform to lines determined by the individual's *sanskaras*. Thus there is often a close resemblance to the past life on earth, but it is not a literal repetition of the past. It is a new experiment.

"If the good and evil *sanskaras* of the individual are almost balanced at the time of death, he may take on a new physical body almost immediately. He may even enter a new incarnation as early as the fourth day after death. In such urgent cases of rebirth, the individual can enliven a ready foetus any time between the sixth and seventh months of embryological development. It is important to note that both father and mother give only *prana* or vital energy to the foetus. In addition to receiving *prana*, it must be enlivened by some individualized soul. Ordinarily this takes place during later stages of embryological development.

"When the individual is ready for reincarnation, he is automatically drawn to his future parents by *sanskaric* links. The parents act as a magnet due to their previous connections with the reincarnating individual. Occasionally the strongest *sanskaric* or *karmic* link, which the reincarnating individual has with incarnate individuals, is not with the parents, but with a brother or sister. It is this link, then, that determines the family in which he takes birth." ^{10.33}.

Ram said, 'In **Prasnopanishad** there is a clear mention of solar and lunar paths. It tells us that the pair of *Prana* and *Rayi* was the first pair produced by the Prajapati. Out of the two, *Prana* is the Sun and *Rayi* is the Moon. *Prana* is the Effulgent Universal Fire immanent in all things and beings. *Prana* is Atman, the Supreme Self. *Rayi* is all things manifest and unmanifest. The Southern Path, in relation to *Prana* and *Rayi*, is open for those individual souls who worship the things and beings of the domain of *Rayi* and this path leads to lunar worlds only. Such souls are not liberated from the cycle of birth and rebirth. The Northern Path is open for those who seek the knowledge and the experience of the Supreme Self, and dedicate themselves whole-heartedly to achieve that. This path is the path of Immortality and Liberation from the cycle of birth and rebirth. This path leads to the supreme Solar Sphere. This is *Paraa-gati*, the transcending movement.'

'**Prasnopanishad** reveals the spiritual law of post-death movement and place-ment: "*Sankalpa* or mental formations, firmly fixed in Chitta at the time of physical death, flow with the stream of *Prana-Tej* and lead the individual soul to an inner world compatible with those *sankalpa*."^{10.34} **Bhagvadgita** also states the same principle: "That upon which a person meditates with *bhaav* or emotion at the time of death, quitting the body absorbed in the thought thereof, that particular thing he attains after death."^{10.35} **Bhagvadgita** categorically states: "Whosoever meditates, with *bhaav*, upon Me, the Supreme Divine Being, at the time of physical death, would surely come to Me."^{10.36} *Bhaav* means deeper emotion involving *mana*, *prana* and *prana*-channel. It is not superficial emotion-less remembrance.'

'**Bhagvadgita** describes two flows of post-death movement - *Aparagati* and *Paragati*. *Aparagati*, the movement within the realm of Illusion, bifurcates into two flows: one, which leads to higher lunar worlds, and the other, which leads to lower worlds. Individual souls remain in these worlds until that time, which consumes the overload of positive or negative *sanskaras*. After that, they are reborn in the *Mrityu-Loka* -the gross world of human beings. *Paragati* is the movement that goes beyond the domain of Illusion, trifurcates into three flows. First leads directly to the transcendental *Param Dham* or the Supreme Abodes of

the Supreme Divine Being; second, is the flow of gradual ascent which goes beyond the domain of Illusion and liberates the individual soul from its self-limitation, bringing about its final merger in the *Sat-Chit-Ananda* Consciousness; third, is not the post-death movement but the one in which the complete *Sat-Chit-Ananda* Consciousness of the Supreme Self is realized in the human-body state.'

`Ram, what is meant by "upper" and "lower" movements and worlds?' asked Rahim.

`Rahim, *Paragati* is the Supreme Ascent leading to the uppermost Illusion transcending regions. In *Aparagati*, there are upper and lower movements correlatable with the physical mode of exit of the individual soul, and its *prana-tej* flow, at the time of physical death. Chapter 298 of *Shantiparva* in **Maha-Bharat**, an ancient Hindu spiritual text, describes this. Human body has in all nine physical inlet-outlet points of sensory flows -2 eyes, 2 ears, 2 nostril, 1 mouth, 1 anus and 1 genital opening. *Brahmrandhra* is the 10th mystic spiritual inlet-outlet point in *Sahashraar*. *Prana-tej*, in the case of highly virtuous individuals, leave through the upper openings; in the case of those, with a moderate load of positive *sanskaras*, leave through the middle openings; and in the case of sinners through the lower openings. The post-death placement in the upper lunar sphere, heaven, hell, and the lower domain of the spirits depends upon the mode of the exit of *prana-tej*. All these are the regions of Illusion. The 10th exit point, the mystic *Brahmrandhra*, is not available to the virtuous as well as the sinners. This is the threshold of *Paragati*.'

`Thanks, Merwan and Ram,' said Rahim. `It has been a great and highly rewarding spiritual discussion.'

`Everybody should give thanks to me. It was I, who had initiated this discussion,' Mary said.

`No. The magic mirror initiated it, and we must say thanks to your magic mirror. Give me that mirror, please,' Ram said jocularly.

Ram took hold of the mirror and looked into it. No sooner he did that, he shouted with amazement and disbelief, 'Hey, everybody, look at that!'

We all, minus Merwan, looked into the magic mirror and were amazed to see ourselves as featureless shining forms of light with no defined organs.

'It is really a bizarre sight. What this magic mirror is up to, no body knows?' Mary asked.

Merwan explained, 'It is showing us now in our subtle bodies. It appears that we have, quite unconsciously, reversed the process of seeing. Earlier we were busy in seeing things from inside out, and it has then shown us our past gross-life forms. We have now started seeing from outside in, within ourselves, and that is why it is showing us in our subtle body-forms.'

'I am getting fed up with this gross body, subtle body, mental body affair,' Mary said with tears in her eyes. 'I am waiting desperately for the moment when it will show me the divinely beautiful face of my Beloved Meher Baba. He has promised that.'

'Mary that will happen only when this mirror will crack up into pieces,' Merwan said. 'Meher Baba says: "The mirror of the limited mind is seeing through the veil of *sanskaras*; the mirror is made of *sanskaras*, and once all *sanskaras* are gone the mirror breaks (limit breaks down) and the image (man) inside the mirror vanishes; then INFINITE INTELLIGENCE sees its Self."^{10.37} So, Mary dear, you will have to wait for that to happen. And when it will happen, no body knows.'

'You, jealous cock! You, chirpy joker! Why we should talk philosophy all the time? Come on, look into my mirror and let me see what it shows? I am sure that it will show the face of a monkey,' Mary said teasingly.

'Should I? Alright, I will do just that. But, Mary dear, you will be disappointed. By calling me a cock, a joker and a monkey, you have only confused the mirror. Come on every body and see me in one of my funny forms!' said Merwan.

What we saw there made us laugh and dance with great merriment. We saw the shining form of a most funny and mischievous chicken. That rogue of a chicken laughed and danced with all of us.

Punrapi jananam, Punrapi Marnam
 Punrapi janani jatharey shayanam
 Iha Samsarey bahudustarey
 Krapayaapaarey pahi Murarey
 Bhaj Govindam, Bhaj Govindam
 Bhaj Govindam moodhmatey
 Sampraaptey sannihitey kaley
 Na he Na he rakhsati dukrankaraney ^{11.1}

Ram was singing melodiously the famous *Charpatpanjarika stotram* of Adi Shankaracharya. This verse in Sanskrit appeared to be the most befitting finale to what we have discussed earlier. The rhythm and the melody of the song enchanted all of us. Mary and Mika insisted upon its translation.

Ram said, 'I have translated it in my own way:

Birth unceasing! Death unceasing!
 Ever to pass through a mother's womb!
 Hard to cross is the world's wide ocean:
 Lord, redeem me Through Thy mercy!
 Worship Meher, worship Meher,
 Worship Meher, foolish one!
 Intellectual gymnastics profit nothing
 Once the hour of death draws nigh.'

'Rightly said and said at the right time, dear Ram', Mary expressed. 'This Ocean of Nothing appears to be endless and infinite. So far, we have drowned ourselves only in the sea of words. Words only satisfy, but fail to transform. There is no change in the quality of our consciousness. On the contrary, we are gripped by the feelings of utter hopelessness and helplessness. In this illusory world all things and beings are illusory. Illusion being illusion cannot nourish the heart with the nectar of love and compassion. Illusion can only create more illusion - illusion of love, illusion of compassion, illusion of knowledge and so on. Illusion can force us to believe that whatever we have understood, so far, was only illusion appearing in the garb of real knowledge. We have only succeeded in adding more zero to the zero with which we had started.'

'We are caught up in a vicious circle. Accumulation of good *sanskaras* takes us to heaven, and that of bad *sanskaras* takes us to hell. Breath control, penance, *yogic* postures and meditation would, at the most, take us to higher inner worlds and perhaps little further. However, in the end we all would be kicked back to the *samsara* - this endless cycle of birth and death. In this vision, good is the chain of gold, and bad the chain of iron. However, a chain, after all, is a chain. The door to the mystic path of the involution of consciousness remains locked, at least for all of us. We have no idea of its real key. When an individual soul would become a pilgrim of the inner spiritual path? - We do not know. There appears to be no imminent end to this utterly helpless and hopeless state of ours.'

'Our intellect, howsoever illusory we may call it, is always there to tempt us like the biblical Satan who took Jesus to a high mountain and showed Him all the kingdoms of the world in all their greatness. "All this I will give you," the devil said, "if you kneel down and worship me". In the same manner, the devilish intellect of ours allures us by saying that what we are glamorizing as the transcendental Supreme Divine Being is actually a replacement of one illusion by another. This devil of intellect stands there with the ever-tempting offer of the Kingdom of Sensuous Enjoyment in this very world, and in this very life. It says how could the state of dreamless sleep, which is the state of total unconsciousness and can also be induced by drugs, be called as the Beyond-Beyond State of God? That If this state is really the transcendental divine

state of God, then the anesthetists should be the real high priests of spirituality, and anesthetics the real nectar. The intellect says that the consciousness and self awareness are the products of the neuro-chemical reactions that take place in the brain. The so called spiritual experiences of inner sounds, lights and colors are the result of self induced excitement of the certain areas in the brain because the psychedelic drugs can also induct such experiences. The satanic intellect of ours says that it was a sheer chance that we were born as a by-product of the sexual copulation of our parents. Death will erase the script of our life, totally and forever. "So kneel before me and worship me," says the devil of intellect, "and you will be made a life member of the Real Pleasure Club." Right from the dirty and stinky brothels, to the shining and fragrant temples, mosques, *gurudwaras*, pagodas and cathedrals reigns the kingdom of the god of pleasure and self gratification. The so called spiritual gurus and yogis, sensing the enormous money making potential of meditation techniques and yogic body culture, have turned religion and spirituality into a 'minimum investment' and 'maximum turnover' industry. Gods are marketed in attractive sachets with guaranties of instant relief.'

'Who is speaking all this?' Merwan asked, 'A rebel Mary? Or the satanic part of Mary?'

'Mary is only presenting the contra view,' Mary said. 'It is impossible to check such thoughts and temptations. We have not yet crossed and come out of the ocean of Infinite Nothing. What else one can expect from the waves and bubbles of this ocean, except this chorus on the rapture and splendor of nothing. However, Merwan, this Mary is no longer the same old Mary. A new Mary was born out of the ecstasy of togetherness with her divine Beloved Meher Baba. Having tasted the nectar of His Love, this Mary now knows what is real and what is not real! So long Beloved Baba is holding her hand, she is full of all hopes. She knows that we will be taken across this ocean of Infinite Nothing and will reach the Shoreless Ocean of Love and Truth - the Eternal Abode of her Divine Beloved Meher Baba. Beloved Meher Baba knew that the nothingness of this ocean of Infinite Nothing would frustrate and torture all of us, and that is why He gave, to each one of us, the precious gift of the ecstasy of His loving touch. He is now

waiting, with open arms, for all of us there on the shores of the Shoreless. There is no doubt about that.'

'Sensuous pleasure, money and power attract me no more,' Mika said. 'I was born in that filth. I am a seeker of real peace and harmony -harmony within and harmony all around. Merwan, this voyage across the Ocean of Non-existence has proved to be an exciting and a delightful adventure. We have learnt a lot about *Maya* and her illusory creations. I feel that recognizing an illusion as illusion in itself is a great achievement. The dreamer who knows that he is dreaming is already 'awakened' and is no longer a prisoner of his dream. We have not only recognized an illusion as illusion but have also discovered that all that which had appeared as "real", and had enamored all of us, was actually a part of that illusion. This indeed is a great discovery. This feeling of helplessness and hopeless emanates from this realization - the discovery of illusion as the reality of all that appeared as "real". We are face to face with an illusion, which hides the face of reality. It is this dark cloud of illusion, engulfing all of us in its gloom, which makes us feel uncertain and insecure. But this cloud has a silver lining of its own. This experience of the "Illusion enclosing the real" would make us increasingly restless and desperate to seek the "Reality which encloses the illusion". Meher Baba, as the compassionate Buddha, took care to give us an intimate experience of transcendental Love and Truth in order to keep our hopes alive. Beloved Baba, as the Eternal Buddha, is eternally waiting on the other shore of the Shoreless - the Buddha's world of Enlightenment. In the Shoreless, there is no greed, no anger, no ignorance, no suffering, no agony, but only the light of wisdom and the rain of compassion. Buddha's mission is everlasting. As long as men live and creatures exist, and as long as selfish and defiled minds create their own worlds and circumstances, there will be no end to His mission.'

'This gift, in the form of inner experiences of Meher Baba's divine love, is indeed the most precious one,' Merwan said. 'He, out of compassion, always gives this gift to His lovers so that they can love Him, as He ought to be loved. Meher Baba says:

"I have also said that you cannot love me as I ought to be loved. To do that you must first receive the gift of my love, and that gift depends upon absolute

pleasure on my part in giving you just a glimpse of the reality of my self. No one can possess love by any means other than as a gift. But I give love to self and accept it myself. The giving of love knows no law save love, which by itself is the law which governs all other laws of nature." ^{11.2}

"If a person accepts, without reserve, from the bounty which the God-Man showers, he creates a link, which will stand by him until he attains the goal of freedom and God-Realization." ^{11.3}

`Mika, to the questions - why should Meher Baba as Buddha, or Buddha as Meher Baba wait eternally on the other shore? Why His mission is everlasting? - Meher Baba gave the answer. Baba says:

"There is One Drop Who is always active,
the First Drop Who was the One to realize,
`I am no drop, I am the Ocean Itself!'
and He swallowed the Ocean.

The First Drop simultaneously realized,
`I am the Ocean, but I am every drop too.'
Because He realized that He is every drop,
He is always active.

Each and every drop is the Ocean,
always was the Ocean
and always will be the Ocean,
but a drop only knows this
after it is Realized, 'Oceanized'.

That is why the First Drop
Who realized that He was every drop
remains ever active,
to 'oceanize' the Ocean of drops.

The Buddha
is the individuality of the Ocean Itself,
the 'Oceanized' Ocean that experiences
the Ocean of Infinity
infinitely in Himself.

Buddha is the Infinity of the Infinite
that one must experience
to experience the Infinite." ^{11.4}

`He, the First Drop, eternally awaits the arrival of other drops, on His own shores, in order to 'oceanize' each one of them in Himself,' said Merwan. `He, being the very first, is the Ancient One and Highest of the High, who had come as Zaruthustra, Ram, Krishna, Buddha, Christ, Mohammed and now as Meher Baba.'

What Merwan has said sounded like a melody. I found it extremely difficult to resist myself from crying. Unabated tears - tears of an unexplainable inner joy - streamed out of my eyes. Surprisingly no body felt disturbed and embarrassed by this unrestrained display of emotion on my part.

Indulging in retrospective introspection, I expressed myself: `I am on a pilgrimage to the abode of Divine Love. Divine Love holds the opposites together, brings them closer when they are separated, and merges them in its Infinitude.

Divine Love is Infinite Intelligence Itself. Desire has always forced me to perceive the present as a big vacuum that needed to be filled by whatever I possessed. However, the present moment is the infinity itself and how can it be filled with things which are illusory? I thought that perhaps knowledge would be able to fill it. I forgot that like all other things, intellectual knowledge is also a servant of desire. Desire always seeks the future and ignores the present. Desire believes that the happiness resides in the objects of the external environment and, therefore, makes use of knowledge to harvest it from them. Desire only remembers the pleasant experiences of the past and seeks their repetition by recreating conditions conducive to their recurrence.

`Science based materialism is the offspring born out of the wedlock of knowledge with desire. It is the instrument invented by the desire to fill the vacuum of the present moment with the experiences of pleasure. Desire cleverly engages us in achieving the impossible and perpetuates itself endlessly. This hue and cry, about our all round moral degradation and ever deepening value crisis, is actually the mask that we wear in order to camouflage our own selfishness and greed. It was sheer hypocrisy on my part when I had blamed everything else, except my own self, for all this chaos and morbidity.'

`Beloved Meher Baba's touch of divine love has convinced me that He alone can fill this vacuum of my life with His Love and Truth. With the present overflowing with His Love as Truth, who would crave for the imaginary things of future? With the present overflowing with real happiness, surging from within, who would go out to beg happiness from others? I, therefore, seek Meher Baba - my Divine Beloved - because in Him alone I will discover the eternal fountainhead of Love as Truth and Beauty. With heart full of Him and His Love, we will go back to our world chanting His mantra - *Om Meher Om, Om Meher Om*, and keeping Him in our hearts. We will share the beauty and truth of His Divine Love with others. It is through such loving and spiritually profound interactions a New Humanity would emerge out radiant with the glow of His Love as Truth, Beauty and Happiness.'

`Professor, this talk about the emergence of a New Humanity is a great vision indeed,' Mika said. `It is not a utopia but something that would materialize in near

future. This vision emanates out of ever-continued experiences of Divine Love, Truth and Beauty as experienced by a vast multitude of individuals, who could establish inner contacts with Meher Baba. Buddha had described this beautifully when he talked about "Building a Buddha Land". Buddha says:

"Let us imagine a desert country lying in absolute darkness with many living things swarming blindly about in it.

Naturally they will be frightened and as they run about without recognizing one another during the night, there will be frequent squirming and loneliness. This is indeed a pitiful sight.

Then let us imagine that suddenly a superior man with a torch appears and everything around becomes bright and clear.

The living beings in the dark solitude suddenly find a great relief as they look about to recognize one another and happily share their companionship.

By 'a desert country' is meant a world of human life when it lies in the darkness of ignorance. Those who have no light of wisdom in their minds wander about in loneliness and fear. They were born alone and die alone; they do not know how to associate with their fellow men in peaceful harmony, and they are naturally despondent and fearful.

By 'a superior man with torch' is meant Buddha assuming a human form, and by His wisdom and compassion He illumines the world." ^{11.5}

'About enlightenment Buddha says:

"Enlightenment is like rain that falls on a mountain and gathers into rivulets that run into brooks, and then into rivers which finally flow into the ocean.

The rain of the sacred teaching falls on all people alike without regard to their conditions or circumstances. Those who accept it gather into small groups, then into organizations, then into communities and, finally, find themselves in the great Ocean of Enlightenment.

The minds of these people mix like milk and water and finally organize into a harmonious Brotherhood." ^{11.6}

`Describing the manner in which spreads the Love and Truth of the Ancient One, Buddha says:

"The children of Buddha, who have crossed to the Pure Land by means of the great power of Amida, may be zealous to return to the land whence they came and where they still have ties. There they will take their part in the Buddha's mission.

As the light of a small candle will spread from one to another in succession, so the light of Buddha's compassion will pass on from one mind to another." ^{11.7}

Explaining the identity of Amida with Buddha, Mika said, `Amida is Amitabh and Amitabh is the eternal Buddha as He appears in the mental space of a meditator. Contemplating the setting sun, the meditator visualizes the radiant deep-red figure of Amitabh, glowing with love and compassion for every sentient creature. And as this radiance surrounds and fills the sadhak, or 'meditator', the petals of his heart are opened and in deep devotion he repeats the mantra *OM AMITABHA HRIH* which is not different from *OM MEHER OM* as chanted by our Professor. Amitabh then manifests in the inner space and on the plane of individuality and action, in the form of Avalokitesvara, in whom the rays of his infinite light are transformed into innumerable helping arms and outstretched hands.'

`I am enchanted by this talk about the emergence of a New Humanity shaped by the touches of Divine Love, Truth and Beauty,' said Rahim. `No doubt it's a beautiful dream, but I have my own doubts about its actual materialization. Traditional religions have been overtaken and relegated by the forces of materialism. Terrorist groups, guided by political and monetary ambitions, are cleverly using religion to enforce compliance on simple god fearing people. Exploitation and oppression, in the name of religion, still goes on unchallenged. Mighty nations, minting money out of global sale of arms and technology of destruction, have discovered that promotion of terrorism and strife is in their interest. Terrorist groups, ever in need of money to buy arms and ammunition, succumb to the temptation of earning big money through drug trafficking. The drug and other mafia, who secretly control the politics and the economics of

nations, use them. Mafia groups control the nations; nations control the terrorists and promote terrorism; terrorists control the traditional religion's clergy and make use of religions to impose their rein of terror and oppression; and, terrorists serve Mafiosi. A permissive society, worshipping the god of pleasure, tolerates all sorts of perversions and vulgarities. Consumerism, promoted by the global advertising campaigns through the media, nourishes this society and helps in the spread of the cancer of materialism. Environmental crisis, value crisis, moral crisis, economic crisis - the world keeps moving from one crisis to another. This is the Satanic Circle of suffering, misery and death. The world is literally in the bloody clutches of Satan. So-called saviors have become murderers and are kneeling before Satan, begging for petty bounties. Where is the way out? '

Merwan said, 'Divine Love is the way and the goal. Divine Truth is the way and the goal. Soul's Divine Beauty is the way and the goal. The eternal Beloved, the Ancient One and the Highest of the High, who had come earlier as Zaruthustra, Ram, Krishna, Buddha, Jesus, Mohammed and now as Meher Baba, is the way and the goal. Meher Baba is the Savior. Devil is killed by his own *karma*. However, devil's *karma* do create misery and suffering all around and the Savior has to bear that cross and suffer for all of us. Avatar or Buddha or Christ is Divine Love, and Divine Love is Beauty, Truth and Light. The gloom of the centuries is destroyed, the moment we bring in the light. Avatar brings that Light, and lightens our minds and hearts. Through His lovers, He gives continuity to His work for which He, out of compassion and love, is eternally committed. Meher Baba has talked about this eternal commitment in what He called as His **Final Declaration**. Meher Baba has said:

"Age after age I come amidst mankind to maintain My own creation of illusion, thereby also awakening humanity to become aware of it. The framework of illusion is always one and the same, but the designs in illusion are innumerable and ever changing. My advent is not to destroy illusion because illusion, as it is, is absolutely nothing. I come to make you become aware of the nothingness of illusion. Through you I automatically maintain illusion, which is nothing but the shadow of My infinite self, and through Me you automatically discard illusion when you are made aware of its falseness." ^{11.8}

"Avataric periods are like the spring-tide of creation. They bring a new release of power, a new awakening of consciousness, a new experience of life - not merely for a few, but for all. Qualities of energy and awareness, which had been used and enjoyed by only a few advanced souls, are made available for all humanity. Life, as a whole, is stepped up to a higher level of consciousness, is geared to a new rate of energy. The transition from sensation to reason was one such step, the transition from reason to intuition will be another.

This new influx of the creative impulse takes, through the medium of divine personality, an incarnation of God in a special sense - an Avatar. The Avatar was the first individual soul to emerge from the evolutionary process as a Sadguru, and He is the only Avatar Who has ever manifested or will ever manifest. Through Him, God first completed the journey from unconscious divinity to conscious divinity, first unconsciously became man in order consciously become God. Through Him, periodically, God consciously becomes man for the liberation of mankind." ^{11.9}

`Conscious Divinity - Beyond God or *Paramatman* or *Allah* or Father in heaven - is the Ancient One. He, out of His Infinite Love and Infinite Compassion, had self limited Himself as the first soul and undertook, in the human form, the evolutionary and involutionary journeys, and the final ascent to *Sat-Chit-Ananda* super consciousness, and the descent with that state in the human consciousness. In His infinite mercy He Himself has labored hard to build this Spiritual Highway between Illusion and Reality. By making "Conscious Divinity" possible in the human form, our Divine Father has made man responsible for the continued sustenance of Divinity in His creation. In His message, **Highest of the High**, Meher Baba says:

"The Avatar is always One and the Same, because God is always One and the Same, the Eternal, Indivisible, Infinite One, who manifests Himself in the form of man as the Avatar, as the Messiah, as the Prophet, as the Ancient One -the Highest of the High. This Eternally One and the Same Avatar repeats His manifestation from time to time, in different cycles, adopting different human forms and different names, in different places, to reveal Truth in different garbs

and different languages, in order to raise humanity from the pit of ignorance and help free it from the bondage of delusions." ^{11.10}

`Oh, Merwan dear, this is the most profound and most complete statement on God, Christ and Man,' Mary said. `Krishna, Buddha, Jesus and Mohammed said the same thing, but our pundits, clergy and mullahs, ever in fear of the closure of their shops of religion, have deliberately given the biased and distorted versions of this. This is what Jesus has said on this, when He talked to His disciples about the Way to the Father:

"Do not be worried and upset," Jesus told them. "Believe in God and believe also in me. There are many rooms in my Father's house, and I am going to prepare a place for you. I would not tell you this if it were not so. And after I go and prepare a place for you, I will come and take you to myself, so that you will be where I am. You know the way that leads to the place where I am going."

Thomas said to him, "Lord, we do not know where you are going; so how can we know the way to go there?"

Jesus answered him, "I am the way, the truth, and the life; no one goes to the Father except by me. Now that you have known me," he said to them, "you will know my father also, and from now on you do know him and you have seen him."^{11.11}

`And replying to Philip's question about the whereabouts of the Father, Jesus has said:

"For a long time I have been with you all; yet you do not know me, Philip? Whoever has seen me has seen the Father. Why, then, do you say, `Show us the Father'? Do you not believe Philip that I am in the Father and the Father is in me? The words that I have spoken to you" Jesus said to the disciples, "do not come from me. The Father, who remains in me, does his own work. Believe me when I say that I am in the Father and the Father is in me. If not, believe because of things I do. I am telling you the truth; whoever believes in me will do what I do - yes, he will do even greater things, because I am going to the Father. And I will do whatever you ask for in my name, so that the Father's glory will be shown through the Son. If you ask me for anything in my name, I will do it." ^{11.12}

`Mary, I do agree with you,' said Rahim. `The holy Koran maintains that a true Muslim should believe in all prophets sent by Him and should not discriminate between one and the other. The holy Koran says, "Those who disbelieve in *Allah* and His messengers and desire and say: We believe in some and disbelieve in others; and desire to take a course in between - these are truly non-believers."

^{11.13} Koran has also revealed that a guide has been sent to earth for every people. The holy Koran says, "Thus to every people have we made their deeds fair-seeming; then to their Lord is their return so He will inform them of what they did." ^{11.14} The expression "to their Lord" is used only relatively because *Allah* is One and the Only One and their Lord is my Lord and my Lord is everybody's Lord -the Ancient One, the Highest of the High, the Supreme Divine Being.'

Merwan said, `Mary, about the way to the Father, Meher Baba has said:

"I am not limited by form. I am within everyone and within you as the real Guide. So following Me does not mean that you have to leave everything and stay near Me. It also does not mean that you are to use Me as a dumping board for your worries, nor that you are to expect Me to fulfill your wants. It means that you are to be completely resigned to My Will and abide in a spirit of total surrender.

To follow me is to obey Me and to do as I want. When My Will becomes your way, you are truly following Me, and then you are safe and you are saved. I know the way and its labyrinths for I am the Way and I am the Goal." ^{11.15}

`Jean Adriel in her famous book, **Avatar**, has mentioned that once, when a questioner asked Meher Baba how He knew that He was the Christ, He replied: `I knew it before anything was." ^{11.16} This is perhaps another way of saying: `Before Abraham was, I am.' In an equally mystical assertion, Meher Baba, on December 11th 1925, said that Christ, Mohammed, Buddha, Krishna, Ram and Zarathustra - they all had His face and hair.' ^{11.17}

`It was not a talk of a megalomaniac. Meher Baba was divinely beautiful. Seeing Him, even for a few seconds, was always not only an unforgettable experience, but also the one which has changed the course of the lives of hundreds and thousands of men and women the entire world over. Even today,

some thirty years after His physical departure from earth, His photographs and paintings are creating the same impacts and drawing vast numbers of people towards Him.'

`Katherine Anna Tolhurst, a young woman interested in Buddhism and studying judo under Koizumi, has described her first meeting with Meher Baba in Combe Martin, England, in September, 1931. Katherine says, "I always loved Jesus Christ and it seemed to me that Baba was like the Jesus I had known as a child in the paintings depicting him. I felt this tremendous love, this tremendous compassion. Although there was a great deal to criticize in me and even be stern about (I most certainly had not always been as good or nice a person as I should have been), in his eyes there was nothing but understanding and compassion and no condemnation at all. I think it was that that won me over to him. However sensual one had been, however undutiful, ungrateful or careless - whatever one's faults were that he saw -it seemed as if he saw what one might become and drew this out. That is really all I can say." ^{11.18}

`Christmas Humphreys, president of the Buddhist Society of London, wrote about his impressions of Meher Baba in an article entitled **The Incarnation of Love**:

"For the first time in my life, and I have not met another like him, I found myself in the aura of a man who literally radiated love. He combined the profundity of mystical experience with the guileless candor of a child, and his smile was as infectious as the words he used were immaterial. And all the while he radiated such a pure affection that one wondered why, when all religions praise the value of pure love, should it be a memorable experience to meet one man who practiced it.

If there were more Meher Baba in the world today, war would end for want of causes. This man of love sets all men an example." ^{11.19}

`Margaret Craske, who had her own dancing school in London and who later wrote two beautiful books on her Beloved Meher Baba -**The Dance of Love** and **Still Dancing with Love** - first met Meher Baba on his first visit to England in 1931. She wrote about her impressions of meeting Him:

"The whole time was invested with a dream-like quality of pure love, timelessness and great beauty. It was as if the curtain had been drawn aside and we were privileged to know and feel from our hearts who Baba is. I have not experienced anything quite like it since." ^{11.20}

Merwan, continuing this wonderful narration of the impacts of meeting Meher Baba, said, 'Quentin Todd, an American actor and comedian who lived in England, felt tremendous love and peace emanating from Baba, and also experienced the feeling of recognition of a long lost friend. Charles B. Purdom, author, drama critic, economist and editor of a magazine called **Everyman**, upon meeting Baba said, "His eyes are large and beaming, lighting up His face which irradiates happiness... He combines the simplicity of a child with the wisdom of ages... He does not need to speak: He has the power of truth in Him." ^{11.21}. Purdom has written three great books on Meher Baba - **The Perfect Master**" which appeared in 1937, **God to Man and Man to God** published by Victor Gollanz, London, and, **The God Man**, published by George Allen and Unwin, London.'

'Delia DeLeon, an actress who met Meher Baba in London, describes her meeting in these words in her beautiful book, "**The Ocean of Love, My Life with Meher Baba**":

"I was stunned. I had seen His face before in my dreams: the eyes were startling in their beauty; the face seemed luminous, honey-colored, framed by a halo of long dark hair... For me it was a wonderful experience to be in Baba's radiant presence. When he enfolded me in His loving arms and His eyes gazed deeply into mine, I knew that my search was over. I loved Him and believed in Him and gave my life into His keeping." ^{11.22}

'Jean Adriel, who first met Meher Baba in America in a small town called Croton-Harmon near New York City, has this to say:

"My most outstanding impression of the first meeting with Baba is one of peering into bottomless pools of love and tenderness as my eyes met his. Seeing him, my heart pounded tremendously with excitement. For a while, I could not speak. I felt that in a mysterious way he was the reason for my existence. I felt

that I had never really lived until this moment. He was deeply familiar to me, even as I was no stranger and dear to him." ^{11.23}

Jean wrote a great biographical book on Meher Baba entitled **Avatar** - perhaps the first one by any Westerner on Meher Baba addressed as the Avatar or the Christ. Jean's book, published by John F. Kennedy University Press, U.S.A., appeared in the year 1948

`Malcolm Schloss, Jean's husband, described Meher Baba as, "Looking for all the world like a Rembrandt painting of Jesus come to life."

`Norina, an Italian by birth, was wife of Prince Georges Matchabilli, a national hero of Georgia who had fought for his country after the Russian revolution. Matchabilli couple settled in America where they founded the company "Matchabilli Perfumes". Norina, as a young woman, was chosen by the stage director Max Reinhardt to play the role of Madonna in his play *The Miracle*. The play was a great success performed over a thousand times. Norina, along with Elizabeth Patterson, Nadine Tolstoy, daughter-in-law of the famous Leo Tolstoy, and Kitty Davy, not only became close disciples of Meher Baba but also worked as the main anchorwomen of Baba in the West. This is how Norina describes her first meeting with Meher Baba:

"I entered the room in which Meher Baba was sitting surrounded by followers and disciples. That very moment an experience began - full of wonder and beauty. Suddenly I had to run across the room and I found myself weeping on the floor at his feet. Weeping! Oh, how I was weeping! But I also began to laugh, and the stream running down my cheeks and the outbursts of laughter became one. While I was resting my head on Baba's hand, my whole body was shaking with terrible sobs of liberation." ^{11.24}

`There is no end to these stories and somebody should stop me telling them,' said Merwan and asked, `Ram what is that saying *Hari anant*, and what?'

`It is *Hari anant*, *Hari katha ananta*, meaning God is endless and His stories are endless,' Ram explained.

`That's a great saying, Ram', Merwan said. `I have intentionally selected these accounts of the impressions of meeting Meher Baba, given by western men and women of different walks of life, when they first met Him during His very first visit to England and America in 1931. The time period is of great significance, and of course the arrival of Beloved Baba in the west is of greatest significance. This was the early phase of the twentieth century. In order to have a close view of the unfolding of the divine plan, we must take an over-view of the significant happenings of the time period, preceding and following Meher Baba's birth in 1894, to sort out those major influences which became the legacy of the twentieth century. The divine plan was to bring about a transition from instinct to reason. This transition was crucial for the future work of the Avatar.'

`Middle of the nineteenth century was the period of great intellectual awakening and transformation. At the same time, it was a period of vigorous churning of human intellect. Human emotions and intellect were thrown into a cauldron and were heated and churned by diverse thought forces. A retrospective of this period reveals that all those differing notes were only the practice sessions of the cosmic harmonic orchestra. Charles Darwin's theory of natural selection and the origin of species shook the very foundations of the religious sky scrappers and brought science and religion on a collision course. The dungeons and torture cells of blind belief based subservience were raided and human intellect set free. Friedrich Nietzsche's poetic fantasy "Also sprach Zarathustra" appeared in 1883 and played the role of a catalyst. Zoroaster was the first among the relatively well known Avatars and founded the religion of Parsis to which belonged the parents of Meher Baba. Zoroaster is the Greek rendering (*Zoroastres*) of Zarathustra but the Zarathustra of Nietzsche was a genial sage, the German Professor on holiday. Nietzsche used Zarathustra only as a prop to hang samples of Nietzschean philosophy of Superman. Nietzsche's Zarathustra declared that "old Gods came to an end long ago." "Dead are all Gods and now dawns the age of Superman." Nietzsche presented the vision in which man was surpassed. He said one should love those who do not know how to live except in perishing for they are those going beyond. He also said that philosophical systems are shining mirages. What we see is not the long sought truth, but the reflection of our own desire. Seen

from Nietzsche's point of view, an uncontrolled mysticism from whatever point it starts, is always a self induced merriment - a blind revel of body or soul. And blind may work themselves into any state but that of vision.

The divine law of opposites was at work. At the one end was Darwinism releasing from the hold of religions and establishing the rein of intellect, while at the other end was Nietzscheanism setting the goal of going beyond the intellect and desires, and proclaiming the advent of the superman. What made Nietzsche choose the name of Zarathustra or Zoroaster for the superman of his fantasy is still an unsolved mystery. Little did he know how prophetic his words would be.'

'With religions positioned at the receiving end in relation to Darwinism, it was part of the divine plan to make a Sadguru active and open the flood-gates of the intellect based spirituality to buffer the destructive impacts of science. Sri Ramkrishna Paramhansa did this through his great disciple Swami Vivekananda. Vivekananda, through his brilliant exposition of Advaita Vedanta, released a mighty wave of intellect based spirituality.'

'Another strong spiritual movement in the West, and the one based more on the heart than the head, was that of Persian Sufis introduced by Murshid Inayat Khan. The mysticism of Persian Sufis descended from the lineage of Qutub Mu'innudin Chishti. Initiated by Inayat Khan in 1911, and head or Murshida of Sufism in America since 1927, Rabia Martin was instructed by her Sufi leader Baron Von Frankenburg to visit India and meet Meher Baba. She could not, as she fell sick and died of cancer.

'The impacts of Darwinism were also diluted by the biological philosophy of Teilhard de Chardin which talked about a 'evolutive' force operating throughout the entire universe, from elementary particles to galaxies: there is no "inert" matter, and therefore no essential distinction between matter and life. Teilhard's 'evolutive' force is the very heart of Spencer's positivism and Marx and Engels' dialectical materialism. Henri Bergson's "Creative Evolution", through *elan vital*, was a metaphysical version of Teilhard and proved to be a great charmer in the early days of twentieth century. Bergson's metaphysical 'vitalism' proposed that an *elan vital*, a vital current distinct from inanimate matter, contends with matter,

traverses it so as to force it into organized form. Advaita Vedanta, concepts of 'evolutive' force and of *elan vital* did succeed in making possible the flirtations between science and spirituality on the one hand, and science and philosophy on the other. Sigmund Freud, who died in 1939, also emerged as a great influence by drawing attention to the immeasurable world of the unconscious. Before Freud, the unconscious was a virtual *terra incognita*. Freud's "The Interpretation of Dreams" succeeded in presenting the dream as the royal road to the inner sub-conscious psychic formations. Freud made man interested in his own inner states of consciousness and became instrumental, though unconsciously, in putting human intellect on the inner path of the discovery of Self.'

`Theosophy also the joined the forces, which countered the growing influence of science and worked in the direction of presenting spirituality as the science of the occult. Theosophy presented itself as the applied spiritual science. The divine law of opposites countered the emerging theosophical perspective of spirituality by materializing the forces of dissent. Jiddu Krishnamurti emerged as a rebel. Krishnamurti, with the strength of the intellect -shattering logic of a Zen Master, crusaded against organized religions and the so called spiritual gurus. Thus, the law of opposites was in operation at all levels, and forces and counter-forces were set free simultaneously, making the transition from the instinct to reason a smooth affair. At the same time, the escape routes from the golden fortress of the intellect could also be built.'

`Dressed up in a saffron robe and a turban, Swami Vivekananda became the role model and the icon of spiritual resurgence. Krishnamurti clad himself in the modern way and was the very picture of a modern philosopher. He presented spirituality as some thing to be talked about, discussed and grasped intellectually. Scientists also worked in the same manner and disseminated science through conferences, symposia and seminars. Intellect knows no other way to operate and this was the only option available. Intellect thrives on uncertainties and moves from one uncertainty to another, though it thinks that it is discovering the certainties. The Age of Intellect is the Age of Uncertainties and that is why it is over-loaded with information. And that is why the rein of intellect is the rein of preachers and teachers.'

`This was the scenario at the time of the Advent of the Ancient One, who came with a definite purpose: The Age of Uncertainties should give way to the Age of Certainty of Truth, Love and Beauty. Obviously, this needed going beyond the intellect and words. Meher Baba, the Ancient One, came fully prepared for that. From 10 July 1925, Baba stopped talking and entered in a state of self imposed silence. This continued for forty-four years and He dropped His body on 31 January 1969 in that very state. This was His way of telling the world that the days of intellect and words are over. And, that the God has come to make it possible, for the mankind, to gain access to the inner psychic network of cosmic communication and interaction that exists in the form of Universal Mind. By this way alone, the rein of Certainty of Truth, Love and Beauty could be established. He gave this message to the world not through eloquent expositions, but by responding uniquely to an interesting situation, and revealing His spiritual powers. This is how it happened:

"On Friday, November 6th, 1931, passing the statue of Liberty, the S.S.Roma sailed into New York City's harbor at two in the afternoon. However, this time Meher Baba's welcome was not exactly warm or inviting. Two hours passed before Baba and the group was allowed to disembark. An insolent immigration officer kicked up a row on board ship, unnecessarily delaying their disembarkation. He was dissatisfied with the answers given by Meredith Starr to his questions, and suspected something suspicious about Baba's silence and the alphabet board. He kept detaining Baba and the group with questions and even tried to read the board himself, but could not. He asked Baba directly, 'You have come to teach people in America? But you do not speak. How can you teach with this board? How foolish! Who gave you this silly idea?'

Baba spelled out in reply: 'I have come not to teach, but to awaken.' In reply, the man laughed loudly, mocking Baba. Baba's eyes flashed, gesturing to the group, 'Fool that he is, he laughs at this now, but I will show him. Poor, ignorant soul. I pity him!'

The officer then warned them, 'I cannot let you pass unless someone in New York stands surety for you.' However, this trip to America was not widely publicized and not many knew about Baba's coming. Except for three persons

waiting for Baba at the dock, and they were prevented from boarding the ship, there was no one present to intervene on Baba's behalf. It was quite an awkward situation, but it was Master's game. Baba remained serene and calm as he meekly submitted to the interrogation by the insulting officer.

Suddenly, an officer of the ship dressed in white appeared on the scene, and asked the immigration agent, 'Why do you detain these men when all the passengers have left the ship?' He explained that he was not satisfied with their travel documents and wanted surety. The ship's officer looked through the papers and asked, 'What is wrong with them? Let them go.'

'But there is no one here to stand guarantee for them,' the agent protested.

Chanji explained that they had very good references, and the officer said to the agent, 'Quite frankly, I do not see any sense in your behavior. They even have references to show. If you still need a guarantee, I will stand guarantee. I am coming back shortly and want you to prepare permits for them to land.'

The reprimand upset the immigration agent; however, he issued the landing cards. When Chanji went to thank the ship's officer, he could not find him. No one knew who he really was." ^{11.25}

'Meredith Starr and Chanji were the persons who were accompanying Baba. The significance of this incident lies in the fact that the Avatar had categorically stated that He has come not as a teacher or a preacher, but as the Awakener - the one who is in complete control of the inner chords which regulate the flow of consciousness in the entire cosmic spiritual-physical system.'

'It was the period when India was under the sway of Gandhi. Indians were fighting against the British rule. Gandhi was mixing religion with politics. Poor religion! Badly mauled by science, it found some consolation in being put to some use. Fabulously rich maharajas, poor and illiterate natives, snake charmers, street magicians, dirt and filth - these were the images of India, which flashed in the minds of the Westerners. Imagine then a young man, in late thirties, with no visibility in the form of traditional indicators of spirituality; and the one, who doesn't speak but communicates only with the help of an alphabet board and a stand-by reader, lands amidst highly intellectual people of an alien culture. And

this young man, Meher Baba, claims that He comes as the Christ with Christ Consciousness. He claims that He is the Ancient One. And He behaves in an unpredictable, unconventional and uninhibited manner, ignoring totally the traditional image of a spiritual Master. He wears all sorts of dresses. He hugs, kisses and embraces men, women and children, and says, "I am man and woman and child. I am sexless." ^{11.26} No mass meetings. No seminars and conferences. Only informal group gatherings. No action based package of spirituality in terms of meditative practices and do's and don't. And people not only believe him but also lay their lives at his feet surcharged with an emotion that inundates the total spread of their lives. Only God could do that and exercise His authority in this manner. And Meher Baba was God who came amidst us in the form of man.'

`Merwan all of us are feeling thrilled by what you have told us so lovingly,' I said. `What did Baba say about the ultimate fate of humanity in the light of His coming as the Avatar? Did He talk about the change in the prevailing awful conditions of the humanity and the beginning of a new era of peace and harmony?" I asked.

`Professor, Meher Baba revealed that a New Humanity would emerge as a consequence of His Avataric Manifestation. Meher Baba says:

"As in all great critical periods of human history, humanity is now going through the agonizing travail of spiritual rebirth. Great forces of destruction are afoot and seem to be dominant at the moment, but constructive and creative forces that will redeem humanity are also being released through several channels. Although the working of these forces of light is chiefly silent, they are eventually bound to bring about those transformations that will make the further spiritual advance of humanity safe and steady. It is all a part of divine plan, which is to give to the hungry and weary world a fresh dispensation of the eternal and only Truth.

"...The cause of the chaos that precipitates itself in wars is that most persons are in the grip of egoism and selfish considerations, and they express their egoism individually as well as collectively. This is the life of illusory values in which man is caught. To face the truth is to realize that life is one, in and through its manifold

manifestations. To have this understanding is to forget the limiting self in the realization of the unity of life.

"...Wars do not arise merely to secure material adjustment. They are often the products of uncritical identification with narrow interests, which through association come to be included in that part of the world regarded as 'mine.' Material adjustment is only part of the wider problem of establishing spiritual adjustment.

"...To understand the problem of humanity as merely a problem of bread is to reduce humanity to the level of animality...Economic adjustment is impossible unless people realize that there can be no planned cooperative action in economic matters until self-interest gives way to self-giving love.

"...The New Humanity that emerges from the travail of the present struggle and suffering will not ignore science or its practical attainments. It is a mistake to look upon science as anti-spiritual. Science is a help or hindrance to spirituality according to use to which it is put. Just as true art expresses spirituality, science, when properly handled, can be the expression and fulfillment of the spirit.

".The coming civilization of the New Humanity will be souled not by dry intellectual doctrines but by living spiritual experience. Spiritual experience has a hold on the deeper truths that are inaccessible to mere intellect; it cannot be born of unaided intellect. Spiritual truth can often be stated and expressed through intellect, and the intellect surely is of some help for the communication of spiritual experience.

"... Spiritual experience involves more than can be grasped by mere intellect. This is often emphasized by calling it a mystical experience...When the spiritual experience is described as mystical, one should not assume that it is something supernatural or entirely beyond the grasp of human consciousness. All that is meant is that it is not accessible to the limited intellect until the intellect transcends its limits and is illumined by direct realization of the Infinite. Jesus Christ pointed out the way to spiritual experience when He said, 'Leave all and follow me'. This means that man must leave limitations and establish himself in the infinite life of God.

"...The New Humanity will be freed from a life of limitations, allowing unhampered scope for the creative life of spirit; and it will break the attachment to external forms and learn to subordinate them to the claims of spirit. The limited life of illusions and false values will then be replaced by unlimited life in Truth; and the limitations, through which the separative self lives, will wither away at the touch of true understanding.

"...When it is recognized that there are no claims greater than the claims of universal Divine Life which, without exception, includes everyone and everything—love will not only establish peace, harmony, and happiness in social, national, and international spheres but it will shine in its own purity and beauty. Divine love is unassailable to the onslaughts of duality and is an expression of divinity itself. It is through divine love that the New Humanity will tune in to the divine plan. Divine love will not only introduce imperishable sweetness and infinite bliss into personal life but will also make possible an era of New Humanity. Through divine love, the New Humanity will learn the art of cooperative and harmonious life. It will free itself from the tyranny of dead forms and release the creative life of spiritual wisdom; it will shed all illusions and get established in the Truth; it will enjoy peace and abiding happiness; it will be initiated in the life of Eternity." ^{11.27}

‘Avatar or Buddha or Christ takes human birth and comes amidst us as a part of the divine plan. He, the eternal Divine Beloved, Who is the Way and the Goal, comes to our doorsteps and gives His Call of Love and Truth. "Leave all and follow me," reverberates again. Meher Baba, the Ancient One, gave this call on 12th of September 1954 at Ahmednagar, India:

"Age after age, when the wick of Righteousness burns low, the Avatar comes yet once again to rekindle the torch of Love and Truth. Age after age, amidst the clamor of disruptions, wars, fear and chaos, rings the Avatar's call:

COME ALL UNTO ME.

Although, because of the veil of illusion, this Call of the Ancient One may appear as a voice in wilderness, its echo and re-echo nevertheless pervades through time and space, to rouse at first a few, and eventually millions, from their deep slumber of ignorance. And in the midst of illusion, as the Voice of all voices,

it awakens humanity, to bear witness to the Manifestation of God amidst mankind.

The time is come. I repeat the Call, and bid all come unto me.

This time honoured Call of mine thrills the hearts of those who have patiently endured all in their love for God, loving God only for love of God. There are those who fear and shudder at its reverberations, and would flee or resist. And there are yet others who, baffled, fail to understand why the Highest of the High, who is all-sufficient, need necessarily this Call to humanity.

Irrespective of doubts and convictions, and for the Infinite Love I bear for one and all, I continue to come as the Avatar, to be judged time and again by humanity in its ignorance, in order to help man distinguish the Real from the false..." ^{11.28}

`Merwan, what Baba meant when He said that He has come as the Awakener? The Ancient One comes repeatedly in the world of humans to accomplish the targets, which He Himself sets forth for Himself. This time the target was to bring about the transition from the intellect to intuition and the emergence of a New Humanity with the certainty of Love, Truth and Beauty. How did Beloved Baba work for this goal? And why should God work so hard again and again when He can get any thing done, the moment He wills it?' I asked.

`Professor, if the goal is the transition from intellect dominated world to the one dominated by intuition, those - teachers or preachers - who work within the orbit of the intellect have a limited supportive role. Awakening means not only the end of the dream-sleep, but also the simultaneous awaking in a new higher state of consciousness. When Baba says that He has come to Awaken, He means exactly that. The illusory dream in the form of creation should cease and the soul should wake up in the Conscious Consciousness of Sat-Chit-Ananda, which is its real nature. Professor, imagine that you are seeing a dream in which you have become a poor and illiterate beggar. You are hungry but cannot afford the food for yourself and your family. You and your dream family members suffer intensely and die one by one. A real nightmare. In your dream you come across with a religious preacher who tells you, "Look dear poor beggar this is all a dream and

your hunger and suffering are not real, and you yourself along with your family members are illusory formations. So wake up poor beggar, wake up!" And you also meet a dream-scholar, a teacher, with a bag full of books. He gives a scholarly discourse on "How to remain cheerful even when you are dying with hunger!" How would you -the dream-beggar- react to such people in your dream? Most probably you would physically throw them out. Now somebody wakes you up, and when you come back to your original gross world consciousness of the Professor, you just laugh at your own foolishness which forced you to identify yourself with your dream-I as an illiterate and poor beggar, and made you suffer. A dream-teacher or a dream-preacher, being part of the dream itself, only strengthens and perpetuates the dream; while the awakener, who is not a part of the dream, and is positioned at a different level of consciousness, has the capability of bringing about a real transformation of consciousness.'

`What are the options available to the awakener to wake you up from your sleep? He can talk loudly and those sounds may sink deep within you putting a stop to your dream-sleep. He may just shake you vigorously and those tremors may push you out of your sleep. Alternatively, he may sing a song, which you love, hugging you, caressing you and kissing you softly, and you are all smiles when you wake up. Avatar Meher Baba, knowing fully well that intellect cannot transcend itself and Divine Love alone can bring about this transition to living by intuition, has chosen the soft way - the way of His Love and Grace - to awaken all of us from our dream-sleep. In His **Universal Message**, given on 10th of July 1958 at Meherabad, India, Meher Baba says:

"I have come not to teach but to awaken. Understand therefore that I lay down no precepts. Throughout eternity, I have laid down principles and precepts, but mankind has ignored them. Man's inability to live God's words makes the Avatar's teaching a mockery. Instead of practising the compassion he taught, man has waged crusades in his name. Instead of living the humility, purity and truth of his words, man has given way to hatred, greed and violence.

Because man has been deaf to the principles and precepts laid down by God in the past, in this present avataric form I observe Silence. You have asked for and been given enough words - it is now time to live them. To get nearer and nearer

to God you have to get further and further away from 'I', 'My', and 'Mine'. You have not to renounce anything but your own self. It is as simple as that, though found to be almost impossible. It is possible to renounce your limited self by my Grace. I have come to release that Grace.

I repeat – I lay down no precepts. When I release the tide of Truth, which I have come to give, men's daily lives will be the living precept. The words I have spoken will come to Life in them.

I veil myself from man by his own curtain of ignorance, and manifest my Glory to a few. My present avataric Form is the last incarnation of this cycle of time, hence my Manifestation will be the greatest. When I break my Silence, the impact of my Love will be universal and all life in creation will know, feel and receive it. It will help every individual to break himself free from his bondage in his own way. I am the Divine Beloved who loves you more than you can love yourself. The breaking of my Silence will help you to help yourself in knowing your real Self.

All this world confusion and chaos was inevitable and no one is to blame. What had to happen has happened; and what has to happen will happen. There was and is no way out except through my coming in your midst. I had to come, and I have come. I am the Ancient One." ^{11.29}

'Professor, whosoever goes through this **Universal Message**, with humility and love, would come to know how this transformation and transition will be achieved,' said Merwan. 'This is a profound and a most positive declaration. Beloved Meher Baba, the Ancient One and the Highest of the High, has come this time as an Awakener. No more of words. No do's and don'ts. No precepts to follow. We are sleeping and cannot wake up on our own. He, the Divine Beloved, has taken up this task of waking us up. Awakening would liberate us from the illusion of "I" as "my" and "mine", limiting the self, and as the process of awakening progresses, we will come nearer and nearer to God. It is not possible for us to self initiate this process. This would be made possible only through His Grace.'

'It will be through Meher Baba's Grace that a mighty tide of Truth as Love would gush out from Him, flowing towards each one of us. In a few recipients of

His Grace He will manifest His Glory in the form of exclusive intimate experiences of His Divinity, thereby establishing independent inner links with each one of His lovers. Then what has to happen will happen in a natural way, without any conscious effort on the part of His lover. His Divine Words would then come to life and sprout in the consciousness of His lovers and their ordinary daily lives will be made divine by His Divine Presence, and will become the living precept.'

'This is how He breaks, and would break, His Silence in the hearts of His lovers who start radiating the Light of His Truth as the Avatar of the Age. He then releases fresh flows of His Truth as Love, through such lovers, to be received by the recipients of His Grace. The number of His lovers, the fountainheads of flows of His Truth as Love, would keep on multiplying. And this is how the New Humanity would emerge out and would stabilize itself in the certainty of His Truth, Love and Beauty in the coming 700 years - the total life-span of the Divine Kingdom of Meher Baba as the Ancient One. How one receives the gift of His Love through His Grace? Are there some pre-conditions and pre-requisites to merit His Grace? Beloved Baba has categorically stated that He lays down no precepts; and knowing our innate inability to live God's Word, He has come, this time, as an Awakener. So, there are no religious and intellectual pre-conditions and pre-requisites to receive the gift of His Love through His Grace. Meher Baba, as the Ancient One, is the shoreless Ocean of Love, Truth and Beauty. He, during the course of His life on earth as the Avatar of the Age, has inundated the things and beings of our gross world with His Divine Love. They are the countless shores of the Shoreless, which He has established in the Eternal Now. Any object - a picture, a book, a film, a cassette, a stone - that way anything that becomes instrumental in giving the gift of Meher *Naam* or Name is His shore. Any place - a temple, a mosque, a *gurudwara*, a church, a street, a road, a hill, a river, a home, a cinema hall, a prison, a brothel, a casino, a toilet- that becomes instrumental in giving the gift of Baba's Name is His shore. Any creature or person - a dog, a cat, a parrot, a pig, a worm, a plant, a monk, a priest, a criminal, a leper, a Baba-lover, a scientist, a teacher, a prostitute - who becomes instrumental in giving the gift of His name is His shore. Any condition or state - sickness, drug-addiction, grief, happiness - which becomes instrumental in giving the gift of His Name, is His shore. All points

of our gross world are His contact-points, provided we become the fortunate recipients of His Grace. Receiving the gift of Meher Baba's Love, through His Grace, is always a "here and now" affair.'

Merwan was talking like a spiritual Master. These were great words - words of Wisdom, words of Love and words of Beauty. Words, so soothing. Words, so consoling. Words, so assuring.

Ram said, 'There is a mythological story about Krishna, the Ancient One and the Highest of the High. Krishna was then a young boy and had the bad habit of eating clay. Once Krishna's friends and brother Balaram complained about this to mother Yasoda. Krishna emphatically denied the allegation. However, Yasoda insisted, "All right, if you have actually not taken any clay, then just open your mouth, I shall see." Krishna, now in a mood to reveal His Divinity to His mother, opened His mouth and this is what Yasoda saw there:

"Yasoda saw within that mouth the complete opulence of creation. She saw the entire outer space in all directions, mountains, islands, oceans, seas, planets, air, fire, moon and stars. Along with the moon and the stars she saw the entire elements, water, sky, the extensive ethereal existence along with the total ego and the products of senses and the controller of senses, all the demigods, the objects of senses like sound, smell, etc. and the three qualities of material nature. She also could perceive that within His mouth were all living entities, eternal time, material nature, spiritual nature, activity, consciousness and different forms of the whole creation. Yasoda could find within the mouth of her child every thing necessary for cosmic manifestation. She also saw, within His mouth, herself taking Krishna on her lap and having Him sucking her breast." ^{11.30}

'Avatar, the Supreme Divine Being, comes with full powers of cosmic manifestation and can create or make use of anything for this purpose. The entire cosmic creation is His Body and He has access to all things and beings. He is in all things and beings and as Avatar eternally available in them and through them.'

Mika said, 'Buddha describes all this beautifully:

"It is seldom that a Buddha appears in this world. When a Buddha does appear, He attains Enlightenment, introduces the Dharma, severs the net of suspicion, removes the lure of desire at its root, and plugs the fountain of evil. Completely unhindered He walks at will over the world. There is nothing greater than to revere the Buddha."

"The moon appears everywhere, over a crowded city, a sleepy village, a mountain, a river. It is seen in the depths of a pond, in a jug of water, in a drop of dew hanging on a leaf. If a man walks hundreds of miles, the moon gets him. To men the moon seems to change, but the moon does not change. Buddha is like the moon in following the people of this world in all their changing circumstances, manifesting various appearances; but in His Essence He does not change."

"As the stars of heaven are reflected in the calm sea, so people's thoughts, feelings and circumstances are reflected in the depths of Buddha's Wisdom. This is why Buddha is called the Perfectly Enlightened One, the Omniscience."

"Buddha does not always appear as a Buddha. Sometimes He appears as an incarnation of evil, sometimes as a woman, a god, a king, or a statesman; some time He appears in a brothel or in a gambling house."

"The work of Buddha is to manifest in all affairs and on all occasions the pure essence of Dharma-Kaya (the absolute nature of Buddha); so Buddha's mercy and compassion flow out from this Dharma-Kaya in endless life and boundless light, bringing salvation to mankind." ^{11.31}

Mary said, `Apostle Paul, in his Letter to the Philippians written from a prison, says, "...The attitude you should have is the one that Christ Jesus had:

He always had the nature of God,
but he did not think that by force
he should try to become equal
with God.

Instead of this, of his own free will he
gave up all he had,

and took the nature of a servant.
He became the man
and appeared in human likeness.
He was humble and walked the path
of obedience all the way to death-
his death on the cross.
For this reason God raised him to the
highest place above
and gave him the name that is greater
than any other name.
And so, in honor of the name of Jesus
all beings in heaven, on earth, and
in the world below
will fall on their knees,
and all will openly proclaim that Jesus
Christ is Lord,
to the glory of God the Father." ^{11.32}

`Proclamation of the Name of the Avatar of the Age by all things and beings, or becoming instrumental in the transmission of His Name is His manifestation. His Name resurrects Him in the minds and hearts of His lovers. In this way all things and beings join Him in His Work as the Avatar of the Age, get the gift of His Love, and come closer to God. His Name or the Word is the Holy Spirit that He gives us as the eternal companion and as helper. About the power of the Name of the Christ, Jesus says:

"Believe me when I say that I am in the Father and the Father is in me. If not, believe because of the things I do. I am telling you the truth; whoever believes in

me will do what I do - yes, he will do even greater things, because I am going to the Father. And I will do whatever you ask for in my name, so that Father's glory will be shown through the Son. If you ask me for anything in my name, I will do it." ^{11.33}

"If you love me, you will obey my commandments. I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Helper, who will stay with you forever. He is the Spirit who reveals the truth about God. The world cannot receive him, because it cannot see him or know him. But you know him, because he remains with you and is in you." ^{11.34}

`Meher Baba says that through His Grace, one receives the gift of His Love. This gift is His Name or the Word which comes to life in the hearts of the lovers of God, manifests God's glory, and makes their lives living precept. Such lovers become His torchbearers and He radiates the Light of His Truth through them for others. All things and beings of the entire cosmos get involved in the transmission of God's name when Avatar showers His Grace. Merwan, which name they transmit -Zoroaster or Ram or Krishna or Buddha or Jesus or Mohammed or Meher Baba? And why?' I asked.

Merwan replied, `Since there is none else than the Supreme Divine Being, the Ancient One and the Highest of the High, He is without a fixed name. The entire cosmic creation - the mental, subtle and gross spheres and their things and beings - is His Body. Names of these things and beings are the names of His parts only. A name has the capability of sprouting and creating its corresponding conscious consciousness. A name of a part creates the conscious consciousness of that part only. However, the Ancient One comes amidst all of us periodically to sustain the Truth of His Divinity in the Illusion and responds to a name or names. In this way the name or names, given to His Avataric Form, are encapsulated with His Power. This is the Name to which He Himself responds as the Avatar, and this name alone has the power to sprout and create the corresponding conscious consciousness of the Ancient One. In a given Avataric period, the name of the Avatar of the Age alone has that power - the power to make the Ancient One respond. All His previous names merge in His current name and create the corresponding conscious consciousness of the Avatar of the Age manifesting His glory.'

Merwan explained. `When Jesus talked about the power of name, he was talking about the power of his own name as Jesus, and not as Buddha or Krishna or Rama or Zoroaster. In the Avataric period of Jesus, all other names of the Ancient One, got merged with the name Jesus. It was not possible to get any response from the Supreme Divine Being for want of a name because He was originally without a name. He got His names only when He descended in the human form as the Avatar. He comes amidst us after an interval of 700 or 1400 years, and whenever He comes, He Himself discards His previous form and His previous names. Meher Baba says:

"My next advent, after I drop this body, will be after seven hundred years and that will mark the end and the beginning of a cycle of cycles. All cycles of time in illusion end and begin after 700 to 1400 years, and there have been and there will be millions and billions of such cycles in a cycle of cycles, thus, there is no end to illusion, which always remains illusion." ^{11.35}

"...This Eternally One and the Same Avatar repeats His manifestation from time to time, in different cycles, adopting different human forms and different names, in different places to reveal truth in different garbs and different languages, in order to raise humanity from the pit of ignorance and help free it from the bondage of delusions." ^{11.36}

`Professor, this time the Ancient One as Meher Baba came in a world, which for the first time was physically united under the influence of science and technology, and had started operating almost as a single system. A single language played a major role in this unification. This time the stage set for the work of the Avatar was that of the entire world - a world enriched by the diversity of cultures, religions, people and languages. This was an unprecedented situation and a highly complex one. Why the Ancient One comes again and again? Why He does not achieve His objective once and forever? - Meher Baba has answered it beautifully and comprehensively. In His, **The Final Declaration**, which was delivered on 30 September 1954, Baba explains:

"There are two aspects experienced in illusion - many-ness and oneness. While many-ness multiplies many-ness, oneness goes on magnifying itself. Many-ness is the 'religion' of illusion on which illusion thrives.

"...Age after age I come amidst mankind to maintain my own creation of illusion, thereby also awakening humanity to become aware of it. The framework of illusion is always one and the same, but the designs in illusion are innumerable and ever changing. My advent is not to destroy illusion because illusion, as it is, is absolutely nothing. I come to make you become aware of the nothingness of illusion. Through you I automatically maintain illusion, which is nothing but the shadow of my infinite self, and through me you automatically discard illusion when you are made aware of its falseness." ^{11.37}

'Illusion, the consciousness of multiplicity, is God's shadow in the sense that it is His dream creation, and is all space. In our case, we know that the beginning and the end of the dream-sleep are synchronized with the diurnal cycle of day and night, and the dreamer does not exercise any conscious control over that. The dream-sleep, therefore, has a natural or pre-fixed cycle of its own. In the same manner, God's dream-sleep is also tuned to a pre-fixed oscillation. End of God's dream takes place only in *Maha-Pralaya* or Great Dissolution when all things and beings are dissolved in the Beyond-Beyond State of God. Until that happens, Vishnu as *Ishwar* has to preserve the creation or illusion, and *Vishnu*, as the Ancient One has to preserve the divinity in the creation. Preservation of the divinity in the creation or the Illusion entails the periodic re-orientation of the diversity of Illusion, existing as specific movements and patterns, in relation to God - the Supreme Divine Being. This is achieved by releasing a fresh tide of Divine Love and Divine Truth in the day to day lives of men and women, and other beings.'

Rahim asked, 'Merwan, Avatar or the Christ or the Buddha or *Saheb-e-Zaman* enters the dream creation of God and works there, and returns. He comes again and goes back after completing his work. Who is he in reality? Is he an 'I-drop-soul'? Alternatively, is he only a temporary dream-entity created for a specific purpose and dissolved thereafter?'

`Rahim, Meher Baba says, "The direct descent of God on earth as 'Avatar' is that independent status of God when God directly becomes man without undergoing or passing through the processes of evolution, reincarnation and involution of consciousness. Consequently God directly becomes God-Man, and lives the life of man amongst mankind, realizing His divine status of the Highest of the High, or the Ancient One, through these Qutubs or Sadgurus or Perfect Masters of the time."^{11.38} Avatar is the independent status of God Himself who is the Ancient One and the Highest of the High,' Merwan said. 'About the periodic descent of God as the Avatar, Meher Baba says, "In each cycle of time, which ranges from 700 to 1400 years, there are eleven ages of 65 to 125 years each. From the beginning to the end of each cycle, there are altogether 55 Perfect Masters and that means each age has only five (5) Perfect Masters. In the last, the eleventh age of each cycle, the Avatar (*Saheb-e-Zaman*) is also present."^{11.39}

`Rahim has asked specifically about the Avatar, "Who is He in reality?" In order to answer Rahim, I begin with the Supreme Divine Being without using the descriptive terms from Hinduism, Buddhism, Christianity and Islam. Supreme Divine Being is the totality of the states of His Own Consciousness. He is beyond "thought", which is time and space. Since understanding needs "thought", we are left with no other option except to understand, through the intellect, in terms of thoughts. The moment we indulge in that, constraints of time and space limit our perception. Placed on a time-scale, the Supreme Divine Being, being the Supreme Cause of all causes and the Beginning of all beginnings, is the Ancient One and the only One. Placed within a spatial frame, the Supreme Divine Being is the pinnacle towards which all 'I-drop-souls' are moving in being pushed by the evolutionary, reincarnating and involuting forces. Seen this way, He is the Highest of the High.'

`What we mean when we say that the Supreme Divine Being is the totality of all states of His Own Consciousness? Expressed in specific terms, it means that all bodies of the Cosmic Creation together constitute His Universal Body, all energies together constitute His Universal Unbounded Energy, all individualized minds together constitute His Universal Mind, and all self limited souls collectively establish His identity as the Supreme Divine Being. All bodies, energies, minds and souls are the states of His Own Consciousness, because they all are the

formations which have emerged out of His Own 'Beyond-the-Beyond' State, and which remain active between the two great polarities of His Own Consciousness: "Infinite Unconsciousness" and "Infinite Consciousness".'

'The 'Infinite Consciousness' - the fully awakened and the exclusive 'I am God' or 'I am 'Sat-Chit-Ananda' State of the Supreme Divine Being -is the original, exclusive and eternal 'Avataric Consciousness'. Being the conscious Self-consciousness of the Supreme Divine Being Himself, this is the singular identity of the Ancient One -the Highest of the High. This is also the eternal identity of the Avatar or the Christ or the Buddha or *Rasool*, the *Saheb-e-Zaman*. In the words of Meher Baba:

"In the infinite Beyond state of God, which transcends the categories of consciousness as well as unconsciousness, there appeared the first initial urge for God to know Himself. And with the arising of this initial urge, there was an instantaneous manifestation of infinite consciousness as well as infinite unconsciousness as simultaneous resultants. Of these two seemingly opposite but complementary aspects, the infinite consciousness plays the role of the Avatar."^{11.40}

'Now let us retrace the cosmic life history of an 'I-drop-soul', which has attained the status of a Sadguru or a Perfect Master or a God-man. We join its life stream from its human state onwards. It was just one among billions of 'I-drop souls', which are active in the gross worlds with the exclusive conscious consciousness of their human states. Its human state conscious consciousness was its own personal creation based on the countless *sanskaras*, which it gathered during its long journey. It then passed through the cycle of births and rebirths, till its gross *sanskaras* were weakened significantly. One good day, while in the human body, it eventually found itself identified with the exclusive conscious consciousness of the 1st plane of the Subtle Sphere. Though still in the human body, it no longer lived with the "conscious consciousness of the human state". It then moved to the 2nd, 3rd and 4th planes of the Subtle Sphere and with every "onward" or "upward" step, it got de-linked with the preceding one. In the same manner, it moved to the 5th and 6th Planes of the Mental Sphere. Being under the control of a Sadguru, this 'I-drop-soul' had an easy passage through all

these planes. Right from the 1st Plane up to the 6th Plane, as the involution - dissociation of the consciousness from diverse opposite gross impressions - progressed, these impressions became increasingly fainter and the experiences related to them less and less frequent. The 'I-drop-soul' living in the 6th Plane became almost devoid of all impressions. At this stage a mighty push – given either by the Sadguru or by the Avatar – impelled it across the sixth Plane and placed it in the Sphere of Super-Consciousness.'

`At that very moment, it became unconscious of the illusory multiplicity, as experienced in the preceding illusory stages, and regained its fully awakened Super-Consciousness state. This was done in two stages: first as the exclusive Super-Conscious experience of the original Absolute Vacuum; and then as the exclusive experience of "I am God or I am *Sat-Chit-Ananda* Infinite Super-Consciousness, which fills the original divine Absolute Vacuum. Describing this transition, Beloved Baba says, "This state of Divine Vacuum prevails just at the instant when the NOTHING disappears or vanishes and just immediately before EVERYTHING fills in that vacuum to give conscious experience of the Reality of the 'I Am God' state."^{11.41} This is the GOAL of God in the man state where God in human form, that is, as man, ultimately realizes the "I am God" state with full consciousness. This is the Supreme Awakening for which Beloved Meher Baba has come as the Awakener.'

`Almost all such souls, which realize or become one with the exclusive Infinite Super Consciousness of Everything, drop their human bodies. When the MIND is finally annihilated, and the limited ego-'I', mind, energy, body and the world have disappeared forever, the body becomes totally irrelevant and is dropped automatically. God as Man, therefore, ascends systematically and reaches the top by realizing the exclusive 'I am God' State. This ascent is an exclusive process in which the preceding states are progressively excluded. At the same time, this movement, from 1st to 6th plane is also a process of progressive acquisition - the acquisition of the conscious consciousness of the next plane as an abode.'

`Merwan, this exclusion and abode acquisition needs further elucidation,' said Rahim.

`Rahim, let us imagine a long tunnel having six compartments between its two open ends,' Merwan said. `Now we intend to traverse the entire length of the tunnel and come out at the other end. Before entering the 1st compartment, our abode was the outside space where we were working, sleeping and waking. Once we enter the 1st compartment, we start living there - working, sleeping and waking - and get totally disconnected with our previous abode. This is how we move from one compartment to another by losing the preceding one and gaining the next. And finally, when we come out at the other end, the entire tunnel is left behind and we find our final abode.'

`Merwan, why should the Super-Consciousness of Divine Vacuum precede the "I am God" Infinite Super-Consciousness? How can one describe this Super-Consciousness of Divine Vacuum? Is it different from the Beyond-the-Beyond State of God, which we experience daily in our deep sleep as a state of unconsciousness?' I asked.

`Professor, each I-drop is the Supreme *Sat-Chit-Ananda-I*. Due to ignorance it thinks itself as different because of the limitations of ego, mind, energy and body,' Merwan explained. `Involution is the process of withdrawal and dissociation. By the time the I-drop-soul reaches the 6th plane, it achieves complete withdrawal and dissociation from the zones of body and subtle energy, and possesses only a few residual opposite impressions. Its continuous abode in the 6th plane erodes them totally and the soul breaks its own prison, which existed in the form of ego-mind. This is the end of the divine dream for the soul, which now wakes up in the Super-Consciousness of the Beyond-Beyond State. This is also the end of the process of involution or withdrawal of consciousness.'

`Super *Sat-Chit-Ananda-I* Consciousness now blossoms fully, and automatically. The Super-Consciousness of the Divine Vacuum, the emergence of the exclusive singular identity of the Supreme Divine Being as Super *Sat-Chit-Ananda-I* Consciousness and the emergence of all-inclusive holistic Super *Sat-Chit-Ananda-I* Consciousness, are the three stages of this blossoming. All this happens in the beyond the beyond, and, therefore, cannot be described in terms of time, space and intellect. However, some vague idea can still be given. The transition from the Super-Consciousness of the Divine Vacuum State to the

exclusive singular Self-Awareness, as *Sat-Chit-Ananda-I*, is "fastest" and "inevitable". However, the transition to the all inclusive holistic Super *Sat-Chit-Ananda-I* Consciousness takes place only in those Beyond-God State Souls, which somehow remain anchored to their gross human-forms. It is incorrect to use here the plural word "Souls", because there is no plurality of souls as they all become One with the Over-Soul. Human bodies work as the gross world anchors of the Over-Soul, enabling it to live the life of God as Man-God - the Sadguru or the Qutub or the Perfect Master.

Let us now compare our daily experience of the Beyond-the-Beyond in deep sleep with that of the soul, which has liberated itself from the self-imposed limitations of an ego-mind and has attained Super-Consciousness. In the deep dream-less sleep mind takes rest and stops thinking. Thoughts are withdrawn, and consequently thought-based ego-mind is also withdrawn. It springs up again with the revival of the conscious consciousness of the gross world. We, who are completely identified with the ego-mind, recollect the experience of the transcendental Beyond-the-Beyond as the experience of unconsciousness because of the absence of the ego-mind. On the contrary, the soul, which has liberated itself from the shells of gross, subtle and mental bodies by completing the involutionary journey, wakes up in the Super-Consciousness realm of Reality. Initially it remains suspended in what can be called as the state of total amazement. This amazed state of Super-Conscious Consciousness, in which it remains in a non-cognitive suspended state, is the Divine Vacuum. Gradually it becomes Super-Conscious of its own presence as the Real and Supreme '*Sat-Chit-Ananda-I*' or *Paramatman* or God. This is how the Divine Vacuum is filled up by INFINITE EVERYTHING. Super-Consciousness is the Consciousness that is beyond the trinity of Observer-Observation-Observed. It is the never ending state of experiencing the Oneness of the Observer with that which is observed.'

We would now look at the final blossoming of the Super '*Sat-Chit-Ananda-I*' Consciousness which takes place only in those men-God who, after the realization of the exclusive "I am God State" or Super *Sat-Chit-Ananda-I* Consciousness, remain anchored to their human forms. In them, the exclusive Super *Sat-Chit-Ananda-I* Consciousness gives way to the all-inclusive Super

Sat-Chit-Ananda-I Consciousness, which enables the Over-soul to live the life of God as Man-God. This process is similar to our daily waking process in which we wake up in our familiar gross world with the conscious consciousness of our own identity; at the same time, we become conscious of our environment and our web of personal relationships, and restart our day to day living. In the Soul, which has become one with the exclusive Super '*Sat-Chit-Ananda-I*' Consciousness but remains anchored to its human-form, the EVERYTHING or the Super '*Sat-Chit-Ananda-I*' Consciousness projects out the illusory spheres and, as a consequence, the exclusive "I am God" Super-Consciousness is transformed into an all-inclusive Super-Consciousness. The Super-Consciousness now becomes progressively inclusive, as it descends down, and includes the consciousness of mental, subtle and gross spheres in its "I am God" Super-Consciousness. A Man-God or Sadguru or Perfect Master starts living the life of God, as God, in the worlds of Illusion, with this active and all-inclusive Super-Consciousness, till the body is dropped. When this happens, then the active and all-inclusive Super-Consciousness returns to its inactive and exclusive Super-Consciousness State - the State B of God in Beyond.'

Rahim said, 'Sufi's call the Divine Vacuum State of Super-Consciousness as *fana* which literally means "passing-away-in". Soul's *fana* in the Divine Vacuum State, and later Soul's *fana* in the exclusive Super-Consciousness of "I am God" State better known as *Fana-Fillah*. The active all-inclusive Super-Consciousness is called *Baqa-Billah*. *Baqa* means "Abiding In" and *Baqa-Billah* is "Abiding or Living the I-am-God" State.'

'Rahim, who are the Sufis?' asked Mary. 'Are they different from the Muslims who follow Islam?'

'Mary, Sufism or *Tasawwuf* is the mystical branch of Islam. It is the central and the most powerful current of that tidal wave which constitutes the Revelation of Islam. Etymology of the word *Sufi* is multiple. Persian word *Suf* means wool; Greek word *Sophia* means wisdom; Hebrew words *en sof* mean endless, infinite. A Sufi is the seeker who leads a simple and an austere life, and seeks the wisdom of the endless Infinite. For a Sufi, holy Koran is the Divine Revelation -the word of God. He aspires to get drowned -*istighraq*- in it. Sufi Perfect Masters speak of love

as the true expression of the relation between man and God. Rabiah, the Iraqi woman saint and her group sang *Chakkinama*, the millstone Sufi poems, and *Charkhinama*, the spinning wheel Sufi poems, which popularized Sufism. For a Sufi, *Dhikr* -pronounced *Zikr*- Allah and *Fikr* Allah constitute the Way. *Dhikr* literally means "remembering" and its practice assume mystical physiology with subtle organs and centers. *Dhikr jali* is recited aloud and *Dhikr khafi* in low voice or mentally. There is also the intimate *Dhikr*, the *Dhikr* of the heart. The first produces concomitant auditory phenomena, the second produces the visual phenomena and in the third, the duality is abolished. *Fikr* is the meditation, which is conscious inner focussing to transform the subconscious. Goal is the same, "getting drowned and merged completely." A favorite Sufi prayer, given by Muhyind-din Ibu Arabi, says: "Enter me, O Lord, into the deep of the Ocean of Thy Infinite Oneness." *Fana-Fillah* is the Goal, while *Baqa-Billah* is reserved for a select few destined to work as Qutubs or Perfect Masters.'

Ram said, 'In Hinduism the exclusive Super Sat-Chit-Ananda-I Consciousness State is called as *Nirvikalpa Samadhi*, and the all inclusive active Super Sat-Chit-Ananda-I Consciousness State is called as *Sahaj Samadhi*. Kabir, a Perfect Master, says, " *Sadho Sahaj Samadhi Bhali*" meaning, "Seekers of Truth, *Sahaj Samadhi* is the greatest".'

Mika said, 'In Buddhism 'Nirvan' is the name of the Divine Vacuum State where 'God is not' while "Consciousness is." Literally, it means to 'blow off'. A state in which the discriminating mind or the false mind is blown off or silenced and nothing exists apart from the fundamental pure clean mind. The exclusive Super 'Sat-Chit-Ananda-I' Consciousness is the eternal Buddha who comes amidst us as the Buddha or the all- inclusive Super 'Sat-Chit-Ananda-I' Consciousness. Buddha says:

"Do not seek to know Buddha by His form or attributes, for neither the form nor the attributes are the real Buddha. The true Buddha is Enlightenment itself. The true way to know Buddha is to realize Enlightenment." ^{11.42}

"Dharma-kaya is the substance of the Dharma; that is, it is the substance of Truth itself. In the aspect of Essence, Buddha has no shape or color, and since

Buddha has no shape or color, He comes from nowhere and there is no where for Him to go. Like the blue sky, He arches over everything, and since He is all things, He lacks nothing."^{11.43}

"Buddha's body in this aspect fills every corner of the universe; it reaches everywhere, it exists forever, regardless of whether people believe in Him or doubt His existence."^{11.44}

`Meher Baba has freely used the terms from Sufism, Hinduism and Buddhism to describe these states of God,' said Merwan. `This was His way to tell us that Truth is One and Avatars have used different expressions to describe it. Describing the final blossoming of the all inclusive Super 'Sat-Chit-Ananda-I' Consciousness, Meher Baba says:

"The consciousness of the false limited 'I' which was there before *Fana*, matured through the process of involution, and the limited false 'I' was replaced by the real unlimited 'I' in *Fana-Fillah*. In *Baqa-Billah*, this matured consciousness is now focused once again and is fixed on the 'I' as the real unlimited 'I', on the mind as Universal Mind, on energy as Unbounded Energy and on the body as the Universal Body called the *Maha-Karan-Sharir*. An important fact must be noted here: - that in the state of *Baqa-Billah* simultaneously the same consciousness is also focused and fixed on the limited 'I', mind, energy and body, wherefore the *Salik* consciously experiences the false as falsity with the false, and the Real as Reality with the Real."^{11.45}

`This is the end of the life history of the 'I-drop-soul', which has achieved the state of *Salik* by realizing *Sulukiyat* or *Baqa-Billah*, and, after being chosen by a contemporary Sadguru, started living the life of God in the human form as a Sadguru or a Perfect Master or a Qutub. About this Meher Baba says:

"After the state of *Fana-Fillah*, the state of *Baqa-Billah* is established by some individualized selves to live the life of God as 'Man-God' on the earth. Such a 'Man-God' lives at one and the same time in all states of life and in all planes, the life of man in illusion -knowing Illusion as Illusion- and of God in Reality. This is the state of real *Sulukiyat*.

"...The state of *Qutubiyat*, which follows the *Sulukiyat* of *Baqa-Billah*, is where God as man, established in the life of God in *Baqa-Billah*, now begins to LIVE the life of God in the *Qutubiyat* state as a Qutub or a Sadguru. He now not only consciously experiences as in the state of *Fana-Fillah* and consciously accumulates, as in the state of *Baqa-Billah*, infinite knowledge, power and bliss, but uses these infinite aspects in this state of *Qutubiyat* for those who are still in Illusion. Such a Man-God of the state of *Qutubiyat* is called a Perfect Master, who as man has not only become God and established himself in God but lives the life of God as God's individual representative in Illusion." ^{11.46}

`We can now answer Rahim's question about the Avatar: Who is He in reality? Since the exclusive Super 'Sat-Chit-Anand-I' Consciousness is the Avataric Consciousness, this Super-Consciousness, therefore, is the real identity of the Avatar or the Buddha or the Christ or the Rasool. This Super-Consciousness is also the identity of the Supreme Divine Being, the Ancient One and the Highest of the High. At the same time, this Super-Consciousness is also the identity of a Salik and a Sadguru. This Super-Consciousness is also the identity of all God realized souls. If the exclusive Super 'Sat-Chit-Anand-I' Consciousness is the identity of the Supreme Divine Being, Avatar, Sadguru, Salik and also of all God realized souls, how do we then differentiate between them?'

`We should not forget that That-Which-Is is Who-Alone-Is, and Who-Alone-Is is the Supreme Divine Being. Almost all of the souls, which become one with the Supreme Divine Being, drop their human bodies immediately after realizing the 'I-am-God' Super Consciousness and exist as the form-less Supreme Divine Being. It takes some time for the Supreme Divine Being as a Salik to drop His or Her human body, and till then He or She lives the life of Man-God in the gross world. He or She sleeps in the exclusive 'I-am-God' Super-Consciousness, wakes up in the gross world with 'I-am-God' Super-Consciousness, and lives there as the all-inclusive 'I-am-God' Super-Consciousness. He or She is the exclusive and also the all-inclusive Eternal Super 'Sat-Chit-Anand-I' Consciousness, in which an experience of unconsciousness is not possible. Having achieved awakening in the Infinite Super 'Sat-Chit-Anand-I' Consciousness, He or She is always awake, though being in an embodied state may appear as sleeping. Being the 'I-am-God-

Super-Consciousness', His or Her 'I-am-God' identity is not a result of thought process. He or She exists as Absolute Self-Certainty and freely makes use of thoughts and memories associated with the gross body while working at the human level. Embodied God realized souls appear different and numerous because of their different bodies but as Super 'Sat-Chit-Ananda-I' Consciousness they all are One. Their bodies can be compared with different television sets tuned to a single channel. A Salik, a Sadguru and the Avatar differ from one another in their differing patterns of living in the world of Illusion. They also function differently. Salik and Sadguru live the life of man as God, while the Avatar lives the life of God through man by actually becoming man. A Salik is a *jivan-mukta* and has no specific role to play and no duties to perform. He or She mostly oscillates between *Fana-Fillah*, *Baqa-Billah*, and remains drowned in Infinite Bliss. A Sadguru is a Salik who is entrusted with the duties of a Sadguru by a Sadguru. This establishes Him or Her firmly in *Baqa-Billah* in which the use of Universal Mind, Universal Unbound Energy, Universal body, individualized minds, bounded energies and individualized bodies is possible. Avatar, however, is the direct descent of Avataric Consciousness in the world of Illusion.'

'Merwan, would you please explain this, with a suitable example, so that the whole scene becomes somewhat clearer', I pleaded earnestly.

'Professor, all this is not at all difficult to understand. We all are familiar with something quite similar,' Merwan said. 'For example, each one of us is having a firmly fixed singular referral identity, but we also respond to our multiple working identities and function at different levels without obliterating our singular identity. All our multiple identities, including the most predominant singular referral identity, are thought based, therefore, become dormant in the state of deep sleep. They are revived when we wake up. Each one of us, therefore, exhibits a composite individuality. This state of affairs is only a reflection of the composite identity of the Supreme Divine Being, the Ancient One and the Highest of the High, who operates with diffused multiple working identities in the worlds of Illusion.'

'The Avatar and the Sadgurus are the multiple working identities of the Supreme Divine Being. Avatar is God Himself who comes down to live the life of

man, and, therefore, His predominant working identity in the gross world is that of a man. This explains why the manifestation and the consequent revelation of His Real Identity as God - the Ancient One and the Highest of the High - becomes the most significant aspect of His Divine Mission on earth. A Sadguru is the man who has become One with God and His predominant working identity is His real identity as God. That is why a Sadguru responds minimally, and rather indifferently, to His working identity as a man. Though quite often in rags and living in humble surroundings, Sadgurus are the real Kings and Queens of the spiritual world. They emanate pure love and exhibit unbelievable spiritual powers. Their spiritual splendor makes their Divinity visible to whoever comes in their contact. On the contrary, the Divinity of the Avatar, the Supreme Divine Being and the Emperor, Who Himself descends down assuming a human form, is widely doubted and becomes a matter of controversy because of Him living the life of a man. He is quite often humiliated and at times even persecuted. People ignoring Him, Who is the Supreme Lord of Creation, keep running after the false saints, petty spiritual teachers and preachers, and others. Reflecting this, Meher Baba says:

"Age after age history repeats itself when men and women, in their ignorance, limitations and pride, sit in judgment over the God-incarnated man who declares his Godhood, and condemn him for uttering the Truths they cannot understand. He is indifferent to abuse and persecution for, in His true compassion He understands, in His continual experience of Reality He knows, and in His Infinite Mercy He forgives." ^{11.47}

"I am the very same Ancient One, in flesh and blood, who is eternally worshipped and neglected, always remembered and forgotten; I am the Eternal One, whose Past is worshipped and remembered, whose Present is neglected, whose Future is always much desired and longed for.

I was Rama, I was Krishna, I was this One, I was that One, and now I am MEHER BABA. In this form of flesh and blood, I am that Ancient One Who alone is eternally worshipped and ignored, ever remembered and forgotten. I am the One who is always lost and found among mankind." ^{11.48}

These words pierced our hearts like bullets, and each one of us could feel the pain inducted by them. It became impossible to restrain ourselves, and we all wept on our inability to recognize Him, love Him and surrender to His Will when He comes amidst us as the Avatar or the Christ or the Buddha or the Rasool. Perhaps this too is His Will, so that mankind should feel tormented by their foolish neglect of the Avatar; and, feeling the pangs of His separation, should await His return much more earnestly. And this game of "lost and found" should go on endlessly.

Collecting myself I asked, 'Merwan, what are the duties of a Sadguru, and since when this legacy had began?'

'Professor,' Merwan said, 'the first man to realize God as the eternal Truth was taken up into this realization by the eternal Avataric Consciousness or *Fana-Fillah* State of God. This man, now God, did not drop His body and the Super Sat-Chit-Ananda-I Consciousness "came down", and blossomed fully as *Baqa-Billah* or *Sahaj Samadhi*. With the "coming down" of the Avataric Consciousness, Avatar Himself descended and took an incarnation in the body of the first God-Man, now the first Perfect Master, Sadguru, or Qutub. Avataric Consciousness is Maha-Vishnu who, as the Ancient One, has committed Himself to sustain the Divinity - Divine Love and Truth - in the worlds of Illusion. The first Avatar is the same as the first Perfect Master who worked for the maintenance of Divinity in the Cosmic Universe by living the life of God as man and by helping, as God, the spiritually advanced souls in realizing God. Later, at the end of the first cycle, the first five Sadgurus collectively brought down the Avataric Consciousness -the Ancient One Himself- in a body independent of the bodies of the Perfect Masters. This is how the Cosmic Spiritual Hierarchy was established and the Divine Work was divided between the Avatar and the Perfect Masters. In the words of Meher Baba:

"The Avatar is the first master of the first God-realized soul. But in God-realization, the full consciousness of the first master became fused with the eternal infinite consciousness of the Avatar. Therefore, with the "coming down" of the first God-realized man, the Avatar himself descended and took an incarnation in his body. So, from the point of view of incarnation, the Avatar is the

same as the first master. This first master had no master in the human form. But all subsequent masters have had masters in the human form to help them in Truth-realization."^{11.49}

`The cosmic spiritual hierarchy consists of 7000 spiritual beings, either advanced or perfect, in each age lasting for about 65 to 125 years. Out of these, 5600 are in the first plane, and also between 1st and 2nd, between 2nd and 3rd, between 3rd and 4th, between 4th and 5th, between 5th and 6th and between 6th and 7th. 666 occupy the second plane, 558 the third plane, 56 the fourth plane, 56 the fifth plane, 56 the sixth plane, 3 as the "inactive partners" in the conduct of the divine sport of creation in the seventh plane and 5 as the Perfect Masters. Besides the 55 Perfect Masters and the Avatar there are also 56 God-realized souls in each cycle of time which ranges from 700 to 1400 years.'

`Before knowing about the various duties of the Perfect Masters or Sadgurus, it would help us immensely if we get some idea about the nature of their *Baqa Billah* or *Sahaj Samadhi* Super Consciousness. About this Meher Baba says:

"It is very, very rare and it is for very, very few to end their third divine journey in the *Qutubiyat* or Sadguru state. In this state man as God now lives the life of God. He now uses the infinite knowledge, power and bliss that He experiences. He is that `God and man' or Man-God who has brought down the One indivisible existence into the Many. He is that Man-God who brought down Independent Reality into Illusion and controls Illusion from the divine office of His Beyond state *Vidnyan-Bhumika* or `MUQAM-e-MOHAMMEDI'."

"The very life of this Man-God or Perfect Master is the `SAHAJ SAMADHI.' Such a Perfect Master is at one and the same time, *simultaneously*, in all the universes and in all the worlds, on all the levels and on all the planes, living the life of the `One and the All.' His life is that of living also on particular levels and on particular planes, as every creature, and as an individual of that certain level, and of that particular plane. At the same time, together with living the life of God, He lives the life of man on this earth."^{11.50}

`Beloved Baba is talking about the cosmic presence of a Perfect Master because as Super-Consciousness He permeates the entire Creation. He or She is

literally everywhere and can work anywhere without any constraint of time and space.'

`Merwan, please tell us more about this "simultaneous" presence of a Perfect Master in all spheres, worlds, planes and levels, and Who, at the same time, remains anchored to a human body,' Mary said. `Obviously, it is His all inclusive Super 'Sat-Chit-Anand-I' Consciousness, which pervades the entire Creation. But how could He, Who is still in a gross body, work anywhere without the constraints of time and space?'

`Mary, a Perfect Master or a Sadguru is the Supreme Divine Being or God Himself because God is His real identity. Imagine countless empty vessels placed in an unimaginably vast field. Space surrounds them, fills them and pervades all of them. In the same manner a Sadguru surrounds, fills and pervades all things and beings of Creation. His human body is just one of those countless things which He fills and engages in His work. This filling of space with consciousness is not something with which we are not familiar. Let me explain that.'

`Place yourself in a room that is stuffed with the objects of all kind. Your consciousness fills the entire room. And, if your eyes are open, then the totality of the room is reproduced, in your mind, as a composite image. You become simultaneously conscious of all those things which are visible, but without being conscious of any particular thing. The moment you decide to do that, you just focus the beam of your consciousness at that particular thing and become conscious of its visible details. Now place yourself in an open field covering a vast area. Your consciousness now fills the entire area and you become simultaneously conscious of all of its visible contents, without being conscious of any particular thing. If you get interested, let us say, in a distant tree and focus the beam of your consciousness over that, you would become conscious of its visible details. Now, in case you lift your head and look at the sky, your consciousness instantaneously fills the entire space that stretches over billions and trillions of miles. If it is a starry night, you become simultaneously conscious of the moon, stars and the rest, but not particularly conscious of any one or a group of them. The moment you decide to do that, you just focus the beam of your consciousness at that particular point in space and become conscious of its visible details. Even the

human consciousness has the capacity to fill infinite expansions of space almost instantaneously, and to become conscious of the objects that are separated by enormously vast distances.'

`Mary dear, when we say that a Sadguru, as all-inclusive Super 'Sat-Chit-Anand-I' Consciousness, surrounds, fills and permeates all things and beings of the entire Creation, we also convey that the entire Creation works as His Body and Mind. He can focus the beam of His consciousness over and through any thing in the cosmos and can get back the desired feedbacks. This is how He remains conscious of the finite.'

`Merwan, should we then take it to mean that all the five Sadgurus, who remain physically available at any point of time, are also literally within all of us as the 'all-inclusive' 'Super-Consciousness'? In other words they are living their "life of God" not only through their own bodies but also through all of us,' Mary said.

`Mary this is what Beloved Baba has said, and this is the truth,' said Merwan. 'A Sadguru being One with the 'all-inclusive' 'Super-Consciousness' is continuously conscious of His infinite identity as God but becomes conscious of finite only when He feels so. He is not simultaneously conscious of infinite and finite. Avatar, however, remains simultaneously conscious of infinite and finite because as Avatar He is simultaneously both, Being and Becoming.'

`Sadgurus help the Ancient One in sustaining Divinity in the worlds of Illusion. They keep divine vigil on the souls stationed in and in-between the inner planes, and extend their help whenever it becomes necessary. Their help is crucial for the pilgrims living in the Fourth Plane. It is impossible to cross the Sixth Plane without the divine touch of their Grace. They also control the affairs of the whole universe in accordance with the Divine Plan as revealed by the Avatar at the end of each cycle of time. If one of them drops His body, then the vacated position of the Sadguru is filled by another living soul who realizes God at that time.'

`Bringing about the direct descent of the Avataric Consciousness as the Avatar at the end of each cycle of time is the most important function of Sadgurus. In the words of Meher Baba:

"Thus, at all times and in all ages, there are always five Qutubs (Sadgurus or Perfect Masters) living on the earth amongst humanity, wielding infinite aspects of AHADIYAT of the ARSHE-ALA or VIDNYAN of the VIDNYAN-BHUMIKA of the Beyond state of God in the form of infinite knowledge, power and bliss for the progressive emancipation of all in the field of Illusion. According to the divine law, these five Qutubs or Sadgurus or Perfect Masters, at the end of every cycle in all ages, precipitate the advent of the direct descent of God on earth in human male form. Hence, at the end of every cycle, when God manifests on the earth in the form of man and reveals His divinity to mankind, He is recognized as The AVATAR -The MESSIAH- the PROPHET." ^{11.51}

`Precipitation of the advent of the direct descent of God on earth in human male form is brought about by all the five Sadgurus collectively through a complex spiritual process which gives some idea about their enormous powers. Avatar or the Avataric Consciousness descends down by being wrapped up in a "veil". Sadgurus choose an appropriate and befitting human male body or a "cloak" for the descending Avataric Consciousness. They create the "veil" of a temporarily working 'mind-based-ego', which delimits the Avataric Consciousness until the time when one of the five Sadgurus blows it off. The unveiled Avataric Consciousness then descends down and blossoms fully in its human form under the active vigil of another Sadguru. About the "cloak" and the "veil", Meher Baba has said:

"The then existing and functioning five Perfect Masters, at the appropriate time of the Avataric Period, individually and conjointly bring about the advent of the Avatar; and exercising their infinity mercy and love for all in Ignorance living the illusory life in Creation, use their infinite power and grace to precipitate this advent and make manifest the infinite Reality of the eternal, infinite 'God-Consciousness' in the Beyond state, onto this earth into Illusion; and they bestow, through their infinite power, knowledge and bliss, onto the Reality a most suitable "Cloak" of Illusion in the shape of a human male form, so that the Divinity of the Reality may be made most presentable, in the world of Illusion.

Thus, when Infinite Reality (i.e. God) manifests on earth in the form of a man and reveals His divinity to mankind, He is recognized as the Avatar, the Messiah - the Prophet. God thus becomes Man." ^{11.52}

"The veil with which the Avatar descends in the human form is placed upon him by the five Perfect Masters who bring him down from his formless being. In the Avataric periods, the five masters always put this veil upon the infinite consciousness of the Avatar, because if he were to be brought without such a veil into the world of forms, the existing balance between reality and illusion would be profoundly disturbed. However, when the five masters think that the moment is ripe, they remove this veil which they have placed on the Avataric consciousness. From that moment the Avatar consciously starts his role as the Avatar." ^{11.53}

"In this manner, infinite God, age after age, throughout all cycles, wills through His infinite mercy to effect His presence amidst mankind by stooping down to human levels in human-form, but His physical presence amidst mankind not being apprehended, He is looked upon as an ordinary man of the world. When, however, He asserts His divinity on earth by proclaiming Himself the Avatar of the age, He is worshipped by some who accept Him as God; and glorified by a few who know Him as God on earth. But it invariably falls to the lot of the rest of the humanity to condemn Him while He is physically in their midst." ^{11.54}

`But Merwan what makes God to come down and lead the life of an ordinary man when He has mighty Sadgurus living in the world looking after the affairs of universe, and implementing God's Divine Plan?' asked Rahim.

Merwan explained, `Advent of the Ancient One, as the Avatar in the world of human beings, is the most important part of the Divine Plan. Human form is of utmost importance because it is the climax form of a long process of the evolution of consciousness, and the only gateway to the inner realms. A Sadguru is a Man-God who, as man, has already traversed the path of involution and has achieved his final and irreversible merger in God. It becomes impossible for him to re-live the life of man. And it is the ordinary life of the common person, which

is in the real need of the touches of Divine Love and Truth. The daily lives of the ordinary people throb conjointly as the very heart of human civilization, and when this heart becomes the abode of God, the entire humanity starts pulsating with the beats of Divine Love and Truth. The Ancient One descends as the Avatar to make our hearts as His abode and to flood our daily lives with His Love and Truth. Meher Baba says:

"The world is witnessing an acute conflict between the forces of light and the forces of darkness. On the one hand, there are selfish persons who seek their happiness blindly through lust for power, unbridled greed, and unrelieved hatred. Ignorant of the real purpose of life, they have sunk to the lowest level of civilization. They bury their higher selves in the wreckage of crumbling forms that linger on from the dead past. Bound by material interests and limited conceptions, they are forgetful of their divine destiny. They have lost their way, and their hearts are torn by the ravages of hate and rancour. On the other hand, there are persons who unveil their inherent higher selves, through the endurance of pain and deprivation and through noble acts of bravery and self sacrifice..." ^{11.55}

"...The present chaos and destruction will engulf the whole world, but in the future this will be followed by a very long period in which there shall be no war. The passing sufferings and miseries of our times will be worth enduring for the sake of the long period of happiness that is to follow eventually. What will the present chaos lead to? How will it end? It can only end in one way. Mankind will become sick of it all. Man will be sick of wanting and fighting out of hatred. Greed and hatred will reach such intensity that everyone will become weary of them. The way out of the deadlock will be found through selflessness. The only alternative that can bring a solution will be to stop hating and to love, to stop wanting and to give, to stop dominating and to serve." ^{11.56}

"Great suffering awakens great understanding. Supreme suffering fulfills its purpose and yields its true significance when it awakens an exhausted humanity and stirs within it a genuine longing for real understanding. Unprecedented suffering leads to an unprecedented spiritual growth. It contributes to the construction of life on the unshakable foundation of the Truth..." ^{11.57}

"...The new life that is based upon spiritual understanding is an affirmation of Truth. It is not something that belongs to utopia but is completely practical. Now that humanity is thrown into the fire of bloody conflicts, through immense anguish it is experiencing the utter instability and futility of a life based upon purely material conceptions. The hour is near when man in his eager longing for real happiness will seek its true source." ^{11.58}

"The time is also ripe when humanity will ardently seek to contact the embodiment of Truth in the form of the God-Man (Avatar), through whom it can be inspired and lifted into spiritual understanding. It will accept the guidance that comes from divine authority. Only the outpouring of divine love can bring about spiritual awakening. In this crucial time of universal suffering humanity is becoming ready to turn towards its higher Self and to fulfill the will of God. Divine love will perform the supreme miracle of bringing God into the hearts of man and getting him established in lasting and true happiness. It will satisfy the greatest need and longing of mankind. Divine love will make people selfless and helpful in their mutual relationships, and it will bring about the ultimate solution of all problems. The new brotherhood on earth shall be a fulfilled fact, and nations will be united in the fraternity of Love and Truth." ^{11.59}

`Speaking about His mission as the Avatar, Meher Baba says, "My existence is for this Love and this Truth. To suffering humanity, I say: Have hope. I have come to help you in surrendering yourselves to the cause of God and in accepting His grace of Love and Truth. I have come to help you in winning the one victory of all victories -to win your Self." ^{11.60}

`In order to give immediate relief to a suffering humanity, the Avatar Himself endures its suffering and suffers. Jesus Christ, in spite of his infinite spiritual powers, allowed him to be sentenced to death and crucified. Meher Baba allowed himself to be wounded seriously in two car accidents, and shed his blood in the West and the East. Avatars do not feint about their suffering, they actually suffer like ordinary human beings. This is the most significant difference between the life of a Sadguru and that of the Avatar. A Sadguru leads the life of God as God in the body of man. He invariably *acts* like a man, but remains internally totally detached with such actions and happenings. The Avatar, who is God Himself, lives

the life of man by actually becoming a man. He does not enact it, but actually *lives* it. Being the Ancient One and the Highest of the High Himself, with simultaneous consciousness of infinite and finite, He, on one hand shares human consciousness, while on the other works through His Universal Mind. His apparently simple human actions are, therefore, translated differently and in differing intensities at different levels of Creation. All this depends on His Will. Since He doesn't work for Himself but for the entire universe, utilizing His own inner net-work of cosmic inter-communication, it becomes almost impossible for a human being to have a complete understanding of His actions and behavior.'

Explaining further Merwan said, 'Professor has raised the question: How did Beloved Baba work as the Avatar to achieve the targets set forth by Him for Himself? Avatar works for the entire universe and His physical presence on earth accelerates immensely the pace of spiritual processes of evolution and involution of consciousness. All things and beings in Creation get flooded with His Love as His Grace. The collective consciousness of humanity undergoes transformation and human life gets oriented in terms of newly created patterns of consciousness.'

'Avatar is the Lord of Consciousness; and, when we say, "Avatar works," it only means that the Avatar of the age sets in motion the Divine Plan related to His Avataric period. For the Avatar, being the Supreme Divine Being Himself, the "past" and the "future" exist simultaneously in the "Eternal Now". At His level, the beginning becomes the end, and the end becomes the beginning. However, for us, who are the prisoners of time and space, the new Divine Plan unfolds and progresses gradually. It begins, reaches a peak of its materialization, and is followed by a period of its diverse impacts that are increasingly diluted. Nevertheless, in the Super Consciousness of the Avatar, whatever He decides is implemented instantaneously and totally. That is how a new regime of certainties is imposed upon the illusory uncertainties.'

'Professor, even this statement about the imposition of a new regime of certainties, upon the illusory uncertainties, is only partly true. In reality, in the Divine Super Consciousness of the Supreme Divine Being, the process of creation, the maintenance of that which is created, and the final dissolution of Creation,

are the simultaneous happenings. In simple words it means, that nothing like Creation has ever happened or will ever happen. Infinite Creation is Infinite Nothingness. The movement of time as past, present and future is an illusion, which appears as real. Thus, at our level, the apparent illusory uncertainties are actually the illusory certainties that are in the process of gradual materialization. This situation is similar to the "presently visible state" of a star, which is actually the state that was in existence millions of light years ago. Moreover, what would be the visible state of this star tomorrow, or the day after tomorrow, would again be the state that only existed millions of light years ago. This star, which we are seeing right now -and about which we are so sure that it is really existing- is perhaps no longer existing. That which is happening today or will happen tomorrow has already happened. Moreover, none can say with absolute surety, that something has actually happened. This is the only way to talk about the shadows of shadows. Meher Baba says:

"In the eternity of existence there is no time. There is no past and no future, only the everlasting present. Therefore, in eternity, nothing has ever happened and nothing will ever happen. Everything is happening in the unending NOW, if there is anything happening at all; because all that has apparently happened, all that is apparently happening and all that will ever apparently happen in the illusory cosmic universe is all that which God has already dreamt the moment His Own original infinite whim surged as 'WHO AM I?' So, really speaking, nothing has happened and nothing will ever happen." ^{11.61}

'Merwan, this is the toughest of all Zen Koans,' Mika said laughing. 'Do you mean to say that the Ancient One is also a shadow of a shadow?'

'No, Mika. Never,' said Merwan. 'Ancient One is the One 'Who-Alone-Is', and that is why He appears in Illusion to reveal that He Alone is Existing, and that all of us are neither "I", nor "You", nor even "We", but One, 'Who-Alone-Is'. This is Avatar's real work for which He comes again and again. He works in Illusion and through Illusion for all of us who are spiritually one with Him. Meher Baba says:

"I have not come to establish anything new - I have come to put life into the old. I have not come to establish retreats or ashrams. I create them for the

purpose of My universal work, only to repeatedly dissolve them once that purpose has been served.

The universe is my ashram, and every heart is My house, but I manifest only in those hearts in which all, other than Me, ceases to live.

When my universal religion of love is on the verge of fading into insignificance, I come to breathe life into it and do away with the farce of dogmas that defile it in the name of religion and stifle it with ceremonies and rituals." ^{11.62}

"...I have come to remind all people that they should live on earth as the children of the one Father until my Grace awakens them to the realization that they are all one without a second and that all divisions and conflict and hatred are but a shadow-play of their own ignorance." ^{11.63}

"I tell you all with my Divine authority, that you and I are not 'WE' , but "ONE". You consciously feel my Avatarhood within you; I consciously feel in you what each of you feel. Thus everyone of us is Avatar, in the sense that everyone and everything is everyone and everything, at the same time, and for all time.

"There is nothing but God. He is the only Reality, and we all are one in the indivisible Oneness of this Absolute Reality. When the One who has realized God says, " I am God. You are God, and we all are one," and also awakens this feeling of Oneness in His illusion-bound selves, then the question of the lowly and the great, the poor and the rich, the humble and the modest, the good and the bad, simply vanishes. It is his false awareness of duality that misleads man into making illusory distinctions and filing them into separate categories." ^{11.64}

`Avatar's work is universal and one can have some idea about its nature and extent by gaining insight into the special state of the spiritual hierarchy which prevails when the Ancient One comes to our world in the human form. In each of the ages of a cycle of time, one to ten inclusive, there are 5 Sadgurus (Qutubs), one of whom is the *Qutub-e-Irshad* or the chief amongst them. In the eleventh and last age of a cycle there is no *Qutub-e-Irshad* amongst the five Perfect Masters but the Avatar (*Saheb-e-Zaman* or Savior), who in person assumes His own office of Christhood (*Haqiqat-e-Mohammadi*). This means that in addition to

His own work, Avatar, the Perfect One, works as the guide of the five Sadgurus who join Him in His Work.'

'The universal work of the Avatar proceeds at different levels. The first dimension of His universal work covers His work for the souls who are attached to various forms, are loaded with sanskaras, and are moving on the path of evolution of consciousness. For this, He works at the level of the individual souls.'

'The second dimension of His universal work is the world of humankind, which receives His special attention because of the supreme importance of the human form and human state of consciousness. This is the global level of His work, in which He selects out the major catalytic channels, and mends them appropriately, so that the consciousness of His Love and Truth flows through them unobstructed. These channels then become His most powerful instruments of the transformation of collective human consciousness. His name and His Love, as His Divine Truth and Grace, then start changing the very complexion of human civilization and culture. He, the Ocean of Supreme Intelligence, releases fresh tides of creativity and opens new vistas of the eternal holistic spiritual knowledge.'

'The third dimension of Avatar's universal work is His work for the souls progressing on the spiritual path of Involution. Those who are stranded in the various spiritual planes, and other subtle sphere locations, receive His special care and attention. Devi and Devata or Archangels and Angels, and other higher beings of inner worlds, not only know about the new Advent of the Ancient One, but His name and form get firmly fixed in their consciousness. Avatar's new name becomes the new bridge between them and the Supreme Divine Being. The Supreme Divine Being responds to their prayers made in the name of the Avatar. All of them work for the Avatar as and when needed by Him.

'Avatar descends with the souls or the members of His Circle, and He has His specific commitments to each one of them. This is the fourth dimension of His universal work. The Circle of Avatar always consists of a total of 122 members. About this Meher Baba has said:

"Like the Perfect Masters, the Avatar also has His Circle (of ten concentric Circles). When the Avatar takes an incarnation, He has before Him a clear cut mission that proceeds according to a plan; and this plan is always carefully adjusted to the flow of time. The process of the incarnation of the Avatar is unique. Before taking on a physical body and descending into the world of duality, He gives to Himself and members of His Circles special types of *sanskaras*, which are known as *vidnyani sanskaras*. The Circles of the Avatar always consist of a total of 122 members, and all of them have to take an incarnation when the Avatar takes an incarnation. The taking on of *vidnyani sanskaras* before incarnating in the physical body is like drawing of a veil upon Himself and His Circles. After taking an incarnation, the Avatar remains under this veil of *vidnyani sanskaras* until the time that has been fixed by Himself. When the appointed time comes, He experiences His own original divinity and begins to work through the *vidnyani sanskaras*, which now have been transmuted into the *yogayoga sanskaras* of the universal mind." ^{11.65}

`These 122 patterns of *vidnyani sanskaras* are there right from the very first Advent and the task of their incorporation as veils in different human bodies is entrusted to Sadgurus. This work started from the time of the first Perfect Master or Sadguru, Who also worked as the Avatar. The members of the Circle remain under the veil of *vidnyani sanskaras* until they attain God Realization at the time preordained by the Avatar.'

`Merwan, what is meant by *vidnyani sanskaras* and *yogayoga sanskaras*?' - asked Ram.

Merwan said, ` Ram, *vidnyani sanskaras* are the patterns of *sanskaras* of duality created directly by the God-man or the Avatar, and the Man-God or the Sadguru, who reside in *Vidnyan-Bhumika* of the Xth State of Beyond God. *Vidnyani sanskaras* prompt activities and invite experiences that are similar to activities and experiences caused by ordinary *sanskaras*. However, ordinary *sanskaras* are gathered during the course of the evolution of consciousness and they tend to strengthen the grip of Illusion; while *vidnyani sanskaras* are the mental-ripples directly created by God stationed in *Vidnyan Bhumika* and they, while in operation, do not generate new patterns of *sanskaras*. *Vidnyani*

sanskaras automatically fade out in a time-bound manner in accordance with the program innately fixed in the consciousness. The moment the point of perfect equilibrium between the opposites is reached, the individual soul achieves God realization. In that case, the remaining *sanskaras* are transmuted to their *yogayoga* state. The *yogayoga sanskaras* keep the body and the mind functioning in the world of duality without obstructing the experiencing of Infinite Sat-Chit-Ananda Consciousness. They automatically dissolve themselves and result in the final and irreversible disembodiment of the God-Realized Soul.'

`Ram, the fifth dimension of Avatar's universal work is His direct manipulation of the collective human consciousness. Collective human consciousness, at any point of time, is a state of diffused individuality characterized by the common people. The descent of the Ancient One, as the Avatar, takes place invariably at a time when the collective human consciousness suffers intensely from the malignancy of its own morbidity. Only a surgery would save it from a sure death. Avatar, the Master of Consciousness, performs this surgery, but in an unbelievably compassionate manner. Social conflicts, wars, natural disasters, epidemics, serious diseases, economic stresses etc. become increasingly frequent. And the humanity is pushed, with great force, towards the negative polarity of the illusory duality so that it rebounds with great momentum towards the positive polarity. Avatar materializes all this. At the same time, He, in His Mercy and Compassion, takes upon Himself the sufferings of the entire humanity, and suffers. He allows Himself to be crucified or tortured, and thereby reduces greatly the collective suffering of the humanity. About this, Meher Baba says: "Everlastingly with all the divine bliss in me, I eternally suffer for one and all -thus I am crucified eternally and continually for all."^{11.66} Explaining Christ's Crucifixion, Beloved Baba has said:

"The God-Man experiences all souls as His own. He experiences Himself in everything, and His universal mind includes all minds in its scope. The God-Man knows Himself to be one with all other souls in bondage. Although He knows Himself to be identical with God and is thus eternally free, He also knows Himself to be one with the other souls in bondage and is thus bound. Though He is conscious of the eternal bliss of His God state, He also experiences infinite

suffering, owing to the bondage of others whom He knows to be His own forms. This is the meaning of Christ's Crucifixion. The God-Man is, as it were, continuously being crucified, and He is continuously taking birth. In the God-Man, the purpose of creation has been completely realized. He has nothing to attain for Himself by remaining in the world, yet He retains His body and continues to use it for emancipating other souls from bondage and helping them attain God-consciousness." ^{11.67}

"...For a man to have a glimpse of lasting happiness he has first to realize that God being in all, knows all: that God alone acts and reacts through all, that God, in the guise of countless animate and inanimate entities, experiences the innumerable varied phenomena of suffering and happiness. Thus, it is God who has brought suffering in human experience to its height, and God alone who will efface this illusory suffering and bring the illusory happiness to its height." ^{11.68}

`Merwan, what about the miracles? Do they not constitute an important dimension of Avatar's work?' Mary asked.

`Mary, voluntary and involuntary applications of His supreme powers, creating visible or cognizable effects, which we call as miracles, are parts of His method of working. Avatars use their supreme powers in order to help the souls needing their help, and also to accelerate the pace of their work. About this, Meher Baba says:

"The miracles of a Saviour are of a universal character and are performed when universally necessary. When a Saviour intends working a miracle, he stations himself for the time being on the 6th, 5th or 4th plane, as demanded by circumstances. When, however, it is desired that the miracles be very forceful, he stations himself for the time being on the 4th plane." ^{11.69}

`Sadgurus perform miracles on a very large scale but they do not cover the whole universe. Mary, the two categories of miracles - voluntary and involuntary - are quite important for understanding the method of working of Avatars. The Avatar performs voluntary miracles willfully. Involuntary miracles are mostly the results of the interactions of the faith of the lovers of Avatar, or that of the

followers and disciples of a Sadguru, with the ever-active force or radiation that emanates from these great beings. Meher Baba says:

"The miracles wrought by Saviours and Perfect Masters have a divine motive behind them and may be either voluntary or involuntary. The voluntary miracles of a Saviour or Perfect Master are those that he deliberately performs by the expression of and force of his will, and the involuntary ones are those that occur independently of the will of the Saviour or Perfect Master and are wrought by the ever-active force that surrounds these great beings. In the latter type of miracle the Saviour or Perfect Master is unaware of the incidents of the miracle of which he himself is the source and prime cause. Both voluntary and involuntary miracles of these Perfect Ones are nevertheless always directed towards the spiritual awakening of the world." ^{11.70}

`Mary, this ever active force, which emanates from the Avatar, covers and permeates the entire cosmic creation. It is the cosmic cloud of Avatar's Personal Radiation, pulsating with the unbounded Universal Energy and Universal Mind, and programmed by the seed words implanted by the Avatar. This ever-active force or radiation is saturated with His Love and works as His Grace.'

`It is impossible to know about all the dimensions and levels of the universal work of Avatar. These five dimensions of His work are only indicative, and provide us with the glimpses of the tremendous complexity and magnitude of the universal work. They, together, constitute only the general format of the Avatar's work. Avatar of the age adopts it, and modifies it, based on His perception of how best His Divine Plan could be implemented in the world of His Advent, and how it should unfold in the succeeding cycle of time.'

`We are indeed extremely fortunate that we are born in the Avataric age and the Avataric period, which give us the singular advantage of knowing, in considerable details, about the nature and the method of Avatar's work as the Avatar. Meher Baba's world is a 'Hi-Tech' modern world. For the first time, in the entire history of humankind, the life of the Avatar was so comprehensively documented. Books on Meher Baba, based on first person accounts; photographs covering almost the entire span of Meher Baba's life on earth; numerous audio-

cassettes and films on Meher Baba's life from early 30s onwards; and almost inexhaustible treasure of communication in the form of letters, telegrams and cablegrams - all these enable us, and the posterity, to have the 'never-before-possible' glimpses of Avatar's Divine Life on earth.'

`About His universal work and His method of working Meher Baba says:

"It is absolutely impossible for an ordinary man to understand my work. With my universal mind, I work on an unlimited scale for the universe; to understand what I do is not within the bounds of human intellect. I always work for the universe and not for myself. Why would I need to work for myself? I do my work through various mediums. With that object in mind, I visit places, see different sights, or go to plays, films, and do a hundred and one other things. But I don't enjoy movies or plays as you do, I make them medium of my inner spiritual work. My every breath does this work constantly, while outwardly you find me doing nothing special. You cannot grasp the internal mystery.

I have to do great work for the welfare of humanity - it is my universal duty. Times are critical and due to certain crises, my responsibility has increased in proportion to circumstances and prevailing conditions. I am the Emperor of the spiritual kingdom and every second receive inner reports and messages from my agents in every corner of the world..." ^{11.71}

`Merwan, what Baba means when He says that He has His agents in every corner of the world?' asked Rahim.

`Rahim, the word "agent" is used for the spiritually advanced pilgrims stationed at, mostly in between, the planes of the Path of Involution. In Sufi tradition, such advanced aspirants are called *abdals*. Advanced aspirants not only participate in some of the privileges of the Divine State, but also wield great occult and mystic powers. Some of them can see hear things at any distance. Some can take a new body immediately after death, while others have such a control over the gross world that they can change their bodies at will. Thus, these agents exist in gross human forms and also in subtle bodies in disembodied states. Some of them are used by the Avatar, also by the Sadgurus, as the

terminals of the cosmic spiritual information network. A few incidents from the life of Beloved Baba would illustrate this better.'

`It was 1931 and Meher Baba was in America. This is how it happened:

"On the evening of November 28th, Baba returned to Harmon arriving at eleven o'clock. A day or two later, Baba asked to be driven to Sing-Sing Prison in the town of Ossining, five miles away. They left Harmon at ten that night by car. Baba indicated he wanted to make inner contact with a man in the prison who could do future work for him. Their car drove all around the prison as Baba gazed at the walls and threw kisses.

Having the car stopped by the high entrance gate, Baba was silent for awhile, then communicated, `There is a man in this prison who is my agent - an *abdul*. He is doing good work for me. When I speak, I will free him.'

Baba's mood became sad as they drove directly back to Harmon. In a melancholy state, he remarked, `It is not important for me to go physically into Sing-Song, as I have already made contact with him.' To lighten his mood when they arrived back at the retreat, Baba had a snack of coffee, cheese and biscuits."^{11.72}

`The other incident took place in Switzerland. It was the month of April and the year, 1932. Beloved Meher Baba was with his Indian and Western close disciples -Adi Jr., Behram, Chanji, Ghani, Kaka Baria, Adi Sr., Kitty, Minta, Kim and Delia. In order to get some relief from Lugano's weather, Kitty arranged a boat trip to Mt. Generoso. On the boat a humble Swiss laborer, with a walking stick, sat opposite Baba for almost an hour. Baba had borrowed Ghani's walking stick to demonstrate His inner relationship with that man. Baba tapped the stick three times. Although the man was not looking at Baba, he could copy Baba's taps exactly, three different times. He left the boat when it stopped at a small harbor. Stepping off the boat, he turned and smiled at Baba. Baba said:

"He was my agent. I have come here for complete rest, and in order to do that, I must temporarily hand over the work to someone else. This morning, I have done that with this man. I had to raise him from between the second and

third plane to between the fourth and fifth, so that he could take on the work I am giving him.

The transfer of my work must take place either in a thick jungle, on a high mountain, on water or in a crowd. That is why he smiled, looked at me and went off. You should have noticed how he answered my taps with his stick on the boat -by giving properly-timed taps with his stick in reply to mine." ^{11.73}

`Another incident, which took place before Baba's visit to West, reveals that His spiritual agents are fully aware of His Divine Plan. In March 1928, Meher Baba sent Rustom K. Irani to West to get Western boys to enter His school at Meherabad. In England, Rustom felt terribly frustrated as he had failed to get any response there. No one was prepared to come to India and get admitted to the school. Before he left England, he met one of Baba's agents. It was from this agent, Rustom could learn about Baba's real plan. The agent said, "Your Master wishes to lay a spiritual cable between the East and the West. Up to now, the East is looked after by Eastern Masters and the West by Western Masters. Your Master wants to join both these and that is the reason why he sent you here. You do not know it but you are carrying with you a sort of wireless connection and it affects all those whom you meet." This wireless connection did work with one person - Meredith Starr - who met Rustom in London. The outcome of Rustom's visit was that three English people, Meredith Starr, his wife Margaret and her sister Esther Ross came to India in June 1928 to meet the Master. This contact later proved useful in Meher Baba's work in the West.' ^{11.74}

`Meher Baba takes His work for the welfare of the humanity as a part of His universal duties. Baba had allotted the two and half-hours of His daily sleeping time for this important work. We should remember that in God Realization, unconsciousness gets totally exterminated and a God Realized individual takes only body-rest, while in consciousness He remains eternally Awake. About this Meher Baba has said:

"People all over the world are like that. When awakening, first they gradually open their eyes and it is the same with me. I take two and a half hours for rest or sleep, but I do not really sleep. My body is here and you think I am sleeping, but I

am inwardly working at different places. I perform my universal duties during these two and a half hours, but it takes me half an hour to become fully conscious. In a similar way, the Sadguru Ramkrishna of Calcutta would take one hour to become fully conscious."^{11.75}

`Baba was only illustrating the difference between the sleep of the Avatar and a Sadguru. Ramkrishna Paramhans had in fact died before Meher Baba was born. Let us now look, somewhat more intensively, at the various but specific dimensions of Beloved Meher Baba's universal work. What He did when He was amidst all of us and what is happening right now, on those fronts, when He is no longer with us in a gross body?'

`This time the global target was to bring about a smooth transition from the age of reason to the age of intuition. In simple words it means making access to the Universal Mind, though in a restricted manner, easily available to the common people. Obviously, the operation level, in order to achieve this objective, is that of an individual. Seen in this light, the statement, "I have come not to teach but to awaken," reveals its great significance. In reply to the question, "Do you preach any specific precepts or do you belong to any particular creed?" asked by one Dr. Robert Norwood, Meher Baba had reasserted: "None absolutely. Religions, castes, sects, dogmas and rituals are all hindrances in the path of Truth. Truth is all pervading and infinite. I do not teach anything. I make the learned forget. I have come not to teach but to awaken."^{11.76}

`The message is clear. This time no new religion will be founded. No more of sects, and no more of sects based castes and creeds. No more of dogmas and rituals. Beloved Baba would make us perceive that all such things are the hindrances. He will make us unlearn all that we have learnt about God and spirituality through the intellect. This would silence the analytical mind and would prepare us for the awakening from within; and His words, would then come to life. The good news is that He would take care of all this and the only requisite, on our part, would be our sincere and earnest love for Him.'

`The message of Love and Truth of Avatars is transmitted through deeper processes that remain mostly invisible. It is always a person to person

transmission brought about in a natural manner. Meher Baba has flooded the entire cosmic creation with His Love as His Grace. This ever active force of His surrounds everything, and permeates everything, and would remain active for the major part of the first half of coming seven hundred years. And this is how it works: His Love as His Grace flows towards, and surrounds an individual, irrespective of whether he or she knows about Meher Baba or not. His Grace is His Gift and He initiates its flow. Good and bad, sinners and saints, learned and ignorant, literate and illiterate, of this religion and of that religion - these distinctions are of no value in the eyes of God, and anybody can be the recipient of His Grace. He makes the choice ignoring all our drawbacks and shortcomings. He is the great shepherd who knows about His sheep. The moment His Love, as His Grace, touches an individual; things start happening. An inner process of awakening is initiated. Divine visions and dreams, sudden fulfillment of wishes, obstinate diseases getting cured, prayers getting responded immediately, restored order in an otherwise chaotic life, and above all the feeling that someone has opened the floodgates of happiness and joy - there is literally no end to these experiences. One feels amazed and gradually discovers that he or she is no longer there, where he or she was earlier, and the quality of his or her consciousness has changed immensely. An immensely heightened sensitivity enables one to see the divine hand behind all the little and big events of one's life. Coincidences no longer appear as coincidences. The Divine Beloved Meher Baba becomes the constant companion, and an inner personal relationship with Him is progressively stabilized. This leads finally to the total spiritual transformation of the day to day life. One is then filled with an irresistible urge to share this joy with others. And the stories of Beloved Baba's Glory get transmitted from person to person. This is how it had happened in the times of Zoroaster, Rama, Krishna, Buddha, Jesus and Mohammed; and, this is how it is happening now in the times of Beloved Meher Baba. However, this time God Himself is flowing towards people and leading them to establish direct inner relationships with Him. Obviously, this is bad news for the so called spiritual teachers, preachers and mediators. This indeed is Beloved Baba's greatest miracle, which He is performing every day and gathering a vast number of his followers and lovers. There is no end to these stories, which are pouring in everyday in an ever-increasing number.

Beloved Meher Baba is making these stories and His lovers are sharing them with others. When the eternal Beloved is making His presence felt from within, through diverse and endless experiences, who would then like to seek Him in the externals. When the Avatar, the Christ or the Buddha, is constantly available as our companion and guide, the intellect is easily transcended.'

`Meher Baba's Apostles, also called His intimate mandali, have never thought in terms of founding a new religion in His name. None of them has ever posed him or her as Baba's successor. We know how people are vulnerable to all such tactics and antics. It is so easy to found a new religion. Those who have money are very eager to donate and derive some mental relief out of that, and get their ego boosted. Action programs - yoga asanas, meditation packages, schedules of austerities and rituals, religious do's and don'ts - sell as hot-cakes. A push-button oriented world appreciates instant push-button solutions to its problems. Illusion knows how to sustain and perpetuate itself. The world of Meher Baba is totally different from the prevalent exhibitionist and commercial variants of spirituality. The New Humanity of Beloved Meher Baba is the ever-growing family of His lovers. It is founded on genuine life-transforming experiences of His Love and Grace.'

`Merwan, what global channels were chosen by Baba to work as major flow-channels of His Consciousness and to act as the catalysts of the collective spiritual transformation of human consciousness? ' Ram asked.

`Ram, Meher Baba not only selected these channels but also let His Consciousness flow in them. This is how He made them immensely powerful and useful for His universal work. He actually worked with them and has mended them to suit His plan of work. We will talk about those channels later. Right now, let us understand how Meher Consciousness -the Infinite Avataric Consciousness - was brought down on earth by the five Sadgurus.'

`Five Sadgurus -Babajan, Sai Baba, Upasani Maharaj, Narayan Maharaj and Tajuddin Baba - conjointly unveiled the Avataric Consciousness of Meher Baba. It was Sadguru Babajan, an ancient woman of over hundred years, who had implanted a divine kiss on Baba's forehead and gave Him the divine embrace that

started the process of unveiling. Babajan said, "This child of mine will after some years create a great sensation in the world and do immense good to humanity." This was the year 1914. Sadguru Sai Baba, who was working as the *Qutube-e-Irshad* or Chief of the spiritual hierarchy at that time, made Meher Baba recollect that He is *Parvardigar*, the Ancient One and the Highest of the High, Himself. Sadguru Narayan Maharaj and Tajuddin Baba did the same. The task of bringing down the Infinite Avataric Consciousness to the gross-level was entrusted to Upasani Maharaj, who took seven years to accomplish that. Finally, at the end of 1921, Upasani publicly announced the completion of this profound spiritual work in these words:

"I have given charge to Merwan. He is the holder of my 'Key'. This boy will move the world. Humanity at large would be benefited at His hands."

"All of you pay heed to what I tell you. Merwan is the Avatar. I have handed over the 'key' of whatever I possessed to Merwan. Now hold his feet; not only with one hand but with both hands! This is my advice to you; you would do well to follow it." ^{11.77}

'Merwan here is not me, but Beloved Meher Baba,' Merwan said smiling and continued his narration. 'This chronology of events is important in developing an understanding of Avatar's priorities. The period between 1921 and 1925 was mainly spent in gathering His first group of intimate disciples and establishing His spiritual commune at Meherabad. He took a group of 45 to Bombay and made them to live with Him and be exposed to living with the Avatar. By taking this group to Bombay, and not to any remotely secluded place, Meher Baba had revealed that the Avatar works for the humanity by living God's life amidst the common people. Villages, towns and cities together constitute the most important component of His global flow-channels. He Himself traversed the whole of India, and some selected parts of the world, to build the reservoirs of His Love and Grace in these villages, towns and cities.'

'Tracking this chronology, we now come to the month of July of the year 1925. From 10th of July, Meher Baba commenced His Mystic Silence. A day earlier He said, "There will be religious hostilities and natural disasters. These events will

cause the shedding of blood of millions of people throughout the world in general and throughout India in particular. But thereafter peace and brotherhood will come back into the world...There will be another world war, it will be much more destructive and extensive than the one before. Rivers of blood will flow! I will dip my handkerchief in that river of blood and tie it around my head! Not until the world cries for God, I will give up my Silence." ^{11.78} The Divine Awakener observed Silence and set before the world the objective of going beyond the words and intellectual polemics, so that His Divine Word can come to life in its everyday life. Meher Baba's Silence, therefore, occupies top position in the plan of His Avataric Work. It started as Avatar's response to future global events full of conflict and misery, and its termination will also be determined by the disastrous events which would make the world to suffer intensely and crave earnestly for God.'

`It is really amazing that Meher Baba, who commenced His mystic Silence from 10th July, started writing a book from 13th of July onwards. Abstaining from the spoken word, he now engaged Himself with the written word. On 7th August 1927, He said, "The Big Book I have written will be the future Bible, Quran, Avesta and Vedas, as it will be universally accepted by all castes and creeds. I have stopped writing after finishing the great work and hence it has force."^{11.79} Later, Meher Baba gave ten percent of this book to Bhau Kalchuri, one of His close mandali. He did not write any other book after that; but he did dictate, through an alphabet board, a great book, **God Speaks**, in its entirety. God Speaks was first published in 1955 in U.S.A. by Dodd, Mead & Company, and, Bhau Kalchuri's book, **The Nothing and The Everything**, made its first appearance in 1981. A very large number of books compiled from Baba's communicated discourses, bearing His name as the author, have also appeared. However, the whereabouts of *The Big Book*, which He wrote Himself, are not yet known. In January 1969, the very month in which Beloved Baba had dropped His body, Eruch, one of the intimate mandali, asked Him about the whereabouts of this book. Meher Baba assured Eruch that there should not be any cause of worry on that front as He has taken care of everything concerning the book. Some idea about the contents of this book can be had from some stray remarks of Baba. Once He said that when the Book comes out...the scientists, who are baffled by this creation, will come to

many secrets. In 1926, to Chanji Baba said, "You find these discourses of mine very interesting, but they are nothing compared to what I have written in My Book at Meherabad. Its three hundred pages cover only short points, and when they are fully amplified and re-written, the points will comprise several large volumes. It is full of secrets, which no previous Saint or Avatar has ever divulged."^{11.80} Mahatma Gandhi had the unique honor of going through its chapter on "Creation". This was on board S.S.Rajputana in 1931.'

`Thus, Meher Baba gave great importance to literature as the channel of transformation and change. Avatar has infused this channel with the power of His Truth and Love by working with it directly as well as indirectly through chosen mediums. Meher Baba was a deep lover of the poetry of Khwaja Shams al-Din Mohammad, known as Hafiz, one of the greatest lyric poets of Persia. He Himself wrote poems under the pen name of "*Homa*" in **Sanj Vartman**, a Gujarat newspaper of Bombay. He admired Kabir, Mira and others. Meher Baba's interest in literature was not casual. He admired William Shakespeare, John Milton and Percy Bysshe Shelley. He named Kalidas as India's Shakespeare. About Shakespeare Baba revealed that he is presently reincarnated in India as a Brahmin. This was said in the year 1927. Another significant statement, which He made, was about Milton. Baba said that Milton was spiritually advanced and was on second plane in the subtle world. Milton could actually see heaven and hell and that was how he was able to write **Paradise Lost** and **Paradise regained**.' ^{11.81}

`Meher Baba was very fond of detective and humorous stories. Quite often, He would ask someone from His mandali to read aloud such stories which He would enjoy greatly. For some time, Delia de Leon mailed these books to India every book week and Margaret Craske, who joined Baba in India, would keep them and carry them wherever she went with Baba. Sherlock Holmes of Sir Arthur Conan Doyle and Hercule Poirot of Agatha Christie were the favorite detectives and Baba was always enchanted by their detective adventures. P. G. Wodehouse was another favorite. Baba enjoyed the hilarity caused by the doings of Lord Emsworth and his prize pig - the Empress of Blandings Castle. Baba also loved listening to the doings of Nero Wolfe and the humorous Archie, the creations of Rex Stout. When Margaret Craske was in America, she received a letter from Baba

saying that He would like to have every book that Rex Stout had ever written. Every one of the books that Rex Stout had written up to that time was found and sent to Beloved Baba.'

Francis Brabazon, an Australian poet, was Meher Baba's mandali and Baba helped Brabazon in developing his poetic creative urges. Francis has described his stay with the Avatar in his epic poem, **Stay with God**. Baba motivated and encouraged Bhau Kalchuri, a close mandali, to write poems and plays in Hindi. Bhau, like Francis, proved to be a great writer and among his numerous publications shines brilliantly his great biographical work on Meher Baba entitled **Meher Prabhu-Lord Meher**, running in several volumes. Meher Baba's mandali have given to the world some of the greatest books on Baba and on His message of Love and Truth. Meher Baba's own, *The Big Book*, the future Bible, Koran, Avesta and Veda, would be given to the world as a part of His universal manifestation. And this will happen when the science would touch the peak of its theoretical heights and would develop the capacity to appreciate the work of the Avatar. Since the public appearance of the *Book* would also be a part of breaking of Baba's Mystic Silence, this event would then take place when the world would be at the height of its suffering. By making the written word as a part of breaking of His Silence and of His universal manifestation, Meher Baba has spiritualized the channel of literature and has transformed it into a mighty instrument of His universal work. The New Humanity would be nourished by the New Literature, which would not only act as a mirror of its contemporary society but would also raise human consciousness to higher spiritual levels. Words would seek the Silence of Divine Love, and, in that Silence, the Divine Words of Meher Baba would come to life. The *New Literature*, particularly the poetry and the plays, would be the *Literature of Transcendence*, and would bring people closer by inspiring them to cross the barriers of religion, caste, creed, color and nationalities. Nietzsche had said, "What is great in man is that he is a bridge and not a goal; what can be loved in man is that he is a transition and a destruction."^{11.82}

Year 1927 is of importance because of another great activity that came in operation at Meherabad. Meher Baba started working with another catalytic

channel of His universal work -the channel of formal and non formal education. On May 1, 1927, "Meher Ashram", a boarding school for boys, was declared open with four Brahmin, three Maratha and three Mahar boys - all Hindus of different castes. The school was located at Meherabad near the village of Arangaon, in the Ahmednagar District of India. With the arrival of 14 boys from Persia, two of whom were Muslims and the rest Zoroastrians, the Persian section was opened on 17 July 1927, in the Hazrat Babajan High School attached to the Ashram. By the end of the year, more than a hundred and seventy boys were enrolled in both of these schools. Meher Baba Himself supervised their activities, played games with the boys, and taught them Persian dictating from His alphabet board. Besides their regular courses, such as English, History, Geography and Mathematics, spiritual subjects were also taught from various mystical writings or scriptures. In addition to Meher Baba's printed discourses, the spiritual curriculum included sayings of different Hindu saints and Sadgurus: Dnyaneshwar, Ram Teertha, Swami Ramdas, Tukaram, Vivekananda and Upasani Maharaj; of different Muslim Sufi Perfect Masters: Ghous Ali Shah, Jal-al--din Rumi, Ibrahim Adaham and Mohammad Gazali. Selections from the Bhagvad Gita, Upanishads, Sufi Literature, verses from Avesta, Christian secret knowledge, Islamic secret knowledge and the biographies of Avatars and Sadgurus -Zarathustra, Buddha, Jesus, Mohammad, Chaitanya, Sri Ramkrishna, Francis Xavier - were also taught. These schools were the miracles of Meher Baba as in 1920s India no body could have imagined that Hindus, Muslims, Christians, Zoroastrians could be brought under one roof to study and live together. Amongst the Hindus were the boys of poor untouchables and of highly placed Brahmins. This was simply unbelievable.'

`Avatar was busy in infusing the formal and intellect based educational processes with a deeper emotion of love for God. On 2 November 1927, Meher Baba passed an extraordinary order. All the boys in the Ashram were strictly forbidden to speak with anyone save amongst themselves or with the Ashram authorities. On the 10th of the same month, Baba quit eating solid food and began to subsist on tea or a little milk, which he continued for nearly five months and a half, even omitting milk for some days during the prolonged fast. Avatar began working with the consciousness of the Ashram boys. During this period He

conveyed to them the importance of love, concentration and meditation, and thus directly began to inspire them. Avatar was preparing them to withstand the gush of the tide of Divine Love, which He was going to release in the immediate future.'

`On the twentieth of December, 1927, the forty first day of His fast, Baba confined Himself in the underground crypt of the size six feet in length, equally deep underground and four feet in breadth with a small of flight of stairs just sufficient for a single person to pass through. A divine current was let loose in the surroundings and everybody was ordered not to touch the boys of the Ashram. Ramjoo Abdulla has chronicled this period under the caption, **Sobs and Throbs**. Ramjoo describes the strange happening in these words:

"The fire of love that was smouldering silently of late in many of the tiny hearts, within a week of the Master's self-imprisonment, began to give out sparks. Strings of pearl-like tears began to flow freely from many little eyes every now and then and without any apparent reason. This much was certain: it was neither due to any physical pain or privations, nor was it due to any grief! Many of the boys on the contrary found relief and a kind of pleasure in weeping out their hearts. Meditation and concentration, weeping and crying appealed to them more than eating, sleeping and playing. They were tears of love.

Who weeps for Love, he weeps the best,

Who cries for else, he does not jest.

...But lo! The New Year day of the Christian era, the first of January, 1928, which also happened to be the fifty-second day of the Master's fasting and the twelfth one since he confined himself, witnessed the most magnificent outburst of divinity. As if the deep-rooted divine emotion of the select few had set the rest of the boys into commotion, the majority of them began to cry openly every now and then throughout the day. But it was in the evening the climax was reached. All the boys in the Ashram burst into tears and began to weep and wail as if all their dear ones had been reported to be dead at the same time. For about an hour between seven and eight in the evening, this wonderful phenomenon held

the onlookers simply spell bound. The shrieks and cries could even be heard a quarter of a mile away from the Ashram..." ^{11.83}

`Education, developing only the head and ignoring the heart is a monstrosity. Education, catering only for the worldly life moved by selfish ambitions and greed for material things is a dehumanizing aberration. Education, strengthening the desire for sensual pleasures is a self destructive process. Education, incapable of generating love for God and His Creation is a wasteful venture. At the same time, the process of education, particularly the non formal one, has immense transforming potential. Meher Baba used His schools in His universal work, and, laid the spiritual cables between the East and West and between different religions and cultures. Hazrat Babajan High School and Meher Ashram were mainly engaged in imparting formal education. The spiritual curriculum and the loving care of Meher Baba generated an atmosphere of informality. Sometime in December 1927, a few Meher Ashram boys, who were profoundly moved by Meher Baba's love and who preferred meditation to studying, were singled out and kept separately from other boys. This is how a totally non formal wing called the "*Prem Ashram*" got started. Avatar was transforming the dry and dull process of formal education into a loving affair and the one, which would lead beyond the domain of intellect. Above all, He sowed the seed of the *New God-centered Education* and proved that it can be used to generate emotions of true love for God and His Creation.'

Ram intercepted and said, `But Merwan several reformers and thinkers have fiddled with the process of education. Krishnamurti created Rishi Valley schools and stressed upon a process of education, which silences the conditioned mind. Tagore created Shantiketan and dreamed about a new universal man. Aurobindo had talked about the education that enables an individual to open his heart for the 'supramental'. Dayananda and, in recent times, Maharishi Mahesh Yogi used education to propagate Vedic culture. However, the pressures of the formal education and the gross realities of life have literally crushed all these endeavors. All the so-called revolutionary changes in the process and the content of education, in the end, proved to be totally ineffective and useless.'

`Ram, Avatar is not a reformer nor a thinker, nor even a scholar,' said Merwan. `Avatar is Supreme Divine Being Himself. His Will becomes the destiny of humanity. He gives new directions to cosmic processes and all that, which He desires to happen, starts happening in a natural way. The *New Education* would emerge out of the feelings of disillusionment with the establishment controlled formal education. It will become increasingly non-formal, and, through modern communication technologies, would reach right inside our homes. In stead of serving the establishment, it will serve the needs of an individual and the society. It will have a high content of spiritual knowledge and of practical spirituality in the form of various concentration and meditation practices. This would train the individual in conscious reversal of the flow of his or her consciousness from the outer to inner realms, resulting in inner poise and silence. The inner equipoise and silence, so gained, would then make access to Universal Mind much easier. The New Education would also have a rich content of art and culture. It will develop head and heart equally and would inculcate in an individual a deep appreciation of the fact that art, science, technology, religion and culture are the instruments of God's Manifestation on earth. The New Education would promote togetherness and would release a soul-invigorating tide of genuine love for God and His Creation. The New Education would not be a product of coercive campaigning on the part of a sectarian group or fundamentalist establishment using the name of God or the Avatar. It will be the product of the interaction between the profound holistic spiritual perceptions, human needs and modern computer and communication technology. The New Education would be based on the holistic spiritual world-view and would cut across the artificial boundaries of caste, creed, color, religion and nationality.'

`We will now talk about another channel of avataric manifestation -the channel of cinema. In His very first visit to the West, Meher Baba showed His deep interest in the world of cinema. For several years in the 1930's, He gave His attention to the production of a film based on spiritual themes. In 1931, in Harmon-on-the-Hudson, when Baba was visiting America, the topic of making of a film based on a spiritual theme was brought up. Margaret Mayo, who herself was a play-write of repute, had a friend who was a movie producer. Margaret

explained to Baba that she could write a detailed idea-script, if points were given to her. Baba immediately took her aside and dictated the whole plot in about an hour. The plot included the beginning of creation, the developing stages of evolution, reincarnation and the stories of three characters through five life times to final Realization. The adaptation, as given by Baba, was entitled "**A Touch of Maya**", and later became the basis of many screenplays. The script was later read to Mr. Artkin, the movie producer, who said that it was a grand idea.'

`Meher Baba was interested in two stories for the films. Later, in India, Baba again dictated a complete scenario for a film along the lines as the previous one given by Him in 1931. The film was to be called "**How It All Happened**", again showing evolution from the beginning to the human state and then the lives of three characters through five representative lifetimes up to God-Realization. The other film was to be called, "**This Man David**". Between December-January of 1934-1935, Meher Baba had daily meetings with Norina, Elizabeth, Karl Vollmoeller and his assistant named Drake, Gabriel Pascal and his friend Hy (John) S. Kraft to discuss these films. Kraft was entrusted to prepare the first script of "**How It All Happened**", while Vollmoeller prepared the script of "**This Man David**". "**This Man David**" is in the form of a short story narrative. Baba, in London in 1936, asked an American writer and director Alexander Markey to write screen adaptation of Vollmoeller story. Incidentally, Markey was one of 21 westerners who attended September 1954 meeting at Meherabad in which "The Final Declaration" message of Meher Baba was released.'

`As compared to "**How It All Happened**", "**This Man David**" is more allegorical and allusive. This man David Lord worked for the community of Middleville, a typical rural American town of 1930s. The community was parochial and resistant to change. Echoing the Gospel story of Christ, "**This Man David**" is tragic in genre and reaches its climax with the lynching of David Lord, the savior. The story reaches its super climax when at its very conclusion the image of David's face appears in the bark of the tree from which he had been hung, underneath which are written the words: " I have come not to teach but to awaken". Meher Baba dictated the details of David's face appearing on the bark of the tree and Vollmoeller faithfully scripted these. These facial details were actually a message

of Meher Baba to His lovers that they would be in a position to understand only after His physical death. In 1995 November Alan Wagner and Heather Nadel drafted a scenario and a script suited to stage presentation. The play was staged on 25 February 1996 at Meherabad.'

`Meher Baba later proved that these were not imaginary fictional stories. Their visualization and His interaction with film-world people were parts of His universal work. The climax part of the story of **"This Man David"**, was later enacted as a real life happening. Some six months after Baba had dropped His body, Mehera, Meher Baba's chief woman mandali, on 15 July 1969, discovered to her amazement that the umer tree, in the Meherazad residential complex, had etched out Baba's face on its trunk. Meherazad is the place, near Pimpalgaon of Ahmednagar District, where Baba had lived with His mandali. Nan Umrigar, reproducing the photograph of Baba's face on the umer tree in her book **"Sounds Of Silence"**, describes this event in these words:

"Another favorite story related that day, referred to one late afternoon on July 15 1969, just after Baba had dropped his body. Mehera was standing by the east window of her room at Meherazad, looking at some newly-planted shrubs and thinking of her Beloved. Suddenly her attention was drawn to the umer tree, just a few feet away from the window. She saw, to her amazement, the likeness of Baba's face etched on the tree trunk. At first, she thought that this was due to the way the light played on the tree trunk, helped by her imagination -but no, it was BABA'S FACE - in all its beauty, serenity and compassion. Mani and the mandali shared this wonderful sight. News spread among the villagers who came from far and near to pay homage to Baba's image on the umer tree. 'What a compassionate gift Baba has bestowed on us,' concluded Mehera." ^{11.84}

`In His second visit to the West, the Paramount film company had arranged to film Baba at Victoria station. This, however, did not materialize as Baba eluded them. But the persistent film people did succeed in filming Him on 8 April 1932, in the garden of Davy's home. Baba was in a white robe and Charles Purdom read out His message from the dictation given through the alphabet board: "My coming to the West is not with the object of establishing new creeds and spiritual societies and organizations, but it is intended to make people understand religion

in its true sense...I intend bringing together all religions and cults like beads on one string and revitalize them for individual and collective needs. This is my mission to the West. The peace and harmony that I shall talk of and that will settle on the face of this worried world is not far off"^{11.85}. Baba's message was publicized in all corners of the world through the Paramount Newsreel. This was the year when the famous Gabriel Pascal met Baba at Walter Merten's home near Zurich, and sat himself at Baba's feet almost in a kind of ecstasy. At that time Pascal was known as a first class film director and Bernard Shaw would allow no one else to direct movies made from his plays.'

`Meher Baba was in Los Angels on the 29 May 1932. He remained in Hollywood for seven hectic days and went to Beverly Hills to make contact with those in the film industry. He met Tallulah Bankhead, Charles Laughten and Gary Cooper. Baba also visited the Fox and Universal studios. That night a grand reception was arranged at the Knickerbocker hotel in Hollywood. On 1 of June, Meher Baba visited Metro Goldwyn Mayer Film Studio and met many film celebrities. He was in a stylish Palm Beach suit while His Indian mandali looked like paupers in their poorly tailored suits. One of them had a torn shoe and flapped up and down when he walked. The message that He gave that day is of great significance:

"Both the Press and the radio influence thought, but both lack the power of visible example, which is the greatest stimulant to action, and which the motion picture offers better than any other medium. The whole universe and its structure, I have created. The universe is my cinema. But just as an audience becomes absorbed in witnessing a drama on the screen, and the film engages their emotions and sways their feelings by its influence causing them to forget that it is not real, in the same way the spectators of the world are charmed by this worldly film show, forgetting themselves and taking it to be real! So I have come to tell them that this worldly cinema in which they are absorbed is not real. I have come to turn their focus towards Reality. Only God is real, and everything else is a mere motion picture."^{11.86}.

`Avatar, by all these actions and the deep interest which He had shown in the world of Cinema, infused this mighty channel with the power of His Love and

Truth. He has transformed it into a great instrument of His universal work. The *New Cinema* would be the *Cinema of Transcendence* - a movement that will bring about the transformation of human consciousness and would weaken the hold of intellect by creating visions about the realms, which lie beyond the sensory perceptions. The New Cinema would bring people from diverse pockets of culture together, and would liberate man from the clutches of ruthless religious fundamentalism and the suicidal over-dose of materialism. The New Cinema would liberate man from exploitation, oppression and tyranny by promoting and transmitting the holistic spiritual world-view and values.'

`Meher Baba's Samadhi, wherein we all are right now, is perhaps the only Samadhi in India with beautiful murals painted by a western woman lover. This is a befitting tribute to Beloved Meher Baba, the Avatar, who not only took great interest in painting but also selected this channel of art for His universal work. In 1938 a number of Western women were staying in the Meher Retreat on the Hill at Meherabad. Helen Dahm, a famous Swiss artist, was one of them. Helen first met Baba in December 1932 in Zurich in Switzerland. Baba was staying with Hedi, an artist, and her husband Walter Mertens, who were Baba's hosts. Helen Dahm met Meher Baba at a reception and was immediately captured by His Love. It was the destiny of Helen Dahm to paint the murals on the uneven stone surface of inner walls and the interior of the dome. She also painted the interior of the crypt with a deer, a swan, and flowers, including a trailing rose bush that climbs to the window ledge of the central north window. Baba expressed His appreciation of the murals. The north window of the Samadhi was the place, which Baba had selected to be covered by one of His full-sized portrait in a seated pose on a later date. He initiated this process by asking Rano Gayley, one of His women mandali, to paint a picture of Him dressed in a white sadra in a seated pose. This painting of Rano's is now in the Rahuri cabin at Lower Meherabad. Later, Charlie Morton, an artist from America, did this painting of Beloved Baba from a photograph of Baba taken by another women mandali, Elizabeth Patterson, in Portofino, Italy, in 1933.'

`Art is an act of love and Baba has transformed this channel for His universal work of manifesting His Love as Truth in the world of humankind. He used Rano

Gayley, a woman mandali, as a medium for His work with this channel. Rano was interested in painting and Baba asked her to paint a huge chart of 10 circles of 120 persons who surround the Avatar in each advent. Baba wanted the chart to measure 5 ft. by 8ft and done in oils. He would outline to Rano exactly how He wished it to be done, a bit at a time. When Rano made a small pencil sketch of the 10 circles to scale, Baba put a variety of symbols that first made no sense. She later found that they correspond to locations He wanted for the various animals, birds, plants and modes of transport, which were to surround the central focus of the 10 circles. Rano says, "When I made this connection, I realized that Baba was letting me know, in silence, that the chart was already totally planned by him, and he was simply having me put it all on canvas... If he liked a sketch very much, he signed it with his full signatures, others he signed with his initials; some he passed without signing and these have my check mark on them....From beginning to end, the sole concept was Baba's; I just blindly followed whatever he wanted."^{11.87}. Rano worked on the chart off and on from 1937 to 1943 at Nasik, Cannes and Meherabad. Nobody was allowed to see Rano working. The first person to see the completed chart was Mehera in 1945. In 1954, it was shown by Baba to others and was hung in the museum on Meherabad Hill where it continues to adorn the wall as a mysterious souvenir - mysterious because its full meaning would only become clear in future. Meher Baba not only corrected some of the sketches made by Rano, but He Himself used the brush to mix the paint. About this, Rano says, "The coloring was left primarily to me, although Baba did give me the colors for the seven roses, and he mixed the paint himself for the platform on which he is seated, as he didn't like the shade I had selected."^{11.88}. Literature, painting, music, dance, theatre, cinema and sports are the channels of joyful creativity and soul-nourishing love that take you out of the dull and dry world of words and intellect. Meher Baba has saturated these channels with the power of His Love and Truth as the Avatar, the Highest of the High and the Anceint One.'

`We would now talk about Baba's love for music, theatre, dance and sports and about His work with these catalytic channels. Meher Baba loved music deeply and immensely. He had a melodious voice and, in days earlier to His Mystic Silence, He thrilled His mandali with His singing. He was an accomplished dholuk

and *ek taaraa* player. *Ek taaraa* is single string musical instrument. He did not show much interest in Indian and Western classical music but loved *qawwali* - a fast-paced form of devotional choral music perfected by Sufis. Sung to induce a state of ecstatic devotion, the core of its theme is passionate love for God and His prophet Mohammad. Qawwali also sings the glory of the Sufi saints. Its origins go back to the 13th century, when it was developed through the poetic genius of Amir Khusro, who created qawwali form of vocal music by fusing Persian and Indian elements. Hazarat Nizamuddin Aulia, a Perfect Master and spiritual mentor of Amir Khusro, loved and patronized qawwali.'

Meher Baba was also very fond of *ghazal* singing. *Ghazal* is a highly acclaimed form of oriental vocal music based on Persian and Urdu romantic poetry of high literary quality. It is performed solo with deep emotions of love and beauty. Avatar is the eternal Divine Beloved and soul is the lover, who, suffering from the agony of separation, seeks the ecstasy of union with Him. The heart of a ghazal is this spiritual romance of a soul with the Avatar, the Divine Beloved. Hafiz, the great Persian mystic poet, had an exquisite voice for singing ghazals. Meher Baba not only loved the poetry of ghazals but also the music of ghazals. The noted Indian ghazal singer, Begham Akhtar, was one of Meher Baba's favorites. Meher Baba also loved *bhajans*, the Indian devotional music form, based on the mystical poetry of saints and Perfect Masters. He loved bhajans of Mira, Kabir and Nanak. He was a great lover of Western popular music particularly of black origins. Paul Robeson was one of the favorites. Paul Robeson was a black American actor and bass singer. Robeson was noted for his roles in Eugene O'Neill's "**Emperor Jones**" and Jerome Kern's "**Show Boat**" -popular films of 1930s. Robeson was also famous for his interpretation of gospel music. On His way back to India in December 1932, Baba had taken the Paul Robeson records back with him, and would have them played in His boat cabin. It was observed that Meher Baba wept, while listening to Robeson sing "*Feed My Sheep*" -thinking of the new lovers he had left behind and their grief at His departure. On the ship, Baba sent messages to his lovers in England and America. To Malcom and Jean, he wrote, "I will come back to America to pour out my love to you and to spiritualize

America". Baba also loved Jim Reeves, particularly the song, "*Welcome to My World*".'

`And Merwan, Beloved Baba loved Cole Porter's song "Begin the Beguine" so deeply that he had instructed that its recording be played several times near His dead body,' Mary said with tears in her eyes. `Baba has spiritualized the music and music would be playing a dominant role in the emergence of New Humanity.'

`Music is ordained to play a dominant role in the emergence of New Humanity. Qawwalis, ghazals, bhajans and popular music would dominate the music scene. Musical traditions of the East and the West would blend and new forms of music would emerge. The poetical content of the lyrics would become increasingly spiritual and mystical, ' said Merwan. `Music will unite the world and will become instrumental in lifting collective human consciousness to higher spiritual levels. *Meher Music* - songs of the Love and Truth of Meher Baba -would become increasingly popular. Mary, Francis Brabazon, Baba's poet and mandali, experimented and succeeded in writing beautiful ghazals and qawwalis in english, retaining their traditional rhythm. Tuck and Patti Andress are Meher singers with albums like **Tears of Joy**, which is a delightful mixture of classical jazz tunes and original songs. Peter Townshend's commercial album "Who Came First" is a bonanza for Baba lovers. It has two large color photographs of Meher Baba taken for a film by famous Louis Van Gasteren of Amsterdam, Holland. There are many others. Peter worked as the lead guitarist of the famous group, "The Who".'

Mary said, ` Merwan, these trends have already started emerging. Singers of black and diverse racial origins dominate the Western Pop Music scene. Fusion music, result of the blending of Eastern and Western music traditions, is coming up as a new popular form. Beatles, all time great and pop music gods, interacted with India's Ravi Shankar and others, and pioneered the blending of the Western and the Eastern music. Madonna, the sexy "material girl" and another music icon, has come out with her new album **Ray Of Light**, singing the sanskrit song -*Shanti Ashtangi*- an adaptation of the opening hymn from *Yoga Taravali* of Adi Shankaracharya. Madonna begins the song in sanskrit which opens with "*Vande Gurunam charanarvinde*" meaning, "I sing out the glory of the lotus feet of Sadguru." One of her songs -*Little Star*- runs: "Never forget who you are/ Little

Star/ Never forget how to dream/ Butterfly/ God gave a present to me/ Made of flesh and blood." Madonna sang this song for her daughter, Lourdes. This profoundly spiritual song sings the glory of the human form and reminds all of us that we should never forget who we are! Little Star, Little Star, never forget that you are the Sun itself. Little drop, Little drop, never forget that you are the ocean itself.'

`God and Avatars love and use mediums of music, dance, theatre and sports for their work. Vishnu is *Ranganath* - the Lord of Cosmic Theatre. Shiva is *Nataraj* - the Lord of Cosmic Dance. Krishna loved music, dance and sports. Merwan, tell us about Beloved Baba's interest and active work with the mediums of theatre, dance and sports,' said Ram.

`Ram, it was not a coincidence that Harmon retreat, where Baba stayed in His first visit to America, belonged to the playwright Margaret Mayo. Margaret was a successful Broadway playwright and she adapted several of her plays for the silver screen. Her play "**Polly of the Circus**" became the first film produced by the Goldwyn Company in 1917. Earlier in England, Meher Baba showed His deep interest in theatre-persons and theatrical performances. On 26 September 1931, Baba took Desmond and Kim Tolhurst, Margaret Craske, Meredith Starr, Kitty Davy, Rustom, Chanji and Agha Ali to see the play "**White Horse Inn**" at the London Coliseum. This visit proved to be a turning point in the life of Cordelia De Leon, one of the actors of the play. Delia, as she was called, was immediately drawn to Baba and sat by His side. Every day, thereafter in London, Delia saw Baba. Delia experienced Baba's divine love and felt that she should love Him as apostles loved Jesus. On 1 October, Baba took His group to the Piccadilly Theatre to see the play "**Folly to be Wise**". Norina Matchabilli, one of Baba's mandali, was an eminent theatre person and became famous for her role of the Madonna.'

`Meher Baba loved theatre, and theatrical performances cheered Him immensely. He was very fond of comic skits and mimicry. Throughout His earthly life, Baba not only enjoyed them but also used them to lighten the burden of His universal work. Quite often He would say that Avatars always come with a great sense of humor! This was His way of telling us that spiritual life is a joyful life. That the world is an illusion, there is no doubt about that. But we all are the

actors of a great comedy of errors - errors emanating out of the original error of taking the illusion as something real.'

`It is through Margaret Craske, a lady of ethereal grace, Baba worked with the medium of Dance. Margaret Craske first met Baba at the house of Kitty Davy's parents at Russell Road, Kensington. The moment she saw Meher Baba, the portals of her heart opened and she saw Baba enthroned within her. Margaret was a former member of the Diaghilev Ballet of Russia and a prominent dancer, conducting a ballet school in London with a lady named Audrey Wilson. This was a period of great mental turmoil for Margaret. Her parents died, and the man she was in love with died. Diaghilev died, Anna Pavlova died. Everything she valued disappeared. Her destiny took her to Meher Baba and Baba filled her heart with His Love. In Kitty Davy's home, Baba called Kitty and Margaret up to his room and gave each a grape, explaining to them the significance of this grape-gift of His. He looked tenderly at Margaret, gesturing, "It was your love that brought me here." The Great Shepherd was on a mission to collect His sheep. Margaret was one of them and the one who was destined to play a significant role in Avatar's universal work. Margaret was a great ballet dancer and was under the influence of Sergei Pavlovich Diaghilev, the great Russian ballet producer and art critic, and of Gurdjieff, an esoteric teacher of music, dance and spiritual practices. Gurdjieff was one of the forerunners of Eastern philosophy of Sufism and Tibetan Buddhism in Europe and America. Ballet is a dramatic or representational style of dancing to music perfected by Russian dance gurus. Baba took deep interest in this dance form. Krishna's *Raas Nritya* or Dance of Love, with His *gopis* was the divine ballet. Margaret surrendered her entire life to Meher Baba and worked as His mandali. She has described her life with Meher Baba in her books, **The Dance of Love** and **Still Dancing with Love**. It was in Santa Margherita, Italy, during summer of 1932, that Meher Baba asked Margaret to give Him a dancing lesson. Margaret describes this great moment of her life under the caption "*Dancing with God*" in her **The Dance of Love**: "This was fun of the highest order. Chanji took Baba's hand and brought Him to class. I then took His hand and showed Him a simple 1-2-3-hop step. No obstacles. He took it at once and then, hand in hand, we flew round the garden path. And I really mean flew. He could move as no one

else has ever moved - with joy, freedom, rhythm. And I knew, without intellectualizing it, that dancing was, is, and always will be a part of God."^{11.89}. Quite often Baba would ask Margaret to dance for Him when and where it was practically impossible to give even a mediocre performance. And Margaret always obeyed His command. The well-known choreographer Paul Taylor although not one of Baba's followers, created something exclusive for Baba and arranged a beautiful small *pas de deux*. Tex Hightower, a member of Agnes DeMille's company, and Cathryn Damon also presented a couple of excellent *pas de deux*. Buntz Kelly, a member of the Royal Ballet, remembering Ashton's enchanting skating ballet, **Les Patineurs**, repeated the performance dancing with great gusto and verve along with the rest of the company. Myrna, a young dancer, felt overwhelmed by His Love when she first met Baba and loved Him all through her life. Margaret narrates the story of Lydia Sakolova, the prima character ballerina of the famous Diaghilev Company, during Baba's very early days in London. Baba was visiting Margaret's studio and Lydia was present on this occasion. Suddenly Baba pointed at her and indicated that He would like her to dance then and there for Him. Without a sign of refusal, because of the difficulties of doing this without music and other things, Lydia obeyed and gave a lovely performance. A delighted Baba embraced her, took her aside and discussed with her a certain major difficulty in her life, which afterward seemed to disappear. Dance with love for God and dance to His tune, and God will be yours. Margaret narrates an incident from Baba's life to prove this:

"During the early days of Baba's visit to England, a young and extremely competent dancer, who was a very matter-of-fact, down-to-earth type, was fortunate enough to meet Baba and to dance for Him. One day about a year later she came to me in a puzzled state of mind, saying that she had had a strange experience.

"She said that she had a bedroom which had length but not a great deal of width. It had at one end a looking glass, which almost covered the wall, and at the opposite end was the door. One afternoon she entered the room and was taken aback to see Baba standing inside the looking glass with His hand stretched out towards her and on His face a loving smile. She felt strongly the wonder and

beauty of this, but had no idea what she should do. She stood still, and then began to walk towards Him. She suddenly thought, 'If I can see Him in the looking glass, He must be standing just behind me,' and she turned away from the looking glass to look back towards the door. This was a mistake, for when she did not see Him she again turned to the looking glass, and Baba was not there."^{11.90}

'The Ancient One as Ram was "*Maryaada Purshottam*" - the One who lived a restrained life; and, as Krishna He was "*Leela Purushottam*" - the One who lived a playful life. Now, as Meher Baba He is both and much more. In January, 1953, while in Andhra Pradesh of India, when a lover addressed Baba as "*Nataraj*", Baba said, "Yes, really I am that as when I danced My first Dance the whole creation emerged and came into being."^{11.91}. Meher Baba has spiritualized the channel of dance, through which He would fill our dull and stale lives with the ecstasy of His Love.'

'Meher Baba was not only very fond of playing games but was most of the time full of fun and play. He played marbles, playing cards, carrom-board, chess, table tennis, cricket, and Indian games like *gilli-danda*, seven tiles and *atya-patya*. Quite often, He would explain their spiritual meaning. He used these indoor and outdoor games in His work as the Avatar. On one hand he used them in preventing the life of His mandali and lovers getting unnecessarily monotonous and dull, while on the other hand He used them to keep intact the contact of His consciousness with His physical body, particularly immediately after the universal work. About His use of one of such games - table tennis - for this purpose, Jean Adriel writes in her book, Avatar:

"At times his playing of this game was used by him for a very different purpose. There was one period in which his universal work took him out of his body a great deal during waking hours. A far-away look would come into his eyes and the next moment he would be lying prostrate and motionless on the couch, with his head covered. After a while he would pull himself up with considerable effort, and force himself to the table, motioning one of his partners to follow. Then, supporting himself by holding on to the table with one hand, he would begin to play, slowly and laboriously. Sometimes he would clutch the table to steady his swaying body. Then he would proceed with the torturing game. These

moments with him were heart rendering, because one could see and feel the agony to which he subjected himself, in compelling his consciousness to return to the physical body." ^{11.92}

‘Meher Baba loved the game of cricket. He loved watching it, and playing it as well. He played cricket with Meher Ashram boys and with His mandali and other lovers. That He was using cricket also in a deeper way in His universal work became clear when he played this game during His very first visit to the West in 1931. This He did on 19 September, in East Challacombe. That day, Baba went with the group to the cliffs by the seashore and walked through the meadows of the valley. Margaret and her business partner, Mabel, gave a dance performance and others sang songs. Baba gave his intimate company to His close ones and played cricket with them. Two decades later, Meher Baba used the game of cricket to fix in the minds of His mandali and others the identity of a particular spot in the village of Udatara, about 14 miles away from Satara in India. Satara holds an important position in the life of Meher Baba. It was while in Satara that Baba gave "*Clarification*" and "*Confirmation*" of His, **The Final Declaration**, and it was from Satara His "*Final Decision*" on His "Final Declaration" was issued. A day prior to the Udatara cricket match, Baba, who was in Satara, sent for some 30 people to be collected from Bombay, Pune and Ahmednagar. Next day, they were taken to Udatara where, in an open field adjacent to a mango orchard, a cricket match was played between two teams with Meher Baba playing for both the teams. A qawali programme was arranged in the evening. On this occasion Baba gave the message that God alone is Real and the universe is only an illusion. Udatara cricket match site was the spot where, later 2 December 1956, Meher Baba and some of his male mandali were seriously wounded in His second car accident. Baba was returning from Pune for Satara by car with Eruch, Pendu, Vishnu and Nilu. His car, driven by Eruch, dashed against a stone culvert and landed eventually in a ditch. This was the fulfillment of a prophecy, which He had made much earlier, that He would shed His blood in America and India.'

‘Meher Baba watched the cricket match, played in New Delhi, between the President's XI and the Prime Minister's XI on 19 November 1953. Jawahar Lal Nehru was also playing in the match. Baba, after some time, said, "My work is

done. Let us move out of here," and then left the stadium. By using games in His universal work, Meher Baba has poured His Love and Truth in the channel of sports. Sports would unite the people, nations and the world, and would fill human consciousness with Meher Baba's Love and Truth.'

`Avatar's work with the spiritually advanced souls, particularly those stationed at various locations of the subtle and mental spheres, is always the most significant part of His universal work. Avatar gives a general spiritual push to these souls, while some of the souls whom He associates with His universal work receive His special attention. These souls help the Avatar in His universal work, and help Him in the Revelation of His Divine Identity as the Supreme Divine Being. Meher Baba devoted a major part of His life for this work and traversed the entire length and breadth of India, covering thousands of miles, and enduring unbearable hardships.'

`It was the destiny of a medical doctor, Dr. William Donkin, one of Meher Baba's western mandali, to write an account of this work for the benefit of the humanity. His great book entitled "**The Wayfarers**" appeared in 1948. "**The Wayfarers**" occupies a unique position in the spiritual literature of the world in being the only book of its kind, and the one that had the privilege of being blessed by the Avatar Himself. Meher Baba contacted hundreds of such souls living in far-off and, quite often, remotely located places for establishing an "inner communion" with them, and through that to work with their consciousness. This "inner communion" between the Avatar Meher Baba and the "mast", the god-intoxicated spiritually advanced soul chosen by Him, pushes the consciousness of the "mast" in three directions. First is the direction of onward movement on the path of involution because of which the god-intoxicated soul moves to the next higher abode. Second push increases significantly the staying time of the mast in the gross world consciousness. This converts the mast into an important mental channel through which the Avatar releases the flows of His Love and Truth. The third push fixes the awareness of the advent of the Ancient One, as the Avatar of the cycle, in the consciousness of the mast. This helps in the establishment of the New Divine Regime of the Avatar. About the "inner communion", as established by Meher Baba with such souls, Dr. Donkin writes in the preface to his book: " It is

true that this inner communion has certain outer features, for Meher Baba serves these God-intoxicated souls with his own hands, and he sits with them in seclusion: but he does not speak to them; the essential contact is silent one"^{11.93}. Meher Baba had started this work only after commencing His Mystic Silence, and in these contacts, therefore, the use of conventional channels of communication was just not possible.'

`Meher Baba divides all spiritually advanced souls into five basic types: God-merged, God-intoxicated, God-absorbed, God-communed and God-mad.'

`God-merged soul is a majzoob of the seventh Plane, in the state of final fana and drowned in God.'`

`All masts are God-intoxicated - intoxicated by Divine Love. A God-intoxicated soul, experiences just the same sensations that a drunkard enjoys - the dominant sensation of the happiness of drunkenness, in which time, past, present, or future, have practically no meaning - and cares for no one and nothing, in proportion to the extent of his or her intoxication. The difference is that the intoxication of a mast is continual, that it may increase but can never decrease, and it has no physical or mental reaction. It is a state of permanent and unalloyed divine intoxication. A mast may have his abode on any plane.'

`A God-absorbed soul is the one who, whether asleep or awake, and irrespective of his or her outer behavior, continually and unconsciously thinks about God. The majority of God-absorbed souls are on the first three Planes, and a few are on the fifth plane.'

`A God-communed is the soul who, like the God-absorbed, thinks of God, but does so by conscious effort. The God-absorbed flies fast and straight like a swan, but the God-communed flits here and there like a sparrow, and is constantly diverted by irrelevant attractions.'

`A God-mad is the one who has lost the balance of his or her mind and has lost sanity through continually thinking about God. Although mad and apparently indistinguishable from an ordinary lunatic, a 'God-mad' is impelled by higher desires and enjoys the God-madness.'

`Meher Baba concentrated mainly on the masts, the God-intoxicated, for His universal work. Outwardly, a mast would be indistinguishable from a lunatic. Mohammad mast, who is still alive and lives at Meherabad, was one of Meher Baba's five favorites. The others were Chatti Baba of Bangalore, Karim Baba of Calcutta, Ali Shah of Ahmednagar and Chacha of Ajmer. These five favored ones' became the universal spiritual transmitting stations of Meher Baba.'

`In 1936, when Mohammad was brought to Rahuri, Ahmednagar District, he was between the third plane and the fourth. During those days Mohammad would eat a lot of food and would sit most of the day near the door of the ashram, and would roundly abuse and spit on anyone who came near him. He would dig holes in the ground with his hands as if searching for something. He would stand from six in the morning until eight o'clock cleaning his teeth, would pester for a full bucket of water with which to clean his mouth. Later in the morning, when Baba used to call him for a bath, it would generally take three men one hour to beguile him to the bathroom. Meher Baba has spiritually pushed Mohammad to the fifth plane, where he would remain rest of his life. This is how Baba had helped some of these masts spiritually.'

`During the summer of 1937, Meher Baba went for several months to Cannes with a large group of eastern and western mandali. He then cabled from Cannes for Mohammad to be brought there for use in His universal work. As soon as Mohammad arrived in Cannes, Baba began his usual daily routine of bathing and feeding him. After returning to India in November 1937, Mohammad's history got closely linked with that of Baba. He was brought to Meherabad in January 1942, and is still a resident there. About Meher Baba, whom he always referred to as "*Dada*" meaning elder brother, this spiritually mighty mast says: "*Dada* is God." "Everything depends on *Dada's* will." "Because *Dada* is there, the world is there." "*Dada* is Master of Mercy ".'

`Chatti Baba was a mast who needed every day 150 to 200 buckets of water for his bath. The year of 1940 was the period of devastation and terrible occasions in Europe, when France fell. Chatti Baba was at Meherabad and repeatedly told Krishna, one of the mandali, that the people of Europe were undergoing great sorrow and suffering, but they would survive to enjoy the happy days. On the

night of 9 June 1940, Chatti Baba became suddenly violent, noisy, abusive, and emerged in a state of disorder and frenzy from his little room. He went directly to Baba's room, and declared that his house had now been destroyed, and that he had come for shelter to Baba. This remark had a deeper meaning and significance in view of the fact that the collapse of the French Armies began about 5 June, and the Germans entered Paris eight days later, on 13 June. Baba at once gave orders for the two to be left alone together, and Chatti Baba for some hours was heard chattering and expostulating with Baba. He then became quite, and spent the rest of the night with Baba. By making a mast respond to a disastrous world situation, Meher Baba was controlling and regulating the affairs of the world. Chatti Baba accompanied Baba and His group to various cities in India and Ceylon, now called Sri Lanka. Baba had prophesied that in future civil war would break in Ceylon and would run for many years. One day, while in Quetta with Baba and His group, Chatti Baba said, "There will be so great a calamity in the world that no one can imagine it; even brother will kill brother, and there will be great tribulation. Then all the world will think of my big brother Meher Baba; at that time he will draw aside the veil, and all will pay obeisance to him." This was the time when Quetta had such a monstrous hail-storm that the hail-stones took three or four days to melt, and on the night following the storm, Chatti Baba sat stripped to the waist on the hail, from four until seven in the morning. At that time Quetta was a part of India; it is now in Pakistan located on Pakistan-Afghanistan border.'

`Chatti Baba and Karim Baba were sixth plane masts. Karim Baba was of aggressive type and was clad in the filthiest of clothes. He wore tangled skeins of fine steel wire around his throat. Unlike almost every other mast brought to Baba, Karim Baba was never bathed, although Baba fed him, and sat with him several times each day. Baba involved Karim Baba in His universal work in an altogether different manner. He was put, for about two weeks, in a special cage erected in the old hospital building on Meherabad hill. Strong pieces of bamboo were used to make a lattice screen, through which food, water, and other essentials could be easily passed on to Karim Baba. Later, he was sent back to Calcutta.'

`Ali Shah was a fifth Plane mast who had a passion for cigarettes. He had a doll-like appearance and possessed childlike quality of simplicity. Ali Shah was

involved by Baba in His universal work carried out during some of the periods of His seclusion. In 1945, Ali Shah helped Baba in one of His most severe seclusion on Angiras Rishi Hill, a mile from Ratawa village one hundred miles south of Raipur, Madhya Pradesh, India. Ali Shah was brought from Ahmednagar exclusively for this work. Meher Baba spent four days sitting alone with Ali Shah in a hut, which had been prepared for the mast on the lower slopes of the hill. Baba was highly pleased after completing His work with Ali Shah and said, "The work I wished to achieve by contacting one hundred and one masts has been achieved by working with Ali Shah."^{11.94} In March 1947, Baba was in seclusion at Purundhar, a place connected with Maratha king Shivaji. Ali Shah was brought from Ahmednagar, and was with Baba for eight days. Ali Shah was also with Baba in the period of His seclusion on the Seclusion Hill during the *Man-O-Nash* or Annihilation of Mind phase. Mohammad and Ali Shah were made permanent residents of Meherabad and were looked after by the mandali. Ali Shah was Meher Baba's stand-by mast with whom Baba associated mostly during the periods of His seclusion.'

`Chacha of Ajmer was a God-merged seventh Plane majzoob. He was a hafiz, one who knew the Koran by heart, and he came to Ajmer to teach Arabic, and was drawn to the famous tomb-shrine of Khwaja Moeinuddin Chishti there. For twelve years, Chacha remained in the graveyard in Khwaja Saheb's tomb-shrine. About a year was spent at Taragarh, the great fort on the mountain behind Ajmer. Later, he spent some time at Indore, about 300 miles to the south, where while in *Nirvikalpa samadhi* state he was buried alive. He resurrected himself and returned to Ajmer. He was called "*Chacha*" because in his fondness for tea, or "*cha*", he used to call out "*Cha, cha*", whenever he wanted it. Meher Baba contacted *Chacha* in Ajmer. He was taken to the house where Baba was staying with His mandali, and there Baba gave him a bath. This was his first bath for about thirty years. But before this could be done, his hat and his clothes had to be cut away with scissors, for, they were so stiffened and adherent with tea, food, and filth, that neither his raiment nor his cap could be removed in any other way. At the end of May 1947, Baba and his mandali moved to Satara and Baidul, one of the mandali, was sent to Ajmer to bring *Chacha* to Satara, which was almost an

impossible task because of the unique state of this great majzoob. But this was the call of love given by the Avatar Himself and Baidul did succeed in bringing *Chacha* to Satara, and Baba's daily contact with *Chacha* began. By the end of the first week of July, Baba had finished his work with *Chacha* and he was sent back to Ajmer with Baidul.'

`Meher Baba loved His masts immensely, and, the great physical discomfort and the troubles which He took in contacting and serving them provide us with only a glimpse of His unfathomable Love and Compassion for them. This mystic mast work was His divine sport or *lila*. About this Baba says:

"In his capacity as the Divine Beloved, and as the Divine Lover, he enters into the lives of masts as a liberator of fresh energies, and as the giver of a higher and healthier tone of life. He achieves this result by slowly and patiently undoing the sanskaric complexities and tangles accumulated in the ego-mind of masts. Through such consummate working, the Master establishes in masts, poise between the head and the heart, activates new and more powerful centers of control, and releases locked-up funds of spiritual energy... Very often, when the Master is helping a mast, he is also helping the world through him at that very time. ...Because of his being stationed on the inner planes, which are free from the limitations and handicaps of the gross world, a mast can be, and often is, in contact with a far greater number of souls than is possible for an ordinary person. Mast mind is a nucleus of conscious formations, with innumerable and far-reaching links. A mast can therefore be a more effective agent for spiritual work than the most able persons of the gross world. The mast mind is also often used directly by the Master as a medium for sending his spiritual help to different parts of the world."^{11.95}

`Merwan, this account of Beloved Baba's universal work with masts is really amazing and His unfathomable Love for them touches the heart,' Mary said. `It provides us with a rare insight of Avatar's work in the gross, subtle and mental spheres. The God-intoxicated souls of these worlds are used by Him to control and regulate the events of the gross world and to extend His spiritual help to all quarters of the universe. Beloved Meher Baba is the Lord of Consciousness and

He, being the Avatar, is the real emperor of the universe. This revelation about the Avatar and His masts is in reality a revelation of His Power and Glory.'

'That's true, Mary dear,' Merwan said. 'Meher Baba, the Compassionate Father, must have contacted hundreds of such masts in different parts of India, in order to help them spiritually, and through them extend His spiritual help to others. For His own convenience of working with them and serving them, Baba had established seven "*Mast Ashrams*" in the country. These were: Ajmer, Jabalpur, Bangalore, Meherabad, Ranchi, Mahabaleshwar and Satara, named on their locations. On His part, this was an act of Supreme Love and Mercy, to which these child-like divine souls have responded through their obeisant gestures and expressions of praise. In this way, they have ratified, though quite unconsciously, the Advent of the Ancient One as the Avatar in the form of Meher Baba. Their unfailing recognition of Meher Baba as the Avatar, the Ancient One and the Highest of the High, is all the more amazing because, when on tour in search of masts, Meher Baba was almost always incognito, and that, when a mast bore witness to Baba's spiritual greatness, he did so without having any external means of knowing who Baba was. Azim Khan Baba, a high mast of Mathura, on being contacted by Baba, said, "You are Allah; you have brought forth the creation, and once in thousand years you come down to see the play of what you have created". Bundle Shah, a sixth plane mast of Poona, said, "God is equal to Meher Baba". Gulab Baba, a sixth plane mast of Ellichpur, said, "He (Baba) is God Himself, and you have tricked me". Mai Saheb, a great mastani of Sukkar, said about Baba that He is "Badshah -Shahenshah", meaning, "King -Emperor". In 1942, Pathan Mast, a good mast of Bombay, said, "The key to the whole world is in his (Baba's) hand, and all countries, Russia, Germany (and so forth), do as he directs". Meher Baba is the Shoreless Ocean of Love and Truth, and the stories of His Glory are endless.'

'Merwan dear, kindly tell us about Meher Baba's crucifixion and its significance,' Mary pleaded. Lending her my support, I said, 'Merwan, please do tell us about that. We know that by now you must be feeling quite tired and exhausted. But we would appreciate if you could tell us more.'

`For me talking about Beloved Baba is always a delightful and rejuvenating experience. Knowing about you all, I feel that you too are never tired of listening about Him. Professor, when we love somebody, we wish to see him or her always happy and healthy. A loving father would always be too willing to suffer and die for the sake of his child, if that would alleviate child's suffering. Avatar, the infinite ocean of Love and Compassion, suffers for our sake and nails Himself on the Cross. The two car accidents of Meher Baba conjointly represent a specific level of Baba's crucifixion. The first car accident wounded Him and some of the members of His women mandali; while the second car accident injured Him and some of the members of His male mandali. The first one took place in America, representing the West, while the second one took place in India, representing the East. Both the accidents occurred as the fulfillment of His prophecy about them. The first accident took place on the same date, and in the same month, as revealed by Him twenty years ago. The second accident took place at the very spot, where He had played a game of cricket with His mandali and other followers. In both the cases, the members of His mandali who were highly experienced drivers drove the cars.'

`We now know about Udatara cricket match and Meher Baba's second car accident there in 1956. On Sunday, 2 December, Baba went to Poona for a day accompanied by Eruch, Pendu, Vishnu and Nilu. Returning to Satara the same day, the accident took place at around 4:45 p.m. Eruch, who was driving the car, tells us that nothing went wrong with the car or with his driving. Yet it happened, as if someone took hold of the steering wheel and forced the car to swirl and dash against a stone culvert. Baba and three of men were badly injured; and the fourth, Nilu, died without regaining consciousness. A man on the way to Pune lifted Baba and Vishnu into his car and brought them back to Satara. The injuries to Baba were very serious but Baba made no sounds and remained silent. Baba sustained facial injuries and His pelvis rim was fractured. He was shifted to Pune. There, Dr.Donkin and Dr. Miss. Goher, both of His mandali, looked him after with the aid of an orthopedic surgeon. On Nilu's death Baba said," Nilu was particularly fortunate to have breathed his last in my physical proximity and it is as he would have wanted it."^{11.96}. That this accident had deeper spiritual connections and

motives became clear when, the morning after the accident, in the midst of tremendous pain, Baba said something that revealed a fresh glimpse of His compassion: "The Hungarians suffered much in their recent struggle. Many were lying wounded and helpless on the roads, away from their loved ones and from care or relief from pain; at least I am lying on a bed, with the care of good doctors and the love of all my lovers present and absent"^{11.97}. A few days before He had said, " Nobody suffers in vain, for true freedom is spiritual freedom and suffering is a ladder towards it. Man unknowingly suffers for God and God knowingly suffers for man."^{11.98}.

The first car accident took place in America on 24 May 1952. On 20 May, Baba sent one car with a few of men mandali to Meher Mount near Ojai, California, to make arrangements with Agnes Baron for His arrival. It rained hard with thunder and lightening on 21 May. At 2:30 p.m. Baba left the Myrtle Beach center. Before leaving, Baba went up to Elizabeth Patterson, who was sitting in driver's seat, and asked if she had her car insurance policy paper with her. Elizabeth replied in negative but said that she knew where it was at Youpon Dunes, and would collect it from there, as they would be passing through the Dunes. Elizabeth drove the blue Nash with Baba seated beside her. Mehera, Mani and Meheru of Baba's women mandali were seated at the back. On 23 May, Baba and the group stopped at a town called Murphy N.C. and stayed at Pond Crest Motor Court in the Ozarks. On 24 May, Baba came out of His room, after breakfast, and stood quite still for a few minutes on the doorstep, withdrawn, sad and unusually still. Then Baba walked to the car and asked Elizabeth to start. He asked her to be ahead of the second car following. This car, a station wagon, was driven by Sarosh, one of Baba's men mandali, with Rano Gayley, Goher, Delia and Kitty Davy, all of women mandali. Baba had asked Sarosh to keep near His car driven by Elizabeth. This was the morning of the 24 of May and Sarosh stopped at a village for tea and speeded up to catch up Baba's car. At 10:05 a.m. Sarosh looked to the right and exclaimed, " Oh, God, there has been an accident! " All rushed to find Baba's face with blood pouring from His head. His eyes were staring straight ahead as if into immeasurable distances. He made no sound or sigh. He lay motionless. Elizabeth was in the car doubled over the wheel. She

asked, "Is He alive?". Baba had been thrown out of the car and sustained facial injuries and had broken his right leg and hand. Mani was not injured. Meheru was injured slightly but Mehera and Elizabeth were the most injured. Elizabeth had cracked her eleven ribs and Mehera had a deep gash on her head and a fractured skull.'

`This was how the accident took place. The night before it had rained heavily leaving the road slippery. Elizabeth's car came over the crest of a small hill and a car came along on the left side of the road. It did not slow. The driver saw Elizabeth's car at the last instant and he put on the brakes, whirling round on the road. His car had struck Baba's car bumper. He was a Korean veteran, a double amputee, who was driving for the first time that day a car made especially for him. The first car to pass the accident site was of man driving his wife to Prague clinic for delivery of a baby. He summoned ambulances. The ambulances arrived and all were taken to the Prague clinic seven miles away. Dr. Burleson, surgeon owner of the small clinic, commented: "When I finally got around to attending to Baba, I was surprised to see an individual who was injured as badly as he was, still smiling. I was also astounded to find that he did not speak a word or make any sound denoting discomfort. I assumed that he could not speak, but was informed soon by Dr.Irani that he did not speak because of a willful act. The most attractive quality of his personality that first day was the way he looked at me with those big brown eyes as if he were reading my mind. Later I determined that the most astounding quality was that something which made it possible for him to receive such profound devotion and loyalty from so many fine and educated people. That quality cannot be forced. Such devotion can only be possible because he deserved it or earned it ". After thirteen days in the hospital, Baba and the others returned by ambulance to Youpon Dunes where Baba stayed for a month while recuperating from the accident. On 13th of June, Baba dictated this message for His lovers:

"The personal disaster, for some years foretold by me, has at last happened while crossing the American Continent, causing me through facial injuries, a broken leg and broken arm, much mental and physical suffering. It was necessary that it should happen in America. God willed it so." ^{11.99}

This accident was a major event in Meher Baba's life and the one which had flagged-off certain highly significant activities relating to His universal work. After completing what He called as *Manonaash* or annihilation of finite mine, Meher Baba, in His Life Circular No.1, February 6th 1952, Meherazad, India, had stated, " I intend to go, in the beginning of April this year, to the West for some months. I expect to lead a 'complicated free' life from March 21st; a "full free life" from July 10th; and a "fiery free" life from November 15th." Years later, while journeying in a car, Meher Baba commented, "Baba got His physical bones broken so as to break the backbone of Machine (Machine Age), keeping intact its spiritual aspect".^{11.100}

'Merwan, when did Baba foretell about this accident? It is quite clear that Beloved Baba was manifesting His Divine Plan. On completion of His *Manonaash*, He reveals His plan to go to the West and at the same time talks about His future tripartite life and gives their dates as well, ' asked Mary.

'He had revealed about this accident to Elizabeth Patterson in 1932 during His second visit to the West. On May 23, Baba and mandali were driven to the Harmon retreat where Malcolm and Jean received them. On 24th, Elizabeth Patterson and others came to Harmon. After lunch, Baba led his lovers outside to the stone terrace and along a path to a field full of wild flowers. Elizabeth stayed close to Baba. Baba bent down and picked a small pink flower, which He handed to her. He spelled on His board that she should always keep the flower and should write down the date, that some day she would know the meaning of it. Elizabeth returned home that night and pasted the flower inside the cover of her New Testament and wrote, "Baba - May 24th 1932". Kitty Davy, in her great book "Love Alone Prevails," describes this incident. After the accident in Prague, Oklahoma in 1952 on 24 May, Elizabeth was feeling miserable that she had been the cause of so much suffering for Baba. Feeling sad and dejected, she picked up the New Testament for solace. And the flower fell down and it was dated 24th May 1932. She now knew that Baba had known about the accident, and her role in it, twenty years back. This brought her solace.'

'Oh, Baba, Baba, Baba,' Mary exclaimed. Crying and sobbing uncontrollably, she just kept on exclaiming, 'Baba, Baba, Baba'.

Merwan continued, 'The story doesn't end here. Beloved Baba also knew that Elizabeth would keep that flower in her New Testament. And, Baba knew that when Elizabeth would recollect the flower incident twenty years later, she would come to know that the accident is Avatar's crucifixion. And, that by involving her and making her to suffer with Him, she is profoundly blessed by Meher Baba.'

'Elizabeth did feel that Baba knew about the accident when and where it will happen. She felt that through the experience of sharing Baba's suffering to a degree, her own life was extended for a purpose and the gift of the little flower was the grace of the Avatar to be treasured in the heart. At the level of Meher Baba, there is no difference between the small and the vast. A drop is the sea and the sea is a drop. An infinitesimally small point is enough to create and release a gigantic cosmic wave. Individuals are the countries, worlds and cosmos; and the cosmos, worlds and countries are the individuals. Everything relating to the two car accidents - the country, the place, the month, the day, the time, the involved individuals - was preordained. The spiritual significance of these two accidents becomes clear when we take an overview of them along with their inter-connections. The 1952 accident took place almost immediately after the conclusion of Meher Baba's New Life and *Manonaash* Phase. Meher Baba began His New Life, a period of self-imposed helplessness and hopelessness, with 4 women and 16 men companions, from 16th October, 1949 to 16th October, 1951. Mehera, Mani, Meheru and Goher were from His women mandali. Male companions were: Adi Sr., Dr. William Donkin, Gustadji, Nilu, Dr. Ghani, Pendu, Sadashiv Patil, Vishnu, Murli Kale, Anna Jakkal, Babadas, Kaka Baria, Baidul, Aloba, Eruch and Daulat Singh. The New Life reached its climax and blossomed into what Baba called as "Manonaash" - the annihilation of the finite mind. At the climax of His New Life, Meher Baba was in the Manonaash phase, with four of His male mandali - Eruch, Gustadji, Baidul, Pendu - selected from His New Life companions, from 16th October to 12th February, 1952. On 12th of February 1952, Manonaash Seclusion was completed and Baba gave this message:

"O God! Today being my first real birthday, my heart expresses that the declaration of the LIFE by Me was entirely Yours and by Your Will; because nothing happens save by Your Will.

All my knowledge and my ignorance; all my strength and my weakness; all my freedom and my bondage are as You have desired and decreed.

This Life Eternal will be lived by me in conformity with Your Will, and every word of the declaration of the LIFE will come to pass by Your grace." ^{11.101}

Baba got His Dhuni, the Sacred Fire, lighted at about 7 P.M. and He said, "...from now on I free Myself from the external religious ceremonies..." ^{11.102}

`From 21 March 1952 to 9 July 1952, Meher Baba was in what He called as the "**Complicated Free Life Phase**", in which "bindings dominated freedom". From 10 July, started the "**Full Free Life Phase**" in which "freedom dominated bindings", followed by "**Fiery Free Life**", from 15 of November 1952, in which "freedom and bindings" were to be finally merged into the Divine Life. His first car accident in America took place when He was in His "Complicated Free Life Phase" - the phase in which "bindings dominated freedom". His second car accident was the culmination of His "Fiery Free Life" leading to the merger of the opposites - bindings merging into freedom and freedom merging into bindings - resulting in the climax state of Divine Love and Truth in the form of "Divine Life" or the "Eternal Ever-Old Ever-New Life". Meher Baba's "Old Life" followed by His "New Life", "Complicated Free Life", "Full Free Life", "Fiery Free Life" and the "Life Eternal" were all preordained and were unfolded by HIm as the manifestations of the Supreme Divine Plan.'

Rahim observed, `Mehera, Mani, Meheru and Elizabeth were involved in the first accident. Mehera, Mani and Meheru were of Baba's women mandali in His "Old Life" and were also Baba's "New Life" companions. Elizabeth, the only western woman and one of Baba's "Old Life" women mandali was, perhaps, an exception in being the one not involved in His New Life. Eruch, Pendu, Vishnu, Nilu, who were involved in the second accident, were of Baba's men mandali in His "Old Life" and were also His "New Life" companions. Thus, a selected few of His "Old Life" women mandali, who were also His "New Life" companions, excepting Elizabeth, were involved in His "Complicated Free Life". And a selected few of His "Old Life" men mandali, who were also His "New Life" companions, were involved in His "Fiery Free Life".' Rahim asked, `Merwan, why Baba has

classified His Divine Life in these categories? Should we perceive these different "Lives" of His as separate and totally independent phases of His Divine Life as the Avatar, or as those which were over-lapping, superimposing and penetrating each other?'

Ram said, 'Merwan, *Manonaash* Phase was the period when Baba, along with His four male companions, got the finite mind annihilated. However, Meher Baba was the Ancient One, the Highest of the High, and had commenced His work as the Avatar from 1921 onwards. Then whose finite mind did He annihilate during this Manonaash period? Moreover, almost immediately after this phase, He entered the "Complicated Free Life" in which "bindings" were to dominate "freedom". If Manonaash is the annihilation of the finite mind, it should have included the annihilation of the illusory bindings and illusory freedom along with all other opposites. Then from where this pair of "bindings and freedom" popped up? On 12th of February, His first real birthday, He had mentioned about a declaration on "Life". Baba had said that He would live this "Life" in conformity with God's Will. When did He make that declaration and what was that?'

Merwan said, 'Rahim, Ram, Mary, Mika and Professor dear. We should not forget that we all are only the shores and Meher Baba is the Shoreless Ocean of Infinite Sat-Chit-Ananda Consciousness. Meher Baba is unfathomable. But He Himself has instructed us to dive deeper and deeper in Him until we are dissolved and become one with Him. Whatever we do and howsoever deep we may feel that we are going, we should always keep in my mind that God cannot be understood and God cannot be described.'

'Meher Baba has talked about His "Old Life", "New Life", and about His tripartite life as "Complicated Free Life", "Full Free Life" and "Fiery Free Life". What did He mean by these words? We may say that His "Old Life" was that period of His "Life" which had preceded His "New Life". Then what He meant by His "New Life"? Moreover, we know that "New" and "Old" depend on each other for their existence. They cannot be separated out and visualized independently. This makes understanding of His "New Life" and its relationships with His other life-phases quite crucial.'

`Meher Baba first used this expression during His very first visit to America in the year 1931. Baba was at the Harmon retreat and those who had come to meet Him were lodged in the retreat and in a nearby guesthouse. Josephine Esther Grabau, a young poetess, was given a room in the guest house. Her mother Mary Antin, author of "The Promised Land", was helping the Jean Adriel with the household affairs at the retreat. Meeting Baba, Josephine said, "Almost at once, I felt I knew him. Here was the living Christ. There was no doubt in my mind." There were many others who also felt the same way. It so happened that the guest house caught fire and burned to the ground. The residents, however, were not upset, as it afforded them the opportunity to move into the house where Baba was staying. On being assured that all were fine and the hostess will not suffer any financial loss, Baba responded, "Since no one will suffer severely through this experience, we should rejoice that the fire happened. It is a good sign. Those who lost their few belongings in the fire will begin a new life. Those who managed to save their possessions will have to wait for their new beginning"^{11.103}. Some of the guests had lost money in the fire and Baba remarked to them,"

`Anita Viellard, when she met Baba, said that she wants to kill herself. Baba said, "Go ahead, do it now by placing your head at My feet, and go and live rest of your life as New Life with Me." Christ talked the same way. To those who came to him he said, "Leave all and follow me." Sadguru Kabir sings, "*Jo Ghar Phukey Apno, Chaley Hamarey Saath*" meaning "the one who burns his house first, should follow me". This is the real meaning of "New Life". Leaving behind everything and following the Avatar, without any precondition of help or hope, is the New Life. Whosoever leaves behind his or her everything - material possessions, thoughts about spirituality and religion, attachment to religious ceremonies and rituals, self-built psychological fortresses of personal and family security, desires and hopes - and joins Meher Baba, the Avatar, enters the New Life. This New Life is the only gateway to the Eternal Now, the Life Eternal. By asking even His own trusted and tested men and women mandali to willingly opt for this New Life, with Him as a companion, Baba has repaired, restored and reopened this ancient Avataric Royal Highway to the Abode of God, our real home and final destination.

The New Life, at the level of the individual soul, inevitably blossoms into Manonaash - the annihilation of the finite mind. It fructifies in the eternal "Divine Ever-Old and Ever-New Life" which in spite of continued interactions of the opposites remains untouched and free. In the eternal "Divine Ever-Old and Ever-New Life", the old continuously begets the new and the new begets the old, and the "Life", the Supreme Self, as Infinite Knowledge, Love, Power, Peace, Bliss and Glory pervades everything.'

Daulat Singh, who was not of mandali but opted for the New Life, failed in observing the conditions of the New Life. Baba asked him to quit but at the same time, out of sheer compassion, pardoned him and gave him a new set of conditions to be observed and lived independently. Daulat Singh's story is unique tale of dedication and obedience, which provides us with an opportunity to dive deeper into the working of the *Avatar* and His infinite compassion. The spirit of New Life was summarized in one word – "*Satyanashi*" – by Baba. In a meeting convened on 31 August 1949 at Meherabad to give an idea about the New Life, Baba stated that unless one is ready to live the life of "*Satyanashi*" and absolute obedience, it would be better to stay behind. About thirty-five close disciples, including Daulat Singh, were present. Literally speaking, the term "*Satyanashi*" means "complete or total renunciation". Baba, however, clarified that in the context of the proposed New Life, the word includes not only "renunciation of everything", but also "ruination of everything." So, in the New Life there would be nothing to go back to or turn back to.'

The **New Life** commenced on 16 October 1949 and, hardly after a week or so, Daulat Singh asked Baba if he could take two month's leave to settle some family matters at Bangalor. This violated the New Life conditions, but Baba forgave him. At night, Baba sent Eruch to check on Daulat Singh. Eruch found him weeping and asked what the matter was. Daulat Singh's love for Baba was exemplary. He had abandoned his medical practice and had left his entire family behind in difficult circumstances to join Baba. He had settled his daughter's marriage just before leaving for New Life and that night he was wondering what will happen to his daughter and family in his absence. Baba sent Daulat Singh back to his old life assuring that he is sent back without any fault on his part. He was asked to follow

Baba's new special orders. These were: until you die, commit no lustful action, even with your wife; never lie, whatever the consequences; and, for one month every year, wear the kafni – beggar's robe – given by Baba and during this month live on food gotten by begging. He was given the freedom to decide about the time and place of begging. Baba assured Daulat Singh that if he succeeds in obeying these orders, he would be sharing the New Life of Baba with Baba one hundred percent. Daulat Singh obeyed Baba to the best of his capabilities, but not without dislocating his life drastically. He came from a very respectable family, and his relatives rebelled when they found him, an educated medical doctor, begging. But Daulat Singh was uniquely obedient, always ready to give up his life to keep his word given to his divine Beloved. Finding circumstances intolerable, he left his home in Bangalore to wander and beg for his sustenance in various places. It so happened that Baba, along His New Life companions, arrived in Satara on June 16, 1950. As if to complete the symbolism of Daulat Singh's New Life with Baba, he also reached Satara during the same period. One day he happened to end up wandering there – begging right near Baba's place of stay. Eruch was keeping watch outside. Suddenly, Baba asked him to find out who was sitting on the culvert. Eruch could not believe his eyes, when he found Daulat Singh there. Baba hugged and praised Daulat Singh saying: "I am extremely pleased with your obedience. You are truly leading the New Life, and are an example to others. Although away from me, you are close to me. I am very pleased with you. I promise one day I will visit your house." Daulat Singh's life opened an altogether new dimension of New Life in which it is possible to live New Life with Baba, in fusion with Old Life, in Baba's physical absence. Meher Baba says:

"The New Life is endless, and even after My physical death it will be kept alive by those who live the life of complete renunciation of falsehood, lies, hatred, anger, greed and lust; and who, to accomplish all this, do no lustful actions, do no harm to anyone, do no back-biting, do not seek material possessions or power, who accept no homage, neither covet honor nor shun disgrace, and fear no one and nothing; by those, who rely wholly and solely on God, and who love God purely for the sake of loving; who believe in lovers of God and in the reality of Manifestation, and yet do not expect any spiritual or material reward; who do not

let go the hand of Truth, and who, without being upset by calamities, bravely and whole-heartedly face all hardships with one hundred percent cheerfulness and give no importance to caste, creed and religious ceremonies.

This New Life will live by itself eternally, even if there is no one to live It." ^{11.104}

`In Meher Consciousness, the New Life and Baba's Universal Work are one and the same. Whosoever lives the New Life in Meher Consciousness becomes an instrument of His Universal Work. Explaining about His `Work', Baba says: "But the greatest work one can do for Baba is to live the life of love, humility, sincerity and selfless service in which there is no trace of hypocrisy. Baba's love is for all; and for each of His lovers to help others, know this, that his or her own life must be a radiating example of love so that it may become the instrument to spread Baba's love and the truth of Reality. Such a life and such a love are vital and carry the highest responsibility, for behind every thought, word and deed is the all-pervading force of Truth ^{11.105}." Seen in this light, Rahim, it would be wrong to say that Elizabeth, who was Meher Baba's mandali, was not a New Life companion of Meher Baba. Whosoever forgets the old life and starts life afresh in Meher Consciousness, with the spirit of surrender and renunciation, enters the eternal New Life and becomes an active participant in Baba's Universal Work.'

`Elizabeth Chapin Patterson first heard about Meher Baba from Jean Adriel. She was married to a prominent stockbroker from New York, and she herself was a successful business-women associated with insurance companies. A person of considerable means, she had traveled all over the world, including a venture to the North Pole. On the morning of 17 November 1931, when she heard about the arrival of Meher Baba from Jean, she drove to Harmon the same day. She had described her experience of shaking hands with Meher Baba by saying, "I felt so happy that my feet did not seem to touch the stairs and I felt as light as the joy itself!" By simply coming into Baba's physical contact, Elizabeth once said, "I gained Life." That she did. Elizabeth's involvement in Meher Baba's 1952 car accident in America was preordained by Baba as an important part of His Avataric Mission on earth. The pattern becomes clear when we scan the activities of Beloved Baba between 12th of February, 1952, the day of His real first birthday, and 24th of May, 1952, the day of His car accident in America; and, also His

significant activities between 24th May 1952 and 2nd December 1956, the period in between His two car accidents. '

`Meher Baba's Life Circular No.1, dated February 6, 1952, is His statement on Manonaash. Baba says:

"God is everywhere and does every thing. God is within us and knows everything. God is without us and sees everything. God is beyond us and IS everything.

To try to understand with the mind that which the mind can never understand, is futile; and to try to express by sounds of language and in form of words the transcendental state of the soul, is even more futile. All that can be said, and has been said, and will be said, by those who live and experience that state, is that when the false self is lost, the Real Self is found; that the birth of the Real can only follow the death of the false; and that dying to ourselves - the true death which ends all dying - is the only way to perpetual life. This means that when the mind with its satellites - desires, cravings, longings - is completely consumed by the fire of Divine Love, then the infinite, indestructible, indivisible, eternal Self is manifested. This is `Man-o-nash', the annihilation of the false, limited, miserable, ignorant, destructible `I', to replaced by the real `I'; the eternal possessor of Infinite Knowledge, Love, Power, Peace, Bliss and Glory, in its unchangeable existence. Man-o-nash - which is bound to result in this glorious state, when plurality goes and Unity comes, ignorance goes and Knowledge comes, binding goes and Freedom comes. We are all permanently lodged in this shoreless Ocean of Infinite Knowledge, and yet are infinitely ignorant of it, until the mind - which is the source of this ignorance - vanishes for ever; for ignorance ceases to exist when the mind ceases to exist..

Unless and until ignorance is removed and Knowledge is gained - the Knowledge whereby the Divine Life is experienced and lived - everything pertaining to the Spiritual seems paradoxical.

God, whom we do not see, we say is real; and the world, that we do see, we say is false. In experience what exists for us does not exist; and what does not exist for us, really exists.

We must lose ourselves in order to find ourselves: Thus loss itself is gain.

We must die to self to live in God: Thus death means Life.

We must become completely void inside to be completely possessed by God: Thus complete emptiness means absolute Fullness.

We must become naked of selfhood by possessing nothing, so as to be absorbed in the infinity of God: Thus nothing means Everything.

For these last four months, according to ordinary human standards, and by ways and means known to me, I have tried my utmost for the achievement of Man-o-nash, and I can say in all truth that I feel satisfied with the work done. This satisfaction is due to the feeling I have, of having regained my Old-life Meher Baba state, yet retaining my New-life ordinary state. I have regained the Knowledge, Strength and Greatness that I had in the Old Life, and retained the ignorance, weakness and humility of the New Life. This union of the old and new life states has given birth to LIFE; Life that is eternally old and new.

“LIFE for me now means:

First: Free and obligationless life.

Second: Life of a Master in giving orders; and that of a Servant in all humility.

Third: The feeling of absolute conviction that we are all eternally One, Indivisible and Infinite in essence; and with it a feeling of separateness from the real Omnipresent Self, through ignorance.

Fourth: Life of God in essence; and that of man in actions.

Fifth: Life of Strength born of inherent Knowledge of Oneness; and of weakness born of binding desires.

“My efforts for Man-o-nash have been positive, and the result of Man-o-nash will be positive. But the actual and concrete manifestation of this result, I leave entirely to the Divine Sanction; where, how, and when the result will be, I leave entirely to the Divine Decree. It may be at any moment, hour, month, year or age. It may be in any part of the world -either in the East or in the West, in the North

or in the South - yet in effect will embrace all four. It may be under any and all circumstances.

I feel that it will be a sudden coming, and a becoming, of the essence of all Love, Unity, Realization, Revelation and Illumination, in its varying degrees, for me and for all those connected with me.

...I intend to go, in the beginning of April of this year, to the West for some months. I expect to lead:

A 'complicated free' life from March 21st;

A 'full-free' life from July 10th;

And a 'fiery free' life from November 15th ...

...To sum up my 'Man-o-nash' work in short:

First: I feel in all truth that the four months' Man-o-nash work has been done by me, by the help of God, to my entire satisfaction.

Second: The result of this work must bear fruit, sooner or later; either in the immediate present, or some time later, or in the distant future.

Third: The result will bring Freedom to us all, in proportion to our merits of Love, Faith, and Service.

Fourth: This Freedom will be freedom from ignorance, and will be the Knowledge that we always were, are, and will be One with God.

Fifth: This Knowledge will make us realize and experience Infinite Love, Power, Bliss and Peace, which we always possessed, and knew not of. "11.106

'What do you make out of this statement? Does it not explain His Manonaash work and inter-dependence and inter-penetrability of all the phases of Baba's Divine Life?' asked Merwan.

'It explains everything completely and most beautifully,' Mary said. 'It tells us that Beloved Baba's Avataric Divine Life is a pre-ordained sequence of manifestations based on His own Sanction and Decree as the Supreme Divine Being. This means that nothing can be viewed in isolation. Avatar's eternal "

Divine Ever-Old Ever-New Life" manifested as the Old life and gave way to the New Life; the New Life blossomed into Manonaash and fructified into the tripartite Free Life; and, the tripartite Free Life finally got blended and became One with His "Divine Ever-Old Ever-New Life". Beloved Baba's *Manonaash* work will bear fruits in the immediate and distant future. He also preordains all the present and the future manifestations of this work. Baba's tripartite Free Life and all the happenings of that period were the results of His *Manonaash* work, and were ordained by Him to manifest at their respective points of time.'

`It tells us also about the results of *Manonaash*,' said Rahim. `The immediate result of *Manonaash* is, no doubt, a state of vacuum, but this vacuum is only a transitory state. It gets automatically filled in by the real "I", the eternal possessor of Infinite Knowledge, Love, Power, Peace, Bliss and Glory, in its pure unchangeable existence. However, this filling in of the vacuum, created by *Manonaash*, cannot be induced intentionally. It is not the result of conscious effort. It happens automatically and cannot even be predicted. The individual hears the eternal call of the Avatar - "Leave all and Come unto Me" - and wakes up from his or her slumber. He or she becomes aware of the fact that books, teachings, preachings, practices, people, science, technology, information, rituals, ceremonies, religions, entertainment - all are useless and cannot give lasting solace to the tormented soul. Our own selfishness and greed imprison our souls. Our greed-soaked selfish efforts to discover the exit doors, only replace one prison by another. We really feel utter helplessness and hopelessness. In this state of mind, the call of the Avatar starts the process of awakening. Individual gathers courage to come out of his or her old life and joins the New Life with the Avatar. And this New Life inevitably blossoms into *Manonaash*. Until this happens, the spiritual paradox remains a paradox. Spirituality appears as illusory as any other thing. *Manonaash*, at the level of the individual, is the death of the finite mind or the illusory self. And from this death emerges the Life Eternal. This is also the crucifixion of the Avatar, at the level of the individual soul, which He suffers for the sake of His lover. He comes in the world of illusion, holds our hand as a loving companion, and His Love sustains us in this New Life of helplessness and hopelessness which ultimately flowers into *Manonaash*. Since we are deeply

identified with the finite mind, we, on our own, cannot initiate that we think as our own death.'

'That's a great perception, Rahim,' Merwan said, 'Meher Baba says, "Everlastingly with all the Divine Bliss with Me, I eternally suffer for one and all - thus I am crucified eternally and continually for all"^{11.107}. Rahim, just to give you some idea about how Beloved Baba had suffered for all of us, I would be narrating an incident from His life; but only after making a small digression.'

'Meher Baba has given the gift of two prayers - **Repentance Prayer** and the **Master's Prayer** - for all of us and for the posterity. Repentance Prayer was dictated by Him in November 1951 and the Master's Prayer in August 1953, at Dehradun. Creation of these prayers by the Avatar Himself is quite significant. Both of them were dictated in the period falling in between His two car accidents. This again is highly significant. He had declared 12th of February 1952, as His real birthday. From this day onwards, Meher Baba entered a phase of His life in which He got busy in what can be called as the public declaration of His divine identity as the Avatar of the age and the cycle. One can say that from 12th of February 1952, began the period of Meher Baba's Avataric regime which would cover almost the total spread of coming 700 years. This, however, does not mean that He started working as the Avatar only from this day onwards. He had started that work right from the day when Upasani Maharaj had declared Him as the Avatar. Prior to 1952 Meher Baba was busy in collecting His sheep, activating the mind-channels of His masts, energizing the global catalytic channels, and, in laying the spiritual cables in the East, West and rest of the world. During this period He worked almost incognito and revealed His identity as the Avatar or the Christ only to a select few. He did not mind and ignored totally, how the people perceived Him. His western lovers hailed Him as the Christ, while His eastern lovers worshipped Him as a Sadguru or the Perfect Master. During this period, He always gave the impression of someone who is in great hurry to complete something within a time deadline. This something was the 'spiritual wiring' of the world of humankind and similar worlds, so that, when in future He would press the button for His universal manifestations, His radiant spiritual energy would flow unabated in the cosmos. Meher Baba has assured, "The Power-house will never fail,

provided the wires take care of their connections"^{11.108}. His New Life and *Manonaash* work, at the macro level, can be compared with the charging, or the activation, of a nuclear reactor. Through His New Life, which includes *Manonaash*, Meher Baba had activated His universal spiritual reactor. It then became as necessary to reveal His divine identity as the Ancient One, and the Avatar, to humanity at large.'

`It was a part of His divine plan to begin the process of revealing His divine identity as the Avatar from the West in general, and from America in particular. By this time Meher Baba's Myrtle Beach Centre, His Home in the West, was fully ready to receive Him in America after a gap of 15 years. Baba and His mandali reached Myrtle Beach on 24 April 1952. Myrtle Beach Centre was a love-creation of Elizabeth and Norina for their Divine Beloved Meher Baba. Elizabeth and Norina did the over-all planning of this Centre on numberless visits to Myrtle Beach from New York. This beautiful Centre is literally a Centre-on-the-Lakes, and sprawls over almost 500 acres of virgin land, situated on the Atlantic coast. On 16th of May, during the course of an interview with Toni Roothbert, Baba said: "America now leads the material side of the world and yet has such potential that she can lead the world spiritually, if awakened. Awakening is love for God in the form of Jesus - God crucified. And God will do it. He can do it. And now the time is near, very near when the spiritual upliftment has to take place. America is destined to lead the world spiritually"^{11.109}. And hardly a week later, on 24 May 1952, Meher Baba's first car accident took place. It was, therefore, a fateful day in Baba's Avataric mission on earth which ushered in intense physical suffering for Baba, and a simultaneous release of His Love and compassion for humanity: a Crucifixion and Dispensation in one. In this accident, three of His Meherazad-Meherabad Indian women mandali and Elizabeth, one of His Myrtle Beach Center mandali, were involved. By involving Elizabeth in this accident, the whole of America was involved. India and America would together lead the world spiritually towards Meher Baba, the Avatar or the Christ, and Baba's Meherabad-Meherazad and Myrtle Beach Centers - Baba's homes in the East and the West - would play a dominant role in that. Eastern and western women lovers would play the leading role in the spiritual awakening of the world. But India and

America will have to bear whatever residual suffering comes in their share - residual, because Avatar Himself has taken upon Himself the major brunt of it. During the convalescence period after the accident, to Mrs. Ivy Duce, Baba said, "You must understand that this was God's Will and it will result in benefit to the whole world"^{11.110.}

`We will now have a chronological scan of some of the most significant events of the period that followed the first car accident and terminated in the second car accident at Udatara. Baba gives the Repentance Prayer in November 1952, at Meherabad. From 18th November, 1952, He starts what is called as His mass darshan programme from Hamirpur District, India. From 17 January 1953 starts His first mass darshan tour of Andhra Pradesh, India. In August 1953, while in Dehradun, Baba gives the Master's Prayer. At Dehradun, on 7 September 1953, Baba makes one of His most important declarations – **‘The Highest of the High’**. In **‘The Highest of the High’**, Meher Baba explains about the Ancient One and the Avatar, and leads His lovers to conclude about His identity as the Avatar of the age. From 3rd of February, 1954, begins His second mass darshan program of Hamirpur District, India. On 10th of February, at about 1:00 A.M., at Meherastana in Hamirpur District, Baba, for the first time, spells out the words "*Avatar Meher Baba Ki Jai*" meaning "Victory to Meher Baba, the Avatar" on His alphabet-board. He hails Himself as the Avatar by raising His right hand up. From 19 February 1954, begins His second mass darshan tour of Andhra Pradesh, India. On 12th of September, 1954, Baba gives public darshan to more than 70,000 people at Wadia Park, Ahmednagar, India, and gives another of His most important declarations, **‘Meher Baba's Call’**. On 30th September, 1954, Baba leads a group of His eastern and western lovers to His tomb-shrine at Meherabad and makes Dr. Donkin to give this message: "Baba wants to use a simile about the atom bomb. Just as an atom bomb, which in itself is so small, when exploded, causes tremendous havoc, so, when He breaks His Silence, the universal spiritual upheaval that will take place will be something that no one can describe. It will happen in a second, at a time when nobody expects it"^{11.111.} At 2:40 P.M., same day, Baba gives His most important futuristic statement – **‘The Final Declaration’** - on the manifestations of His Divine Plan. In the "Final Declaration", Baba says:

"...The time is fast approaching when all that I have repeatedly stressed, from time to time, will definitely come to pass. Most of you will witness those events, and will recall very vividly all that transpires during these two days of your stay at Meherabad."

"...The universe is my ashram, and every heart is my house; but I manifest only in those hearts in which all, other than me, ceases to live."

"...Thus, it is God who has brought suffering in human experience to its height, and God alone who will efface this illusory suffering and bring the illusory happiness to its height."

"...The time has come for the pre-ordained destruction of multiple separateness which keeps man from experiencing the feeling of unity and brotherhood. This destruction which will take place very soon, will cause three-fourths of the world to be destroyed. The remaining one-fourth will be brought together to live a life of concord and mutual understanding, thus establishing a feeling of oneness in all fellow beings, leading them towards lasting happiness.

Before I break my Silence or immediately after it, three-fourths of the world will be destroyed. I shall speak soon to fulfil all that is shortly to come to pass."

"...When I break my silence it will not be to fill your ears with spiritual lectures. I shall speak only one Word, and this Word will penetrate the hearts of all men and make even the sinner feel that he is meant to be a saint, while the saint will know that God is in the sinner as much as he is in himself."

"...My manifestation as the Avatar of the time will be of short duration. This short period will, in quick succession, cover my humiliation, the breaking of my silence, my glorification and my violent physical end. Everlastingly with all the divine bliss within me, I eternally suffer for one and all - thus I am crucified eternally and continually for all."

"...During this short period, my Word of words will touch the hearts of all mankind, and spontaneously this divine touch will instill in man the feeling of the oneness of all fellow beings. Gradually, in the course of the next seven hundred years, this feeling will supersede the tendency of separateness and rule over the

hearts of all, driving away hatred, jealousy and greed that breed suffering, and happiness will reign."^{11.112}

`On 7 November 1954, gives a '**Clarification**' of His "Final Declaration". On 13th of November, He gives '**Clarification and Confirmation**' of His "Final Declaration". On 10th of April 1955, Baba gives '**The Final Decision**' regarding His "Final Declaration".

In His "Clarification" on the "Final Declaration" Baba points out : that "a strange disease attacking My body," was said, " in your language"; " the humiliation that I shall suffer," was said, " in your language"; " the breaking of My silence and uttering the one Word of words," was said, " in My own `language' and simultaneously in yours, because when I utter that word, it will be an audible word to you"; "My Glorification," was said, " simultaneously in my `language' and in yours"; " the destruction of three-fourths of the world," was said, " in my own `language' "; " the stab in the back, " was said, " in my own `language' and simultaneously in yours "; "the dropping of my body ", was said," in my own `language' and simultaneously yours"^{11.113}. Baba also explained that whatever He has said in His `language' will be understood only when it actually happens.

In His "Final Decision" on the "Final Declaration", Baba says:

"According to my Final Decision, except for the time factor everything will happen in every detail and sequence as declared, clarified and confirmed by me.

There is now no limitation to any point in time, nor contact with any point in time. Things may happen after one month or three months, after three years or twenty years. In short I may speak tomorrow or my silence may be broken after 10 years "^{11.114}."

`On 2 July 1956, Baba, while preparing for His forthcoming visit to the West, sends this message to His western lovers:

"As declared in the past, I am free from all promises and am not bound by time and space. Though all happenings are in the realm of illusion, a great so-called tragedy is facing me and my lovers. My long expected humiliation is near at

hand. This may happen tomorrow or any day of this year, or it may happen next year.

The love, courage and faith of my lovers will be put to a severe test, not by me but by Divine Law. Those who hold fast to me at the zenith of this crisis will transcend illusion and will abide in Reality.

I want all my lovers to know that the contents of this circular, however despairing, should not affect their enthusiasm and the efforts of their preparations for my coming, because my humiliation and 'tragedy', though necessary, are but passing phases, which are bound to have a glorious end - as is destined "11.115. "

'From July to August 1956, Meher Baba gives darshan to His western lovers in England, America and Australia. Baba returns to India and between February to the end of November 1956 tours extensively in India contacting His masts. And on 2 December 1956, His second car accident takes place.'

'Taking an overview, it becomes clear that Meher Baba chose to declare publicly His divine identity, as the Avatar, in the period falling in between His two car accidents. Almost all of His major declarations of this period are on the specific future manifestations of His Divine Plan leading ultimately to the worldwide spiritual resurgence and the emergence of a New Humanity. Some of the specific future manifestations, as revealed by Him, are:

1. His presence as the Avatar of the age and the cycle will be globally recognized and a tidal wave will rise in the Ocean of Grace and will flood the entire world. His spiritual message will reach every land, every town, and every village. It will convey the Truth in its utter and indefinable simplicity. It will mark the fulfillment of the Divine Life. It will throw open new gates to eternity bringing New Hope to despairing humanity.
2. Sectarian differences will be transcended and there will be agreement on the essential truths.
3. Racial and communal strife will cease.
4. Disarmament will then no longer be a matter of talk but an actual fact.
5. Cooperation will replace competition; certainty will replace fear; generosity will replace greed and exploitation will disappear.

6. Feeling of oneness, through love, will be brought about amongst all the nations, creeds, sects and castes of the world.
7. Evolution of consciousness will reach such an apex that materialistic tendencies will be automatically transmuted into spiritual longing, and the feeling of equality in universal brotherhood will prevail.
8. There will be a great material destruction through earthquakes, floods and volcanic eruptions. East and West will be aflame with war; but there will also take place a tremendous spiritual upheaval.'

In the spiritual transformation of the world, India, England, America and Australia would together play the most dominant role. This becomes clear when we trace the initial flow of Meher Consciousness in the world. Baba's school at Meherabad became the cause of His initial contact with the West and which by His own choice began from England. In England, Thomas A. Watson, an American and a colleague of the eminent scientist Alexander Graham Bell, became instrumental in taking Baba to America. In America, Meher lovers established His Home in the West at Myrtle Beach and four of His women mandali - Elizabeth Patterson, an American; Norina Matchabelli, an Italian; Nadia Tolstoy, a Russian and the daughter-in-law of Count Leo Tolstoy, the Russian author of "War and Peace" ; Kitty Davy of England - became its main anchor persons. In America, Francis Brabazon, an Australian, became instrumental in taking Baba to Australia and another great center "Avatar's Abode" was established there in Queensland. At Myrtle Beach Center, one can say, America, Italy, England and Russia worked together setting an example of devotion and surrender to the Avatar. The world will, therefore, witness a growing cooperation between these countries and they, together, will play a major role in the emergence of New Humanity.'

`That this chain sequence of happenings, starting from Meherabad in 1931 and terminating at Avatar's Abode in 1958, was an unfoldment of Meher Baba's Divine Plan gets revealed fully when we take into account what happened when Francis Brabazon met Meher Baba, for the first time, at Myrtle Beach in 1952. Francis first heard about Meher Baba in Australia from Baron Von Frankenberg, who was the head of the Sufi group. Frankenberg gave Baba's "Discourses" to Francis who was immensely impressed by them. In 1949, Francis purchased land at Beacon Hill, a

suburb of Sydney, to build a house for Meher Baba. Frankenberg died in 1950 and Francis succeeded him. When Francis heard of Baba's visit to the States in 1952, he sailed for America where he met Mrs. Ivy Duce and with her went to meet Baba at the Meher Spiritual Center at Myrtle Beach. Baba asked Francis to return to Australia before July 10 and said: "I have known you for ages; you will come to know it.... Blindly do as I tell you, and you will not be following the blind. Do as I tell you: I KNOW ^{11.116}." Francis obeyed Baba and could make it to Australia within the time deadline. Meher Baba's first visit to Australia took place in 1956. Before that, Baba had invited Francis to India to join in His Andhra tour. Francis described this tour in his book, **'Journey with God.'** Francis was again called by Baba to be with Him in India from 11 September to 30th September 1954, when a group of twenty Western men was invited for three weeks. Thus, Francis was with Baba when the "Final Declaration" was made. Francis had described this stay in his, **'Three Incredible Weeks'**. Baba visited Australia again in 1958, mentioning earlier, in a family letter, that the Australian "Sahavas" or "Living Together" will be held at Beacon Hill or in Queensland. Francis found a farmland on the top of Keil mountain and sent a long cable to Baba about this. Baba approved and cabled back, "excellently suitable." Right from the beginning, Australia was foremost in Meher Baba's mind. Baba had sent Rustom Irani in 1932 from Honolulu to Australia and New Zealand but he had been refused to disembark by the immigration authorities. Meherabad, Myrtle Beach Meher Spiritual Center and Avatar's Abode are His major spiritual ports on earth.'

Something touched Ram's heart and he cried uncontrollably. Ram said, 'There is always an undercurrent of deep pathos in the lives of Avatars. They are ridiculed, insulted, humiliated and sometime even executed. They come amidst us and suffer for all of us and we, with our highly inflated egos and soul tormenting religious codes, ignore them. This happened with Ram, Krishna, Buddha, Jesus and Mohammad, and now with Meher Baba. However, Avatars being avatars of Love and Compassion ignore all our stupidities and follies. See, how Beloved Baba has physically suffered for all of us, and yet He took all those strenuous journeys, within India and abroad, only to contact His lovers and give them His Love.'

`Ram,' Merwan said, `Baba says: "I am the Root of everyone and everything. An infinite number of branches spread out from Me. I work through, and suffer in and for, each one of you ^{11.117}."

`Merwan, what about that incident from Baba's life, which you wanted to tell us to illustrate how much He suffered for each one of us,' Mary reminded.

Merwan said, `Mary, from 1966 onward, Baba was in seclusion engaged in His universal work. This work drained Him out greatly, but He wanted that the Master's Prayer and the Repentance Prayer read almost every day when a particular part of His work was finished. After 1967, He usually needed one of His mandali to stand at His side to support Him. Even this was proving too tiresome and painful and a stage was reached when He used to signal Eruch to read the prayer as fast as is possible. Obeying Baba, Eruch used to read these prayers at breakneck speed, and the words so spoken, now only meaningless sounds, gave the impression of an express train clattering its way without stopping or slowing down. Once Eruch, unable to restrain himself, burst out laughing for a few moments and then collected himself and resumed. On this Beloved Baba said, "You have no idea of the physical strain I was going through when I gestured for you to read faster. For you, reading the prayer fast may seem farcical, but for Me to participate in these prayers in My present state of health is no joke. I have given these prayers to humanity to recite. They are for all posterity. Whenever anyone recites these prayers, they will be helped spiritually because of My present personal participation. It has nothing to do with how quickly you read the prayer or how much feeling you read it with or anything of that sort. All that matters is My having participated in the prayers. Any time anyone repeats these prayers, I am there with them, and they will be helped spiritually ^{11.118}." On 1 February 1968, a Life Circular was issued in which Baba asked all His lovers to help Him in His work by reciting the prayers every day until July 9th. Thus reciting the prayers of Meher Baba gives us the privilege of participating in His Divine work.'

`We come now to His last days on earth - the days of His Supreme Crucifixion. In July of 1968, Baba declared, "My work is done. It is completed 100 percent to My satisfaction. The result of this work will also be 100 percent and will manifest from the end of September ^{11.119}." . In August, He dictated:

"Everlasting, never ending,
Never changing ever the same
And His oneness in its fullness,
Plays in manyness His game."^{11.120}

On another occasion Baba said, "Coming, coming, coming - came." After a few days, He added one more line: "Coming, coming, coming -came! I am tired of the illusion game!" In October of 1968, He convened a meeting of His Indian lovers to discuss the projected darshan program from 10th of April to 10th of June 1969. Giving some idea about how much He suffered during His seclusion from 1967 onward, Baba said:

"The strain of ...eighteen months work was tremendous. I used to sit alone in my room for some hours each day while complete silence was imposed on the mandali, and no one of them was permitted to enter the room during those hours every day. The strain was not in the work itself, although I was working on all planes of consciousness, but in keeping my link with the gross plane. To keep this link I had to continuously hammer my right thigh with My fist ^{11.121}."

`Because of this constant hammering, the muscles of Baba's thigh became stiff and hard like wood. Worried by the delicate state of His health, Eruch and others tried to persuade Baba to postpone the 1969 *darshan* program. Turning to Francis Brabazon, who was there, Baba asked, "Will My lovers be upset if I give *darshan* while reclining or with my eyes closed?" To this Francis replied, "No, Baba, they will just be happy to have Your *darshan*, that's all, no matter what!" '

`In the final month, Baba's urea count went exceedingly high. An ordinary person would not be sane or lucid in such condition, and would emit a foul odor. Yet, Baba was able to converse and joke until the very end. His face continued to glow with divine radiance and His body emitted a fresh scent, like that of a baby.'

`On January 30, 1969, Baba told Dr. Donkin that He was being crucified, so great was His pain. He repeated this to Bhau Kalchuri, one of the resident mandali, that same night. Baba's body was rocked with spasms and convulsions,

which at times lifted Him completely from the bed, and everyone else looked on helplessly. "This is My crucifixion," Baba gestured. The Avatar, as Man, was taking the suffering of the entire world on Himself to usher in a new era in His own time. The spasms became increasingly severe. Dr. Goher was greatly alarmed. Baba gestured to her, "Don't forget, I am God".'

`On January 31, between noon and 12:15, Baba's body was seized by a climactic spasm, and His respiration stopped. Avatar Meher Baba had dropped His body. It was kept in the crypt here for seven days, so that His lovers could have the last *darshan* of His human form. It was decided by Meher Baba's close mandali that the crypt would finally be sealed at 12:15 P.M. on February 7, 1969. By divine coincidence, February 7, 1969, the day when Beloved Baba's physical body was finally covered, also happened to be His birthday according to the Zoroastrian calendar. Just past noon the Master's Prayer was recited and "*Avatar Meher Baba ki Jai*" was called out three times. A slab of white marble was laid bearing the inscription:

ETERNAL BELOVED

AVATAR

MEHER BABA

FEBRUARY 25, 1894 - JANUARY 31 1969

I HAVE COME

NOT TO TEACH

BUT TO AWAKEN

This slab of white Italian marble, now bearing the inscription, was lovingly donated by Rano Gayley.'

`Mary, Ram, Rahim, Mika and Professor, this tomb-shrine of Beloved Meher Baba is now working as His Cosmic Spiritual Power House emanating His Divine Radiation. This Samadhi of our Eternal Beloved is incessantly conveying Meher Baba's eternal message: "I never come and I never go. I am present everywhere. Isn't it wonderful that I never leave?" Francis Brabazon, Beloved Baba's beloved poet, sings:

Beloved God,
All the earth is singing you
In the impermanent materials of stone, leaf and heart:
Singing you, yearning, leaning towards
Your reaping.

God-the-Father-the-Son of yourself:
Whole God: Perfect Man.
Cherisher of the sap in all things;
Destroyer of the worn-out, the false of all things;
Releaser of the love in all things, which,
Locked in the prison of heart, in leaf and stone,
Raises itself in longing towards your reaping.

You are the perennial and glorious Avatar,
The human and lovely Rasool,
The sudden and beautiful Christ,
Who stoops to Man-state, and walks the earth
Carrying the Cross of our violence,
Of our little stupidities of progress
To other than God - our own perfect state-

(For we have ever turned from that which we most passionately
desired,
And hated that which we most dearly loved) -
Carrying your Cross,
Talking intimately with your disciples as their brother,
Teaching them, nourishing them as their master,
Cracking a joke as you pause to wipe the sweat from your
Lovely forehead.

How very Man you are.
How absolutely God. "11.122

`God, feeling the pangs of separation from all of us, comes down as the Avatar and consciously carries the Cross of our sufferings as an act of Love. And we, who have forgotten their oneness with Him and have deserted Him, suffer crucifixion for His sake, toddling our way through endless cycle of births and deaths. He is our Eternal Beloved and we are His. Meher Baba says: "I tell you with My Divine authority, that 'You' and 'I' are not 'WE', but 'ONE'. You consciously feel My Avatarhood within you; I consciously feel in you what each of you feel. Thus everyone of us is Avatar, in the sense that everyone and everything is everyone and everything, at the same time, and for all time."11.123

And inside our dear Pusan, which was now Beloved Meher Baba's Samadhi, we all cried in the silence of our hearts overflowing with the Silence of Beloved Baba's Presence. The love-drops of our silent tears mingled and merged with the Shoreless Ocean of His Infinite Love.

Mary was in a state of deep trance. Facing Beloved Meher Baba's picture, she was sitting cross- legged with eyes wide open but totally blank. She was holding her magic mirror in her hand; and quite often would peep into it, only to burst out in a fresh tide of tears. She looked like a God intoxicated mast. Her mental state alarmed us but Merwan assured that there is nothing wrong with her and there was no cause to worry. Merwan advised that it would help her if she is left alone undisturbed.

Merwan said, `I have told you about Malcolm Schloss, who met Beloved Baba in His very first visit to the States in 1931. Malcolm was a poet and an ardent seeker of the Truth. During His 1952 visit to America, Baba asked Malcolm to versify His message on "Ways to Attain the Supreme Reality". Malcolm's opening verse, "First and Foremost," begins:

If the sun did not shine,
To whom would the flower turn,
How would the mango grow?

If the sea were not spread,
To what would the rain descend,
Whither the river flow?

If the earth did not spin,
How would the light return,
Where would the darkness go

If the air were not rare,
How would the breathing flow,
Where would the spirit go?

If God came not as man,
How could we really know,
That we could love Him so? ^{12.1}

This was later put to music and has become one of the favorite songs of the Baba lovers in the West'. Merwan then sang this lilting song melodiously, and all of us, excepting Mary, joined him. The concluding stanza was our refrain:

If God came not as man,
How could we really know
That we could love Him so?

The song and our singing made Mary behave more wildly. She was in a state of ecstasy and unconsciously swayed her head on the rhythm of the song. However, even in this state of self-oblivion, she just kept on looking to her mirror and tears flowed unceasingly from her eyes.

`Why, and what she is looking in that mirror repeatedly? ' Asked Rahim.

`It appears that Mary has broken her mirror and that has made it much more magical,' said Merwan. `Come on, let us see what that mirror is showing now? '

It was true that the mirror had cracked, but it was now shining with dazzling brilliance. Moreover, when we looked into it, instead of showing our faces, it showed the beautiful face of Beloved Meher Baba. Every time, when we looked into it, Baba gave us His most beauteous smile and moved His lips gesturing a kiss. His eyes were overflowing with Love and Compassion. His Love and Compassion surged towards us in the form of a gigantic wave, drenching and drowning all of

us. We were in bliss and ecstasy, and were seeing His divinely beautiful face everywhere. We saw His smiling face in the heart of each man and woman of the murals on the walls. We saw Baba's face in the clouds shown in His own picture inside Samadhi. Wherever we focused our eyes, we saw Baba's loving face.

Rahim, looking deeply absorbed and bewildered, expressed his experience by reciting this ghazal:

" Acchaa hee mohabbat kaa asar dekh rahaa hoon,
Tum hee nazar aatey ho jidhar dekh rahaa hoon.

Kaabey ki jaroorat, naa Butkhaney ki khwaayish,
Jis simt dikhatay ho, udhar dekh rahaa hoon." ^{12.2}

Merwan, feeling extremely delighted, rendered these couplets in English:

"The effect of Love is full of delight,
I see You there, where goes my sight.
No need of a mosque, no desire of temple,
In all things shown, I see You in ample. "

Ram was also in a somewhat strange state in which sometime he laughed deliriously, and sometime wept profusely. He said:

"That kiss taught me that joining of lips in Love
Reveals heavenly secret, which the tongue cannot utter!
That kiss was introduction to a great sigh,
Like the Almighty's breath that turned earth into man.

That sigh led my way into the spiritual world,
Announcing the glory of my soul; and there
It shall perpetuate until again we meet." ^{12.3}

Merwan said, `Tears, laughter and seeing Beloved Baba everywhere are some of the common experiences of Baba lovers. Jean Adriel has described one such experience, in her book "Avatar", in these words:

"During this period I saw Baba's face in everything - sky, trees, water, other people's faces, the walls of my room, my own hand - everything upon which my vision focussed. It was, therefore, not surprising that I had no desire for material food. When a tray was brought to my room I would look at it for a moment, resolved to eat what had been so kindly prepared; but immediately Baba's face would appear, blotting out food and dishes. When, however, Baba discovered that I was not eating, he made a point of coming to my room at mealtimes. Sitting on the edge of the bed, he would, like a loving father, tenderly feed me the food from my tray, until finally overwhelmed by this act of compassion, I forced myself to eat."^{12.4}

`I have told you about Kitty Davy who was one of Baba's mandali. Kitty was among those who had gathered in London at Victoria Station to welcome Baba on His first trip to the West. Kitty had arranged for Baba to stay at her parents' house at Russell Road, Kensington. It is quite significant that Beloved Baba stayed in a British home first and moved to the Devonshire retreat later. In the eyes of Baba, Kitty and her parental family and England were the same. By staying at Davys', Beloved Baba had made the entire of England as His very first home in the West. '

`In Davys' home, quite a few of those, who met Baba, had this experience of suddenly bursting into tears. Kitty herself had this strange experience. May, Kitty's elder sister was highly skeptical about Baba and taunted Kitty, rather severely, saying: "You are being hypocritical by shedding tears. You unreasonably go on weeping just to show your love for Baba. It is not love but a sham. It is all humbug! It upsets me to such hypocrisy." Upset by this rebuke, Kitty told Baba about it. Baba called May and explained to her, "It is no pretense. The tears that

you see are the outcome of Kitty's love which she cannot prevent...You will also start loving me within two days." ^{12.5} May burst out laughing and did not believe Him. However, when she was with Baba that night along with others, she suddenly burst into tears, which she could not control for three hours. Explaining these experiences of tears and laughter to Mahatma Gandhi, Baba said, "People weep at the sight of me and find themselves loving me even when they say they don't love God. It is because I am desire-less; I am completely free of desire and am full of only love from head to foot." ^{12.6} To a group gathered at the home of Davys', Baba revealed, "I am the Source of all knowledge, all love and all bliss. Love me, the Source of all love, and be happy - and don't worry." ^{12.7} "Don't Worry, Be Happy," is one of Baba's globally known sayings, and the one which has worked wonders. It has not only lighted the hearts of hundreds of men and women with the Love and Truth of Meher Baba, but has also delighted the hearts of millions of people in the form of a popular song sung by the famous singer, Bobby McFerrin. The song fetched Bobby the prestigious Grammy Award. The song, "Don't Worry, Be Happy", is from Bobby's EMI album entitled "Simple Pleasures". Bobby McFerrin has a distinct Meher Baba connection. He has often sat in with Tuck and Patti, the famous Meher singers, and from their exposure, he wrote this reggae-styled song. Kitty Davy was very fond of this song and used to show the video to guests and the kids on the street. Kitty wrote a beautiful and heart touching book - "Love Alone Prevails" - on her life with Beloved Meher Baba.

`Merwan, these are great anecdotes,' Mika said. `Unfortunately our Ram, Rahim and Mary are not in an externally receptive state of mind; otherwise they would have enjoyed them greatly. They are in a state of seeing which surpasses a hundred hearings.'

`But Mika, they have to come out of that state of mind. Beloved Baba wants to take us across the last stretch of this Ocean of Nothing. Come on let us sing what I call Baba's maha-mantra – 'Sacchidananda Paramananda, Meher Baba Vidnyananda'. Baba willing, Mary, Ram and Rahim would come back to normal consciousness.'

We sang Baba's maha-mantra with Merwan leading us. It proved to be an extremely soothing and invigorating experience. We were pleasantly surprised

when Mary, Ram and Rahim also joined us behaving quite normally.

‘Sacchidananda Paramananda Meher Baba Vidnyananda’ echoed the holy walls of Beloved Baba's Samadhi. We saw Merwan in a profoundly meditative state. He was facing Baba's picture and appeared to be in deep communion with Beloved Baba.

‘Sacchidananda Paramananda Meher Baba Vidnyananda’ reverberated in the space surrounding us. It started repeatedly at a louder pitch, and then receded gradually to almost inaudible faintness. This created a deeply soothing effect.

‘Dance, music, colors, beautiful forms - all are within us,’ Merwan said. ‘We would soon enter the inner subtle and mental worlds, and would experience the subtle and mental planes. However, in order to experience them, we will have to come out of our gross bodies. For the subtle world, we will make use of our subtle bodies; and, for the mental world, we will use our mental bodies. These bodies have their own sensory units' operative at their respective level. We are already somewhat familiar with our subtle body, through which we, almost daily, see and experience the dreams. However, our dreams are our personal creations, while these subtle and mental worlds are the creations of the cosmic divine dream. There are heavens and hells, but we will only pass through the subtle and mental planes and have their glimpses. It is possible to enter these planes only after reaching the "take-off" point through the universal process of the evolution of consciousness. That needs considerable weakening of good and bad sanskaras, and their appropriate balance. Beloved Baba has just now directed me to make it possible for all of you to enter the subtle world, and from there He Himself would lead. Since none of you has reached the "take-off" point, this experience of the subtle and mental planes will be Baba's Love gift to you all.’

‘The subtle world, as we all know, is the sphere of pure Prana energy; and, the mental world is the sphere of pure Mana or Mind. There exist three Planes of consciousness - the first, second and third planes of power - in the subtle world of infinite energy. The fourth Plane lies between the subtle and mental worlds. The fifth and sixth Planes are of the mental world, the fifth being the Plane of Thought and the sixth of Feeling. Each of the seven Planes has a heaven. The seven lanes

and fourteen by-lanes of the seven Planes and seven heavens make up the Inner Path. The seven lanes are in between the Planes, and the fourteen by-lanes are through the heavens of each of the seven planes. A heaven is to a Plane as a city to its central railway station; one journeys on the Path from station to station, from Plane to Plane by seven lanes or tracks. To reach the station, or the Plane, one must pass through the city and if one lingers in the city and becomes enchanted, lured by the heaven's multiple attractions, one gets stranded and cannot journey further.'

'All this sounds too complicated and technical,' said Rahim. 'At the same time, at least to me, it sounds imaginary and eerie.'

'It is strange and weird, and dream-like - there is no doubt about that,' said Merwan. 'But that way all these worlds - gross, subtle, mental - are imaginary and dream-like because they are the formations of mind, energy and space. It is only the mind as thought, creating the consciousness of time and stability that classifies these worlds in terms of its own concepts of so-called real-reality and dream-reality. It is true that when we talk about the gross, subtle and mental worlds, we actually talk about the shadows. That is why they together constitute the realm of Illusion.'

'It is like the multi-media world of Internet - a world of shadows filling the cyberspace - with servers, clients, surfers, pages or web-sites inter-connected by hyperlinks, but on a very large scale and magnitude, and with mind-boggling diversity,' Mary explained. 'In the case of these inner worlds, we can use the expression "spiritual space" in place of cyberspace.'

'Mary, that's an excellent example,' said Rahim. 'Multi-media communication through computers has now revealed that the real can appear as virtual reality and the virtual reality can represent the real. At the cosmic level, however, there is no way to know whether all that appears as real is really the real and not the virtual reality.'

'Merwan, Beloved Baba has filled our hearts with His Beauty and Love. We, who have seen His divinely beautiful form and have experienced the bliss of His Divine Presence, have no desire to enter into these inner worlds and experience

them, ' Mary expressed her feelings.

`I know about that,' Merwan said. `This experience is necessary because it would make the transition to the supra-mental sphere almost an instantaneous affair, whensoever you would reach the 'take-off' point. Like a bullet, you would then zoom through the subtle and mental Planes. No more danger of being stranded and locked-up there. After this experience, the craving for the inner spiritual experiences would cease, and the day-to-day ordinary life would undergo spiritual transformation. It will then be increasingly filled with the bliss and the ecstasy of the Eternal Now - the Supreme Abode of the Supreme Divine Being. The Divine Beloved will hold the hand of His beloved in you, and the two together will lead the eternal New Life which blossoms in manonaash and fructifies in the Infinite 'Sat-Chit-Ananda' Consciousness.'

`Merwan, I am happy and contented as I am. Beloved Meher Baba is with me as my Beloved, and I am not at all bothered about this manonaash thing and this state of Infinite Consciousness,' Mary said. `But Merwan dear, why have you started distancing yourself from all of us? You have said that you will make possible our entry into these worlds and then dear Baba will lead us, minus you. Again extricating yourself from all of us, you have explained that when we will reach the "take-off" point, this thing will happen and that thing will happen. Merwan, why have you started talking like this? Are you going to leave us? Where would you be going and why? We love you Merwan, and it hurts when you talk like this.' Mary was in tears and looked emotionally disturbed.

Merwan, who appeared visibly sad and equally disturbed, said: ` Mary, talking about this world, the sages have said, "*Do din kaa jag mein mela, Ye sab chala chali kaa khela*," ^{12.8} meaning, "The world is a two days fair, Its all a game of coming and going." One who comes here has to depart some day. Avatar comes, lives amidst us, and goes back. People come and just disappear. In the end, memory outlives the actual person and that too fades away completely. Sadguru Kabir sings, "*Prem Nagar kaa anta na paaya, Jaun aaya saun jaayega*", meaning, "No body knows where this Love City ends, As one comes, So one goes."

`I was sent by Beloved Meher Baba to contact you all and join as your

companion. Baba loves you and knows everything about you. Whenever a heart, sincerely and lovingly, yearns for God and seeks Him in His Creation in order to start a New Life of Love, Truth and Beauty, Meher Baba, the Avatar, responds immediately. This is His Divine commitment. To such lovers Baba says, "Don't Worry, Be Happy. Hold fast my daaman and forget all your worries." Yogis, religious philosophers, scholars and scientists have only behaved like those blind persons of Buddha's parable who wanted to feel and describe the elephant. Scientists say that vacuum was the beginning and vacuum is the end. Yogis postulate that God is an exclusive state devoid of thought-formations, and work hard to attain that. Religious philosophers spend their time in postulating whether there is an absolute Advaita or Non-duality, or a specialized mixed Dvaita-Advaita. Scholars rejoice in making comparisons and interpreting the Nirvan of Buddhism, Mokhsa of Hindus, Kingdom of Heaven of Christians, and Allah of Muslims. It is impossible for the ego and its egoist companion, the intellect, to come out of the clutches of the pairs of opposites. Intellect will always segregate "noise" from "silence" and can never understand how "noise" contains the "silence" and "silence" contains the "noise". He, the Supreme Divine Being, is all this multiplicity and the under-lying unity. All things and beings are His states. Since everything is essentially a state of the Supreme Divine Being, Avatars and Sadgurus know that none of these states is more sacred, or less sacred. Sadguru Kabir says:

“Ghat Ghat mein Panchee boltaa
Aap hee dandi, Aap taraaju,
Aap hee baitha toltaa.
Aap hee maali, Aap bageechaa,
Aap hee kaliyan todtaa.
Ghat Ghat mein Panchee boltaa.”

`Rendered in English, it would mean:

"In all things and beings, the Divine Bird says

He is the lever and the weighing-scale too,
Sitting there, He Himself weighs.
He is the gardener and the garden too,
Plucking the buds, He always plays.
In all things and beings, the Divine Bird says" ' '

`In 1959, Meher Baba dictated this couplet to Bhau Kalchuri':

"Oh Priceless Treasure of Knowledge!
You are within and without,
And you are the Ocean of Mercy.
You are in all the worlds:
You are the Ocean of Attributes!
Oh Meher, God-Incarnate, You Alone Exist!" ^{12.9}

`So, Mary dear, where would I go? Where I can go? We all are in Him. This coming and going is also in Him. We only change our positions. However, in He, the Eternal Now, the beginning and the end, the coming and going, this position and that position - all are existing simultaneously. Gone I would be, but I would always remain available, here and now. Mary, Ram, Rahim, Mika and Professor let me share a divine secret with all of you. Meher Baba's Avataric period is the most amazing and the most significant period of His Avataric cycle. The 100 to 200 years after the Manifestation of the Avatar on earth is the period encompassing the direct living and personal radiation of the Avatar. This tomb-shrine of Meher Baba, the Avatar, is that Powerhouse which is transmitting the direct and personal radiation of the Avatar Meher Baba. This direct living and personal radiation of Avatar Meher Baba would permeate the gross, subtle and mental spheres. It would remain available on earth as the universal ocean of Divine Grace, for the major part of the 21st Century. This is how Meher Baba willed it to be.'

Mika, visibly excited, pleaded Merwan to explain this further. Mary, Ram and Rahim also supported Mika.

Merwan explained, 'There was some confusion regarding the Avatar's circle, Avataric period and the Avataric cycle. All this emerged out of the book 'Civilization or Chaos?' written by Irene Conybeare. It was not clear, whether the Avataric period and the Avataric cycle are the same or different from one another. This was clarified by Baba through a letter written by Mani, one of the women mandali and Baba's sister. The letter stated:

"...All the fourteen members of the Avatar's Inner Circle realize God by the grace of the Avatar during the same Avataric period, which is of one hundred years' duration after the Manifestation of the Avatar on earth...The Avataric period has nothing to do with the cycle. Please have that clear. The 100 years after the Manifestation of the Avatar is the period encompassing the direct living and personal radiation of the Avatar." ^{12.10}

'An Avataric cycle, which may be of 700 years or 1400 years, consists of two components. Divisible into 11 ages, its first 10 ages together constitute the Avataric cycle of the last Advent, and its last age becomes the age of the next Advent. Meher Baba's Avataric cycle is of almost 650 years in which 100 to 200 years, following His Manifestation on earth, constitute His Avataric period when His direct living and personal radiation would remain in operation. Ann Conlon has mentioned that Baba has said that His Avataric Age with all its power and love would last for 100 to 200 years after the death of His gross body. Over the years, Baba referred to the crypt, now this Samadhi, as His final resting-place. One day during the Sahavas of 1955, Baba allowed His lovers to come inside the Samadhi and circumambulate the crypt; Baba Himself stood silently inside the structure for some time, in this left rear corner. After Baba came out, He began an informal conversation and conveyed that after a period of seventy-five years, this little structure would be the center of world pilgrimage. Thus, Baba Himself has revealed that in His Avataric Period His Tomb-Shrine or Samadhi would work as the Powerhouse of His direct living and personal radiation. This Powerhouse will never fail. Meher Baba's Grace, in the form of His direct living and personal radiation of His Love and Truth, is directly lighting the hearts of sincere God-

lovers. In the hearts, so lighted, Meher Baba starts revealing Himself as the Ancient One and the Highest of the High. Meher Baba's Avataric period is the period of direct living contact with Him. To what extent our hearts would be filled by His Love and Truth depends on how much heart-space we lovingly offer Him. In the words of Francis Brabazon:

"Don't let anyone tell you that we're not all in the same boat;
Those that saw Him were seeing no more than a beautiful coat.
Whether one saw Him or not, He is still knocking on each Heart-door
And each heart is still harboring strangers
what matters some few, some more?" ^{12.11}

Rahim asked, 'What is meant by, "Manifestation of the Avatar on earth?" What could be the beginning of this Avataric period of 100 years? Moreover, after this period of 100 years, should we presume that the contact with the Avatar would no longer be possible? '

`Rahim, Avatar is always a manifestation of the Supreme Divine Being, the Ancient One and the Highest of the High, on earth. In His statement on the New Life, Baba's has said that after His physical death this New Life would be lived by those, "...who believe in lovers of God and in the reality of Manifestation." Manifestation of the Avatar on earth, therefore, should mean His Advent and the period of His physical presence on earth. We should not forget that this, "direct living and personal radiation" of the Avatar emanates from Him, and co-exists with Him throughout the period of His physical presence amidst us. This radiation interacts with sincere God-lovers, and with the souls born with spiritual orientation of sanskaras. It becomes instrumental in creating countless involuntary miracles. It permeates the gross, subtle and mental spheres and remains in operation. Avatar willfully extends the period of His direct living and personal radiation so that it can remain functional even after His physical departure. Another expression, "manifestation as the Avatar of the time," as used by Baba in His Final Declaration, refers to the time-bound manifestations of

the Divine Avataric plan as fixed firmly by the Avatar through His conscious universal work. These are multi-level manifestations involving the levels of the individuals, countries and the world. By fixing 100 years, as the duration of His Avataric period, Meher Baba has also fixed the period in which all that has been ordained to happen will happen. It is through His direct living and personal radiation, that Meher Baba is continuing the universal work of the Avatar after His physical departure.'

`In the expression used to describe this radiation, three words - direct, living and personal - are of great significance. Direct means, direct access; living means, that it is a 'conscious-consciousness' force of Infinite 'Sat-Chit-Ananda Consciousness'; and personal means that this force is consciously created and emanated by Beloved Baba as the Avatar. For 100 years, this Divine Being - the direct living and personal radiation of Beloved Baba with Samadhi as His abode - would directly lit the heart-candles of His lovers. After this period, hearts so lighted, would lit the heart-candles of the future generations of God-lovers. The divine Flame would remain unaltered and undiminished, irrespective of the fact whether it was kindled by the original Flame, or by its progenies, until the time when the wick of Righteousness starts burning low. That would be the time of the next Advent.'

`All this is quite clear now,' said Rahim. `It is just like the solar radiation, created and emanated by the Sun, and, received by the planets far away where it performs its own miracles. On earth it creates and sustains the living systems and a hierarchy of ecosystems. Energy, so received, remains operative in the solar energy appliances, even during night hours, when the availability of its source is obstructed.'

`Merwan, what do you mean when you say that this radiation is a "conscious-consciousness" force? Since this radiation is Beloved Baba's personal creation, could it then be presumed that this radiation, the Divine Radiant Being, can manifest Baba's form any where, any time?' Mary asked.

`Mary, this Divine Radiant Being is the personification of Beloved Baba's Love and Grace. Beloved Baba worked through this radiation when He was amidst us in

human form, and now, in His physical absence, this radiation is giving continuity to His work as directed and programmed by Him. Let me illustrate this by few examples.'

`In February 1958, there was Sahvaas congregation of Baba lovers at Meherabad. One day Beloved Baba was feeling tired and exhausted, and in order to cheer Him singers were called. Singers sang the ghazals of Urdu poet by the name Seemab. The opening couplet of one of the ghazals was, "*Ab kyaa bataun mein teray milne say kyaa milaa?*" meaning, "how could I tell, what I gained by meeting You?"^{12.12} The rendering of the ghazal as a song, and above all its beautiful poetry, pleased Baba immensely. Beloved Baba lovingly declared, "Today, I have liberated the soul of Seemab." His lovers responded with a resounding "Avatar Meher Baba Ki Jai." Seemab had died long ago. Baba's Love, as His Grace, must have located Seemab's soul, wherever it was at that point of time, instantaneously releasing it from the cycle of birth and rebirth. At that time, Seemab's soul could have been anywhere - heaven, or hell, or reborn as a human being in the gross world. This happened when Beloved Baba was amidst us in the human form.

This conscious flow of His Love, as His Grace, is being continued even after His physical departure in 1969. Everyday, numerous such stories are being added. In the case of a soul, on the verge of physical departure, Meher Baba manifested Himself and led this soul, through the door of the physical death, to the regions beyond. This is the famous case of a young man, aged 21, by the pet name "Gypsy" Sharma. Gypsy died of cancer on 28 February 1983. Dr. G. S. N. Moorthy, a renowned Baba lover, narrates this incident, as told by Gypsy's parents, in these words:

"On the 16th Feb. '83, while the boy was sound asleep, his mother tried to wake him up. With eyes half opened the boy moved a little and said, 'What are you doing mother? Do not disturb me please. Look, Meher Baba is here in the room.' Then he closed his eyes and turned aside. People in the house were surprised who the Meher Baba was; for they heard this name for the first time in life. Neither the boy, nor any member of the family, far and near, had ever known the Avatar Meher Baba. On Sunday, the 27 February '83 late at night, the boy was

persuaded by his mother again to get up for a cup of tea. He opened his eyes slightly and said, 'Mother, look; I am talking to Meher Baba. Promise me on oath you will not disturb me any more. I am in a great peace mother, do not disturb me.' All those gathered around drew blank and asked each other who the Meher Baba was, and why Gypsy was repeating his name. However, the utterance was dismissed as an unfounded imagination in semi-delirium. But that was not the case. Around 12 in the noon on Monday, 28 Feb. '83, his condition became serious. His sister, with tears in her eyes, asked him to get-up, eat something and talk. At last, he opened his eyes, muttering incoherently to himself taking Baba's Name again. Desperately she asked, 'What are you talking about Gypsy? Who is Meher Baba?' He responded clearly and said, ' Don't you see, Meher Baba is standing here in the room in his white clothes.' His mother anticipated that the inevitable was written on the wall. She said, ' Gypsy, my son, you are not well. Now you should remember Lord's name.' He replied, ' Why should I remember Lord's mother? Look; Meher Baba has himself come to take me along. I am going with him.' Then he raised his hand high, snapped his fingers and closed his eyes forever, leaving behind Meher Baba's mystery for all of us to ponder."^{12.13}

'On the first anniversary of Gypsy's death, M.G.Sharma, Gypsy's father saw a dream, the significance of which was revealed later when the couple visited Meherabad and Meherazad. In the dream, Sharma and his wife were taken to a place similar to a temple. There was a person, like a priest, who led them into the temple, down some stairs into a sort of cellar. In the cellar, Sharma saw the bust of a person with a large mustache. Sharma couple's search for Meher Baba brought them to Meherabad on 27 February 1985. On 28 February, they visited Meherazad where Eruch, one of Meher Baba's closest mandali, showed them around Mandali Hall. Eruch also took them inside the "Blue Bus" where Sharma saw the bust of the person with a large mustache - Meher Baba! Describing his experience in Mandali Hall, Sharma, looking at Eruch said – "You might have casually shown me the bust, but in a profound way it has confirmed my belief that Gypsy had an intimate connection with Meher Baba. And what a coincidence, today is the second anniversary of Gypsy's demise."^{12.14}

Next day at Meherabad, Nana Kher, one of Baba's mandali, took Sharma

couple to the museum near Baba's Samadhi. Nana led them down the two stairs and the first thing that arrested their attention, on the left, was a replica of the bust they had seen in the Blue Bus. This experience revealed the full significance of the dream filling Mr. and Mrs. Sharma with love for Meher Baba and His "temple like" Samadhi.

There is another famous case of a soul, living in a disembodied state of existence after its death in the gross world, having been found by Meher Baba, when in a state of coma, and led to the inner sphere. Karl Umrigar, born on October 4 1960, was a champion jockey. 15 April 1979 was the last day of Bombay racing season and Karl was one of the participating jockeys. Karl's horse stumbled and went down dislodging and trampling Karl. Karl was hospitalized and in spite of best possible medical care, died on 3 May 1979. Nan Umrigar, Karl's mother, feeling totally shattered by the death of her beloved son, started knocking the doors of some of the reputed occultists to learn the practice of automatic writing. She succeeded in meeting one Mrs. Bhavnagiri in 1984. The first auto-writing contact with Karl was established on 11 September 1984. After daily auto-writing sessions for fourteen days, a cryptic message, "WHEREVER MUM HOME," was received. Deeply touched by the word 'mum', Nan burst into tears. This is how she describes this first contact with Karl, five years after his death:

"The tears flowed as I rocked myself, with my arms tightly wrapped around my chest. A newfound life source began to creep through my body till there remained no doubt in my mind. I was certain. My son Karl had returned home.

The years of emptiness receded as each morning Karl diligently practiced. Each word, no matter how often repeated, brought infinite joy to my soul.

Karl soon spelt out another word, 'MEHER'.

I was puzzled, for there was no one of that name in my family or in my group of close friends. So back, I went to Mrs. Bhavnagiri with my pages filled with the words, 'Meher'. Who or what was 'Meher'? Mrs. Bhavnagiri suggested that I direct my inquiries through another medium, a Mrs. Prabhavati Rishi. I had absolutely no idea of what she was talking about, but having come this far, my inner spirit seemed to have assumed an inexplicable drive. I simply had to find

out more about the word - 'Meher'. "12.15

`Nan could locate Mrs. Rishi, and they together contacted Karl on an ouija board. Just to check that the contact is real, Nan asked, "Who are you? Please write your name." The board did spell out the name - KARL. It also spelt out, "I FELL DOWN - BRAIN HAEMORRHAGE." Nan has described this ouija board contact in these words:

"Startled by the response, my heart began to race furiously, for it had been a brain haemorrhage that was finally responsible for the loss of Karl's consciousness. He was thus unable to fight for his life anymore. This had to be Karl, for another spirit person would never have known. This had to be my son!

Gaining confidence, I began to question him about the writing - 'Am I disturbing you Karl?'

`NO MUM,' he replied.

`Do you wish me to continue, and will I ever be able to write clearly.'

`YES, WITH GOD'S HELP'

`And what are you trying to tell me Karl? Who is Meher?'

`MEHER BABA'

`And who is Meher Baba?' I cried, intrigued.

`HE IS MY GURU,' spelt the board.

`What do you want me to do?'

`GO WHEREVER HE IS. GO WHEREVER HE IS' repeated Karl.

The session ended abruptly and I was left stunned! "12.16

`Nan Umrigar's search for Meher Baba, a consequence of Karl's repeated instruction, "GO WHEREVER HE IS," brought her to Meherabad. In his subsequent messages Karl had said, "I am always in Meherabad...I live there... I am Meher Baba's Right hand man...When I first came here Mum, I did not know what had

happened. Meher Baba came to take me when I was struggling in pain and unhappiness. He looked after me, He healed my leg and my body that was badly hurt. He is the kindest and most wonderful friend that a person can ever have - He is my father in Heaven."^{12.17}

`There should now be no doubt about the continued working of the direct living and personal radiation of Meher Baba. Meher Baba's Samadhi is the abode of this living radiation of the Avatar,' Merwan said. `This direct living and personal radiation of the Avatar, His Love and Grace, comes with Him when He descends as the Avatar. The moment Infinite Avataric Consciousness decides to actively respond to the prayers of the five Sadgurus, Divine Love as Divine Grace is manifested and fills the heart of the Supreme Divine Being. What makes the Infinite Avataric Consciousness to respond to the prayers of the Sadgurus? Obviously, the Divine Love, which manifests as Divine Grace in the form of the personal living radiation of the Ancient One. Since sound, light and thought-forms are the projections of the Divine Word or Para Vak, the personal living radiation of the Avatar is the radiant Word or Vak of the Avatar, which fills the cosmos. The Avatar Himself ordains the precise program, mode and time of its continuous manifestation. In the directly active phase, Avatar's Grace itself makes the choice of the souls deserving the gift of Divine Love and flows towards them. However, in the passive phase, God's Grace flows through the Sadgurus, as and when they deem it so. The active phase of the Divine Grace, the direct living and personal radiation of the Avatar can be called as the high-tide period of Divine Love.'

Ram beamed with joy and said, `Merwan, this revelation about the divine Grace clears so many things. The esoteric tradition of Srivaishnava religion, well documented in the Rahasya granthas or Secret Texts of the various preceptors belonging to this school, puts great emphasis on Prapatti or Sharanagati - total self-surrender to the Avatar. The Charama Sloka, which is interpreted in this school as the final teaching of Lord Krishna in the Bhagvadgita, expresses the Lord's assurance given during His incarnations to grant succour to any one who leaves all and starts the life of total surrender to Him. The very fact that the Lord made this promise when He Himself had assumed the role of Arjuna's charioteer indicates His easy accessible nature. Manavalamamunigal, in his commentary, has

emphasized that the mental resolve to surrender arises due to Divine Grace and should not be considered as human effort. Unless the Lord wills to redeem man and extends His Grace, man cannot by effort alone progress spiritually. The second half of the Charama Sloka indicates the transcendental nature of the Supreme Being who alone can protect man. The Charama Sloka or the Supreme Verse integrates the contrary aspects of the Divine Being - easy accessibility and transcendence - together, revealing clearly that Avatar's Divine Grace makes the transcendental easily available.'

`It was Mary Magdelene who had instructed the disciples of Jesus on the Grace of the Saviour,' Mary said. `Mary was a close and favorite disciple of Jesus. From Luke we know that she, with other women, went through cities and villages with Jesus, proclaiming the news of the Kingdom of God and the advent of the Avatar. Mary was with Jesus during the moments of His crucifixion. She was the first to have met the risen Christ. After the physical departure of Christ, the grieving, frightened disciples wondered how they would preach the gospel of the Lord. They thought, "if they did not spare him, how will they spare us?" We see an inspired Mary instilling courage to go on: "Do not weep and do not grieve nor be irresolute, for the Saviour's grace will be entirely with you and will protect you."^{12.18}

`Merwan, this revelation about Divine Grace, as direct living and personal radiation of the Avatar or Buddha, is indeed a revelation of a great spiritual secret,' Mika said. `Buddha told us about the Spirit of Buddha. The Spirit of Buddha is that of great loving kindness and compassion. The Buddha's spirit of compassion is stimulated according to the needs of men; man's faith is the reaction to this spirit, and it leads him to Enlightenment, the Eternal Buddha. Though Buddha has a three-fold body, His spirit and purpose are one - to save all people. About this Buddha says: "In all circumstances Buddha is manifest in His purity, yet this manifestation is not Buddha because Buddha is not a form. Buddhahood fills everything; it makes Enlightenment its body and, as Enlightenment, it appears before all those capable of realizing the Truth."^{12.19} Buddha is a good friend to all people. If Buddha finds a man suffering from the heavy burden of worldly passions, He feels compassion and shares the burden

with him. If He meets a man suffering from delusion, He will clear away the delusion by the pure light of His wisdom. Buddha assures, "Your suffering is my suffering and your happiness is my happiness."^{12.20} Merwan, Buddha has also talked about the New Life. He says:

"Therefore, Buddha will never disappear as long as Enlightenment exists. Enlightenment appears as the light of Wisdom that awakens people into a newness of life and causes them to be born into the world of Buddha.

Those who realize this become the children of Buddha; they keep His Dharma, honor His teachings and pass them on to posterity. Nothing can be more miraculous than the power of Buddha."^{12.21}

'Mika, Meher Baba says, " I am the Divine Beloved who loves you more than you can ever love yourself...Don't worry; be happy. Remember Me; I will help you."^{12.22} I wonder how many of us really understand and feel the truth, power and the authority of the Avatar behind these statements,' Merwan said. 'There are countless stories of Meher Baba's Love and Compassion manifesting as Divine Help and Protection. Let me tell you two such stories. The first anecdote is from the period when Baba was amidst us, and the second incident took place in 1982, about thirteen years after His physical departure.'

'Walter and Hedi Mertens were great Baba lovers. Walter met Meher Baba in 1933 and later he introduced his wife Hedi to Baba. Responding to their love, Baba, during His visits in Europe between 1934 and 1937, spent several weeks in the Mertens' lovely house in Zurich. In 1938, Hedi was invited by Baba to go and live in India with the other Western women Baba lovers. Hedi had two small children whom she had to leave behind in Switzerland. After a few months in India, Hedi received a letter from her husband informing her that the children were very ill and that even the doctors were worried. Deeply distressed, Hedi sat on the edge of her bed and wept. Norina Matchabelli happened to come in, and having known the cause of Hedi's sorry state insisted, "Hedi, you simply must take this to Baba. You must." So Hedi, letter in hand, gave the news to Baba. Baba shook His head, looked up at her, and said, "Hedi, when you first came to India, I said to put your family in My hands. Don't you trust me?" Hedi assured Baba

about her trust and surrender. Hearing this from her, Baba, jokingly and with a smile on His face, said, "I can see the children now. They are sitting under a large umbrella out in the garden with their grandmother. She is reading to them. And one of the children has his finger up his nose!"^{12.23} Everyone had a good laugh, especially Hedi who was greatly relieved. Soon afterwards, she received another letter from Walter, her husband, informing that the children were fine, and enclosing a photograph of them. There were the children out in the garden with their grandmother - and all the details were exactly as Baba had described - one even had a finger up his nose!

'Amazing! Incredible!' we all exclaimed.

'The second story is that of a Baba lover from Andhra Pradesh of India. B. Mohan Das was part of a large family of five brothers and three sisters. They were all active and healthy. One day Mohan Das, in his early teens, slipped inside the house and fell. His right hip, knee and ankle were damaged. A local doctor treated him and everything seemed to be okay. However, as days and months passed, Mohan Das developed very high temperature and severe pain in ankle, knee and hip. This time, he was shown to orthopaedic experts. Many x-rays were taken and finally an operation was performed on the hip. He was put in plaster from chest to toe and had to stay that way for six months. After six months, doctors decided to put Mohan Das in plaster again, but now for a period of three years! Every six months a new plaster cast was made for him, and this went on for seven long years! Finally, the plaster was removed. He was an adult now - pale, shaky and with a leg as stiff as a stone. Crippled for life, Mohan Das was given a walking stick to support and move around. He took part in the activities of the local Red Cross Society. For his self-less service, the Governor of the State awarded Mohan Das with a Red Cross Medal and Certificate. Mohan Das came in the contact of Meher Baba lovers during the course of his social work. Baba's Grace started engulfing Mohan Das giving him the feel of Baba's Love. Mohan Das arrived at Meherabad on January 29, 1982 with his brother and sister and went straight to Beloved Baba's Samadhi. His brother and sister knelt down inside and prayed. When his turn came, Mohan Das also knelt down and prayed. Yes, he did kneel bending his stiff leg for the first time in forty years! An amazed but immensely delighted

Mohan Das, just to reassure himself, knelt down again putting his head on the marble slab. Returning home, Mohan Das described to his doctor how Beloved Meher Baba has cured his leg after forty years of intense suffering. His doctor said, "It is a miracle -the greatest of all surgeons has cured you. There is no explanation for what has happened to you in the medical world." ^{12.24}

`Beloved Baba keeps on knocking our heart-doors to fill us with His Love and Truth. How He fills much of us depends on how much of heart-space we offer Him lovingly. When Baba takes over, the greatest miracle takes place. He, the Shoreless Ocean of Sat-Chit-Ananda, inundates our ordinary daily lives and we start floating in Eternal Life - the Ever Old-Ever New Life of His Love as Truth and Bliss - frolicking in the joy of His Companionship and splashing His Love.'

Rahim observed, `I have a question, Merwan. Are we to presume that the Shoreless Ocean of Everything does not contain our ordinary daily lives? If we accept that, then the Shoreless no longer remains Shoreless. It becomes one of the polarities of the paired opposites existing as emptiness and fullness. We again fall into the clutches of opposites. The effort creeps in and we become engaged in emptying our hearts and creating more and more of heart-space. Our effort becomes the cause of His flowing towards us and filling our heart-space. Instead of He moving us, we become the cause of His movement. Merwan, this cannot be true. All flows are His flows. He is the Supreme Mover and Motivator. And above all, since He encloses everything, all flows are within Him.'

`Rahim, we have now understood that all things, beings and processes are the states and processes of the Supreme Divine Being, the Ancient One. They exist within Him. He is the Supreme Container. How could it then be that our ordinary daily lives are located elsewhere and exist independently of Him? This is just not possible. Our so-called ordinary lives are essentially the forms of Eternal Life. They are floating in the Eternal Life drifted by the cosmic flow moving from Unconsciousness to Supra-Consciousness. We, out of mind-born foolishness, have started swimming, instead of floating freely, and have created our own boundaries, movements and destinations. This is how the Eternal Life was made to look so ordinary, tiresome, frustrating and exhausting. These imaginary boundaries, movements and desire-based destinations have created a web of

self-centered relationships. Oblivious of the cosmic truth that all things, beings and processes are the states of That-Who-Alone-Is, we react to these relationships on the basis of our own selfish and petty concepts of "good" and "bad", "useful" and "not useful", "proximate" and "remote". Rahim, swimming needs effort. There is no effort in floating. Floating is freedom and joy. When one surrenders to the Will of the Avatar and allows Him to take over, there occurs immediate and instantaneous transformation of the ordinary suffering-loaded life into the Eternal Life of Freedom and Happiness.'

`Meher Baba says, "Don't worry; Be Happy. Remember Me; I will help you." Remembering Baba does not mean mechanical repetition of His Name without any feeling. Remembering Him means seeing and feeling Him in all things and beings. Remembering Baba means having a fresh look at the human relationships. Husband, wife, father, mother, daughter, son and friends are much more than mere the instruments of self-gratification. They all are God in human form. A severely hurt, crippled and bedridden Baba quite often reminded that no body should forget that He is God. A few minutes before dropping His human body, and suffering from severe spasms, Baba said, "Do not forget that I am God."^{12.25} Remembering Baba means remembering that God remains God, whether sick or healthy; active or disabled. Remembering Baba therefore means seeing Him in the sick and disabled. Washing the feet of lepers and bowing down His head on their feet, Baba had said that they are beautiful souls in ugly cages. Remembering Baba means seeing Him in lepers, and in those suffering from unsightly diseases. It means seeing Him in Easterners, Westerners, Northerners and Southerners. Seeing Him in friends and foes. Seeing Him in men and women. Seeing Him in sinners and saints. Seeing Him in all creatures. Remembering Baba means remembering that He is here, there and everywhere, and that nothing happens without His sanction. Remembering Baba means remembering that He is our Divine Beloved and without Him everything else is illusion.

`The moment we start seeing things this way, Meher Baba takes over. Baba says, "...leave everything to Me -leave it to Me".^{12.26} Baba is with you. Baba helps us from within and without. He gives us the strength and courage to leave everything to Him and start floating in His Consciousness.'

`Merwan, total surrender to Beloved Baba,' Ram said, `leading to what you call as "floating" in Meher Consciousness, is the supreme spiritual happening. Baba alone can make it happen. Spiritual tradition, however, stresses greatly upon conscious effort. In Yoga Vashishtha, there is an interesting discussion between Ram and the sage Vashishtha on Prarabdha or destiny and Purushaartha or spiritual effort. There is the eight-fold path -Ashtaanga Yoga- based on the practice of moral code of conduct, asanas or yogic postures, breath control and meditation leading to samadhi or Super-conscious State. There are cults which train in the various practices of meditation, perfected by their Gurus, and claim about their efficacy in making one realize God. Merwan, please tell us how useful these approaches and practices are? There would be many who would think that "floating" is a static state and the one which ignores the usefulness of conscious effort.'

`Ram, "floating" is not at all a static state,' Merwan explained. `In "swimming", you are pushed by your own movements; while in "floating", you are impelled by the movements generated by the Supreme Divine Being. Whatever diversions a river may take, it always moves towards the sea. In its ego, a river may get flooded and flow into many fresh diversions; but all this causes only great devastation and misery. Our un-exhausted sanskaras would always keep us anchored to gross consciousness. If we drift towards "good", we land up in heaven; and, if we drift towards "bad", we go to hell after death, only to come back again in the gross-world. Moreover, spiritually balanced state of sanskaras cannot be resulted by enlisting the opposites, and creating their equilibrium by compensating "good" with "bad", and "bad" with "good". So long we are held by the sanskaric-pull, and are kept anchored to gross-world consciousness; we will continue to remain the prisoners of Unconsciousness. In such a state, meditation either induces a transitory relaxed and stress free state of mind, or at the most plunges us into deep slumber. Effort, howsoever sacred one may think it be, instantaneously creates a pair of opposites: a state minus that which you are seeking through conscious effort, and the state which you assume as full of that which you are seeking. One only flies high in the expanse of Illusion. Rahim, a helicopter, an aeroplane and a jet-plane can make you fly higher and higher, but

they lack the power to make you counter the pull of gravity and cross the gravity-barrier. Sanskaric-pull is much stronger than the pull of earth's gravity. This pull is weakened only when we start liberating ourselves from the clutches of the opposites, and even after that one needs the mighty push of the Avatar or the Sadguru to cross the boundary of this Ocean of Infinite Nothing. Krishna said, "*Sarva dharma parityajya maamekam sharanam vrajah*," meaning, "Leave everything and take refuge in Me." Buddha said, "*Buddham sharanam gacchaami*," meaning, "Take refuge in Buddha." Jesus said, "Leave all and follow Me." Meher Baba has also said, "Complete surrender to the Divine Will of the Perfect One, an unflinching readiness to carry out His orders, rapidly achieves a result not possible even by rigidly practicing all the ethics of the world for a thousand years."^{12.27} Avatars have repeatedly shown the way - the way of "floating" in Eternal Life, here and now. Knowing our anxiety about personal and family security, and lack of courage, Beloved Baba assures, "Don't worry; Be happy. Remember Me. I will help you." This is not a vain promise. Meher Baba really helps.'

`Shoreless is Meher Consciousness and total surrender to Beloved Meher Baba instantaneously throws us in the Shoreless. Shoreless is shoreless because it contains all the possible shores as islands within its infinitude. Shoreless is the Eternal Now in which past, present and future are one. In Shoreless, there are no distances to be traversed and destinations reached at. Each point of Shoreless is the fountainhead of Divine Love, Truth and Bliss. Whether one should live the Eternal Life of surrender to Baba's will in the world of illusion or whether one should seek abode in the exclusive state of Infinite Consciousness, the one floating in Meher Consciousness doesn't differentiate between these states. Kabir says, "Sahib miley saburi mein," meaning "keep on floating without losing patience, God will come searching you." Spiritual Masters exhibit their great sense of humor when they assure by saying, "Patience is the key, God comes searching you." When you are floating in the Shoreless, you are floating in God, with God, and as God.'

`Merwan, in Centering, an ancient Tantra text Shiva offers 112 ways to open the invisible door of consciousness. Shiva, instructing Parvati, says, "Beloved, at

this moment let mind, knowing, breath, form be included."^{12.28}. I think this describes beautifully and profoundly the "floating" in Meher Consciousness,' said Ram.

Mika said, 'Zen comes of itself. True Zen shows in everyday living. It emerges as Consciousness in action. Meher or Buddha Consciousness is everywhere, including all of us, and working through us. It opens every inner door to our infinite nature. It frees the mind instantly. Merwan, the word "floating" expresses the merger of our everyday life with Eternal Life beautifully. A profound truth was stated; when you said that in "floating" we are impelled by the movements generated by God as the Supreme Divine Being and God as the Avatar. This makes it the most dynamic state of human existence. In this state, we start living in Avatar's Consciousness, with Avatar's Consciousness and for Avatar's Consciousness. By becoming His living torch, we burn in His Love and disseminate the Light of His Truth. Inhaling and exhaling Him, we carry His fragrance with us flowing freely here, there and everywhere. Buddha says:

"The rain of the sacred teaching falls on all people alike without regard to their conditions or circumstances. Those who accept it gather into small groups, then into organizations, then into communities and, finally, find themselves in the great Ocean of Enlightenment.

"The minds of these people mix like milk and water and finally organize into a harmonious Brotherhood.

"...As has been explained, if a Brotherhood does not forget its duty of spreading Buddha's teaching and of living in harmony, it will steadily grow larger and its teaching will spread more widely.

"This means that more and more people will be seeking Enlightenment, and it also means that the evil armies of greed, anger, and foolishness, which are led by the devil of ignorance and lust, will begin to retreat, and wisdom, light, faith and joy will dominate.

"The devil's dominion is full of greed, darkness, struggling, fighting, swords and bloodshed, and is replete with jealousy, prejudice, hatred, cheating, flattering, fawning, secrecy and abuse.

"Now suppose that the light of wisdom shines upon that dominion, and the rain of compassion falls upon it, and faith begins to take root, and the blossoms of joy begin to spread their fragrance. Then that devil's domain will turn into Buddha's Pure Land." ^{12.29}

`Joshu once asked Zen Master Nansen, "What is the path?" Nansen answered, "Everyday life is the path." Once Master Mumon observed, "If the feet of enlightenment moved, the Great Ocean would overflow;" Describing the "floating" of human consciousness in the ocean of Eternal Life, Mumon says:

"In spring, hundreds of flowers;
in autumn, a harvest moon,
In summer, a refreshing breeze;
in winter, snow will accompany you.
If useless things do not hang in your mind,
Any season is a good season for you." ^{12.30}

`Mika, talking about brotherhood,' Merwan said, `Beloved Baba says:

"The world of today presents the spectacle of man pitched against man; he has become a passive and helpless victim of an unthinking and ruthless machinery which is dragged on from the past through sheer inertia of the spirit. In the one undivided and indivisible Ocean of Life, man has through ignorance, created the pernicious divisions based upon sex, race, nationality, religion or community, and allowed these self-created divisions to poison their hearts and pervert their relationships.

"You are already parts of one life and as such brotherhood is not something which is to be brought into existence through laborious efforts but is the supreme FACT, which claims your recognition and whole-hearted allegiance, as soon as you have the candidness and the courage to face the Truth; slowly but surely must you imbibe this great Truth; slowly but surely must you shed prejudices and get disentangled from superficial distinctions, created by identification with forms

and names; and slowly but surely must you relinquish the selfishness of the narrow ego and acknowledge that all life is one and indivisible.

"The minds of people will have to be completely purged of all forms of selfishness and narrowness if they are to inherit the Life in Eternity, which I bring and it is by no means an easy task to persuade people to give up their selfishness and narrowness..."

"When you enthrone this Truth in your mind-heart, you do not necessarily put an end to the game of duality. You have to play your Divine Role in the drama of creation without being caught up in duality." ^{12.31}

Mary, feeling impatient and restless, said, 'How long we would just keep on talking about this "floating" in Eternal Life? How long we would keep postponing the moment of direct plunge into the Shoreless? Merwan, when would you take us in the inner realms as desired by Beloved Baba?'

This timely jerk by Mary took all of us out of our self-induced charm of words. Silence engulfed us. Merwan suddenly became pensive and sad. Drops of tears trickled through his eyes. He got up and hugged all of us. He started singing a song of Kabir: '*Rahanaa nahin desh biraana hai, Ye sansaar kaagaz ki pudiya, Boond pade ghul jaana hai*'. The song conveyed, "I would be going now. This world is barren of love. It is wrapped up in a bag of paper, and would dissolve in a drop of water."

Merwan said, 'My dear brothers and sister, soon I would be leaving you all. Meher Baba loves you deeply. I am sure He would soon tie you all with the chords of His Love, and would throw you in the Shoreless Ocean of Meher Consciousness to float freely and move as He wills. Your mind-hearts will be filled by Him and would overflow with His Love and Truth. This last stretch of the voyage across the Ocean of Infinite Nothing would give you the glimpses of the subtle and mental worlds. Even at our present gross level, the micro-world is the reservoir of tremendous amounts of energy in comparison to the macro-world. Nuclear energy - whether of fission or of fusion- is the energy of the gross micro-world. The gross has come out of the subtle and the subtle has come out of the mental. Thus you would be going nearer and nearer to the Supreme Reservoir of Cosmic

Spiritual Energy. Obviously, this journey is full of its own dangers. There would always be the possibility of losing your gross body. Moreover, the inner worlds are the worlds in which sounds, colors and perfumes are existing in their relatively purer states. Various raga or musical scales have their origins in the inner worlds. Musical instruments of the gross world are the products of innovative applications made by the spiritual sages to reproduce the various sounds, which they had heard within in profound meditative states. Body movements, in the form of dance patterns, have also their origins in these inner worlds. As you would move higher on the inner planes, thought and subtle energy would become increasingly one, and you would be endowed with unbelievable physical and mental powers. Inner worlds, therefore, are full of many pitfalls and great temptations capable of holding you there in one way or another. These worlds are beyond time, which means that time flows freely there -regressing and progressing - without much relevance. Since these worlds are not self-induced mental states, the experiences relating to them are universal. Hindu, Buddhist and Sufi sages have left an ancient spiritual legacy in the form of mystic verses and statements describing their experiences of these worlds. Kabir, Nanak and other saint-poets have composed mystic song-poems on the experiences of these inner worlds. Come on, we will sing one such song.'

We all liked the idea. Mary got ready with her guitar, Rahim with his harmonica and Merwan with his dholak. Merwan asked Professor and Ram to clap, keeping pace with the beats of dholak. This was the song, which we sang together:

Suno sakhi ree anahad naad bajey
Gagan mahal mein naubat baajey, saaj anaykan sajey
Ghanta, shankha, mirdanga, bansari, garjan megh bajey
Jhilmil jhilmil jote ujaala, suraj chaand lajey
Brahmananda magan mun hovey,
Bhav bhaya duur bhajey^{12.32}

"Listen, friend, the ring of Infinite Mystic Sound,
In the mind-sky,
Resound the beats of the kettledrum,
And sounds of many musical instruments:
Ring of the gong,
Sound of the conch-shell,
Beats of mridanga,
Burst of a cloud,
See the twinkling of dazzling lights,
Fading those of sun and moon,
Brahmananda is blissfully engrossed,
And fears of the mortal world
Are driven away"

Merwan was in an extremely happy mood. He, holding my hands, said, 'Professor, Beloved Baba would indeed be very happy, if you would write about this mystic voyage of ours across the ocean of Infinite Nothing. I know that this would only be possible when He decides to send you back to the gross world after this inner journey.'

'Merwan, Baba willing, I would love to do that,' I said. 'But who will believe in all that has happened with all of us? Some would say that it is a work of fiction, and all of its characters are imaginary and fictitious. Merwan, who would have the time to read about such things?'

'Professor, you would write with love and conviction, and then would forget everything. Your book will not be for the believers who walk with the ego of their beliefs. It will not be for the non-believers who walk inflated with the arrogance of their disbeliefs. Professor, write for the lovers of God, and write for those who are fed up with their tiring and frustrating lives and seek true love and happiness.'

Write for those who have the courage to leave aside everything and take a plunge in the Eternal Life of Meher Consciousness.'

It was at this very moment the interior of Beloved Baba's Samadhi was lighted by a dazzling rainbow of seven colors, and then everything was engulfed in darkness.

Taken aback Rahim exclaimed, 'Why this darkness after all those colors?'

'We will now meditate,' Merwan said. 'Close your eyes and tell me about that, which is filling your inner space spread out right in front of you.'

We closed our eyes and told Merwan about the darkness that filled the inner space.

'Good. Tell me now what fills this darkness?' Merwan asked.

'Oh, yes. You are right Merwan. Soft and faint light -similar to moonlight- is filling the darkness of the inner space,' Mary observed with excitement.

'Now, open your eyes and see that the darkness within and without is filled up by the same moonlight type soft radiation. Close your eyes again and concentrate on the light that fills the darkness. You will discover that it is not a static pool of light but the one, which shows movement,' Merwan commented. 'Meher Baba gave this technique of meditation to Dante Cordella's group in U.S.A. in the year 1956. Before I ask you to take a direct plunge in it, let me clearly explain what should be done. You will keep your eyes open and keep on concentrating on the light filling the darkness. With every inhaling breath, you will flow by mentally speaking "Ba-a-a-" of Baba. You would do the same with every exhaling breath. Eventually, Baba willing, you would see circles and circles of light swirling and moving. And, in one of those circles, you will see Beloved Baba's radiant and divinely beautiful form. This vision of Beloved's form may be different for each one of you or, if He wills, it may be a vision common to all you. It would be like seeing the form of your beloved person on a television screen. The moment this happens, you would collect and push yourselves inside the light circle, and would follow the form of Beloved Baba, wherever He takes you.'

A perplexed Mary asked, 'Howsoever we may push, but how could we enter

inside our own inner space? Where you would be Merwan?'

Merwan said, 'Mary dear, believe me, entering the light-circle will not be a problem. You will see me in the form of a tiger holding the 'daaman', or the garment, of Beloved Baba with my teeth, and extending my tail in your hands. A little push from your side and a little pull from me would be just enough to materialize this entry into the inner realms. Your gross bodies will remain here in a state of suspended animation ready to receive you again, in case Baba sends you back. I have full faith on your love for Beloved Baba. However, if any one of you feels stranded anywhere in these worlds, just say "Baba, Baba, Baba," and Beloved Baba will help you.'

Collecting ourselves and filled by deep emotion of love for Beloved Meher Baba, we sat cross-legged or in 'Padmasana' posture. Fixing our gaze on the soft radiation filling the darkness, each one of us started the mental speaking of 'Ba' and 'Ba', synchronizing it with inhaling and exhaling.

Then, not exactly knowing when, the transition of consciousness took place. We found ourselves in our luminous subtle forms shooting across vast distances in dark space at an unbelievable speed. Though our subtle luminous form was without any of the gross body organs, however, we were in complete possession of our sensory capabilities.

Suddenly, we entered a region full of out-of-the world musical notes and fragrances. A voice, resembling that of Merwan, told us that we are passing through the first part of the first heaven, which is known in the spiritual circles as 'Alm-e-Vaktya'. The voice told us that the functional ties with our gross bodies are not yet snapped, and this experience of subtle music and subtle fragrance was actually coming through the gross sensory apparatus.

Soon we entered inside a zone of great luminosity. We saw countless whirlpools of dazzling light. They were revolving at an unimaginable speed. Rays of color emanated out of these swirling light circles. However, their centers were shining in colorless central light.

One of these light-circles, quite unexpectedly, started coming closer and closer. Dazzling brilliance and colors filled the entire space. The light circle started

enlarging and soon assumed the form of an enormously huge sphere. Inside that circle, we saw the divinely beautiful form of Beloved Meher Baba. Baba was in white 'sadra' or the long loose garment. His thick mustache, flowing long hair and radiant pink face were making us spellbound. Baba was smiling and His eyes were full of love and compassion. A beautiful and highly restive tiger stood near Baba, holding a portion of His 'sadra' by its teeth. The tiger looked at us quite naughtily and winked. Remembering what Merwan had told us, we grabbed the tail of Baba's tiger and held it firmly. A little pull from the tiger was just enough to bring all of us inside the luminous sphere. We were filled with ecstatic delight when Beloved Baba took all of us in His embrace. It was at this very moment the tiger had disappeared. We sobbed and cried. Beloved Baba kissed all of us most lovingly.

An ecstatic Mary, overflowing with love and happiness, said, 'Baba, I am feeling fully exhausted and tired of this illusion game. Baba, my Baba, my very dear Baba, please promise that you would no longer be indifferent towards me. None of us is seeking anything material or spiritual. Having seen you, my Divine Beloved, nothing remains to be seen. My Beloved, Baba, promise that henceforth you would never desert me.'

Embracing Baba tightly, Mika said:

"Come close to me, oh beloved of my soul; the
Fire is cooling and fleeing under the ashes.
Embrace me, for I fear loneliness; the lamp is
Dim, and the wine, which we pressed, is closing
Our eyes. Let us look upon each other before
They are shut." ^{12.33}

Rahim, beaming with great joy, started singing.

*Kam nahin meri jindagi key liye,
Baba mil jayen, do ghadee kay liye.
Aey Diley Yaar, Jab Meher Hai Tera,*

Ab tadaptaa hai quon kisi kay liye.

This touching couplet conveys: "It's more than enough for my life to be blessed by this momentary union with Baba. Listen, beloved friend, having found Meher, your heart need not throb for any one else."

Ram prostrated at the feet of Beloved Baba. Raising himself up and dancing in great joy, he sang:

*Mun mein hai basee bus chah yahee,
Priya naam tumharaa ucharaa karun.
Bhar kay drig patra mein prem ka jal,
Pad pankaj naath pakharaa karun.
Bithlaa kay tumhein hiya mandir mein,
Mun mohini murat niharaa karun.*^{12.34}

This beautiful poem expresses the love of the lover of God:

Only one desire resides in my heart,
That I recite Your Name,
Unceasingly.
Filling the cups of my eyes with tears of love,
That I wash Your lotus-feet,
Most lovingly.
Making my heart as Your Abode,
That I keep looking at Your Bewitching Form,
Never-endingly.

So far I was concerned, I had a feeling that I have ceased to exist. I was at a

loss of words to express myself. Blissful silence had filled by being. I kissed Beloved Baba lovingly and rested my head in His lap.

Our spontaneous outbursts of love have made Baba very happy. With tears of love in His eyes, Beloved Baba said, " My dear children, you have won my heart with your love. Give me the dholak of Merwan. Mary would sing her song of Love and Happiness. Come on everybody and begin the beguine."

Jumping boisterously, we held each other's hands and encircled Baba. With Beloved Baba playing the dholak dexterously, we clapped with wild joy and danced with great fervor of love.

Mary sang her own version of Bobby McFerrin's song: ^{12.35}

Don't worry, be happy,
Forget why, where and how,
It's New Life with Baba,
In the Eternal Now.

In our old life, we had some trouble,
By worrying a lot, we made it double.

Don't worry, be happy,
Forget why, where and how,
It's New Life with Baba,
In the Eternal Now.

No place to go as all roads are blocked,
Hell is full and heavens are locked.

Don't worry, be happy,
Forget why, where and how,

It's New Life with Baba,
In the Eternal Now.
We waited for tomorrow but tomorrow never came,
Kicked by the opposites, now tired of illusion game.

Don't worry, be happy,
Forget why, where and how,
It's New Life with Baba,
In the Eternal Now.

Abandoned by all, with no help and hope,
Cheated by everybody - Pandit, Mulla and Pope.

Don't worry, be happy,
Forget why, where and how,
It's New Life with Baba,
In the Eternal Now.

Fish craves for water, bird craves for space,
Fooled by Illusion, we pass night and days.

Don't worry, be happy,
Forget why, where and how.
It's New Life with Baba,
In the Eternal Now.

Suddenly we became aware that we were again inside Beloved Baba's Samadhi. How and when our subtle consciousness was reverted to gross

consciousness, we did not know. Baba was at His naughtiest best and gave a meaningful smile from His picture. Our hearts throbbed at an unbelievable pace. However, their beats were rhythmically resounding Baba, Baba, Baba, Baba. Our New Life had just begun and started dancing on Beloved Baba's beats.

Somebody said, "Time for Prayers. Please come out and join." We came out prostrating before Baba, and bowing down at the Samadhi threshold. There was an informal gathering of Baba lovers out there. They all hugged us most lovingly and greeted softly, "Jai Baba. Welcome home." Reverently we joined the Prayers.

THE MASTER'S PRAYER ^{12.36}

O Parvardigar, the Preserver and Protector of All,
You are without Beginning, and without End;
Non-dual, beyond Comparison; and none can measure You.
You are without color, without expression, without form,
and without attributes.
You are unlimited and unfathomable,
beyond imagination and conception; eternal and imperishable.
You are indivisible; and none can see You, but with eyes Divine.
You always were, You always are, and You always will be;
You are everywhere, You are in everything; and You are
also beyond everywhere and beyond everything.
You are in the firmament and in the depths,
You are manifest and unmanifest;
on all planes, and beyond all planes.
You are in the three worlds, and also beyond the three worlds.

You are imperceptible and independent.
You are the Creator, the Lord of Lords,
the Knower of all minds and hearts;
You are Omnipotent and Omnipresent.
You are Knowledge Infinite, Power Infinite and Bliss Infinite.
You are the Ocean of Knowledge,
All-Knowing, Infinitely-Knowing; the Knower of
the past, the present and the future, and
You are Knowledge itself.
You are All-merciful and eternally benevolent;
You are the Soul of souls, the One with infinite
Attributes;
You are the Trinity of Truth, Knowledge, and Bliss;
You are the Source of Truth, the Ocean of Love;
You are the Ancient One, the Highest of the High;
You are Prabhu and Parmeshwar;
You are the Beyond-God, and the Beyond-Beyond-God also;
You are Parabrahma; Allah; Elahi; Yezdan;
Ahuramazda; and God the Beloved.
You are named Ezad, the only One worthy of worship.

THE PRAYER OF REPENTANCE ^{12.37}

We repent, O God Most Merciful, for all our sins;
for every thought that was false or unjust or unclean;

for every word spoken that ought not to have been spoken;
for every deed done that ought not to have been done;

We repent for every deed and word and thought inspired by selfishness;
for every deed and word and thought inspired by hatred.
We repent especially for every lustful thought and every lustful action;
for every lie; for all hypocrisy;
for every promise given but not fulfilled;
and for all slander and backbiting.

Most especially also, we repent for every action
that has brought ruin to others;
for every word and deed that has given others pain;
and for every wish that pain should befall others.

In Your unbounded mercy, we ask you to forgive us, O God,
all these sins committed by us,
and to forgive us for our constant failures to think and speak
and act according to Your wish.

PRAYER FOR MEHER BABA LOVERS ^{12.38}

“Beloved God, help us all to love You more and more and more and more and still yet more, till we become worthy of Union with You; and help us all to hold fast to Baba's daaman till the very end”.

Immediately after the ‘aratis’, some of the lovers started singing Bob Holt's

Meher song, "Ocean of Love". It was melody and poetry at their very best and we too joined the singers lovingly.

I am the ocean where all have begun,

I am beloved sublime.

I am the ocean where all finally come,

I am the one beyond time:

For I am the one who made heaven and earth,

Planets and stars up above.

I am the treasure of infinite worth,

I am the ocean of love.

I am the ocean of limitless joy,

Infinite consciousness too.

I am the music that never will cloy,

I am the ocean in you:

I am the ocean of unending peace,

Infinite hearing and sight.

You from your chains I have come to release,

Into my ocean of light:

I am the ocean of unbroken calm,

Infinite bliss I am too.

I've been called Jesus, and Buddha, and Ram

And now, Meher Baba by you,

And now Meher Baba by you.

We - Mary, Mika, Ram, Rahim, and I - came down the upper Meherabad hill clapping and dancing in joy and ecstasy.

I am the ocean of limitless joy,

Infinite consciousness too.

I am the music that never will cloy,

I am the ocean in you.

Then, somewhere in the crowd, I lost Mary, Mika, Ram and Rahim; almost as suddenly as I had found them that night on the beach. I have no hope of meeting them ever again, as in my heart I know that the one who becomes One with the Eternal New Life of Meher Consciousness becomes One with our ordinary Old Life. The fusion of the Eternal New Life with our ordinary Old Life keeps us floating in the Eternity of Meher Consciousness of Love, Truth, Beauty and Happiness. Being one with all-inclusive Life and with no effort or movement of their own, such individuals become 'invisible' as they cannot be distinguished from the ordinary. They are the ones who, by the Grace of Beloved Baba, have succeeded in fusing the ordinary 'here and now' with the most extraordinary Eternal Now. In 'Gitanjali'," Tagore describes this fusion beautifully in these words: "Thou hast made me endless, such is thy pleasure. This frail vessel thou emptiest again and again, and fillest it ever with fresh life. This little flute of a reed thou hast carried over hills and dales, and hast breathed through it melodies eternally new." ^{12.39}

A melodious chorus filled my being and in that magical moment I felt, as if from some far away place my friends were singing Francis Brabazon's beautiful Arati for Meher Baba:

O Glorious, Eternal Ancient One
Your face is a bright, transcendental Sun
Lighten this dark world and the tears I weep;
My heart, Meher, I give to You to keep.

Creator, yet creation-less You are –
Truth and Truth's Body, Divine Avatar
Who through compassion the three worlds maintains –
Destroy this ignorance that life sustains

These five lights are the whirling spokes of breath
Of the world's wheel that bears me on to death
Unless You, who are infinitely kind
Break the wheels hub, which is conditioned mind.

This incense is my love, these fruits my art
Which to please You, I have shaped from my heart
Accept them as You would a simple flower
That has no use beyond its shining hour.

You are my Self, I sing to You in praise
And beg your love to bear me through the days
Till you the Ever Living Perfect One
Illume my darkness with your shining Sun.

Tears of joy welled up in my eyes. It was a lovely morning and indeed a lovely day. A child greeted me with her innocent and beautiful smile. Collecting her in my arms, I walked down singing a Francis Brabazon:

We have come down, God from the Separation
Into this silent morning -
To begin a new day in the sun,
To sing a new song to you,
To continue the Earth for our children. ^{12.40}

A new day had indeed begun. A New Hope had dawned. A new journey, from the Shore to the Shoreless, had just started.

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Index of Quotations

The following is a sequential index of quotations which appear as superscripts in the running text of this book. The quotation numbers in the left column point to the detail reference source number as provided in the list of references above. For example quotation 1.10 has been quoted in Chapter 1 and its source is reference number 7 which upon looking up the reference list is – *“Avatar Meher Baba's Prayers and Aratis with translations. Ahmednagar, India: Avatar Meher Baba Trust”*.

Quotation Number	Reference Number
1.1	1
1.2	1
1.3	1
1.4	2
1.5	3
1.6	4
1.7	5
1.8	6
1.9	6
1.10	7
1.11	8
2.1	14 (Vol. 8)
2.2	13
2.3	14 (Vol. 3)
2.4	12
2.5	6
2.6	11
2.7	10
2.8	6
2.9	9
2.10	2
3.1	2

Quotation Number	Reference Number
3.2	2
3.3	13
3.4	16
3.5	17
3.6	18
3.7	18
3.8	19
3.9	20
3.10	9
3.11	20
3.12	2
4.1	23
4.2	24
4.3	24
4.4	25
4.5	25
4.6	6
4.7	20
4.8	26
4.9	27
4.10	28
4.11	24
5.1	24
5.2	34
5.3	34
5.4	34
5.5	34
5.6	34
5.7	34
5.8	34
5.9	34
5.10	34
5.11	34
5.12	34

Quotation Number	Reference Number
5.13	34
5.14	34
5.15	9
5.16	35
5.17	20
5.18	18
5.19	18
5.20	11
5.21	24
6.1	36
6.2	36
6.3	37
6.4	37
6.5	38
6.6	3
6.7	39
6.8	39
6.9	38
6.10	40
6.11	41
6.12	23
6.13	42
6.14	43
6.15	43
6.16	43
6.17	43
6.18	43
6.19	42
6.20	23
6.21	23
6.22	23
6.23	44
6.24	44
6.25	37

Quotation Number	Reference Number
6.26	37
6.27	37
6.28	45
6.29	45
6.30	45
6.31	14 (Vol. 5)
6.32	14 (Vol. 5)
7.1	60
7.2	28
7.3	18
7.4	11
7.5	61
7.6	62
7.7	35
7.8	28
7.9	28
7.10	28
7.11	18
7.12	18
7.13	18
7.14	63
7.15	64
7.16	65
7.17	66
7.18	67
7.19	29
7.20	43
8.1	68
8.2	28
8.3	28
8.4	28
8.5	18
8.6	69
8.7	69

Quotation Number	Reference Number
8.8	70
8.9	71
8.10	72
8.11	35
8.12	18
8.13	72
8.14	72
8.15	11
8.16	69
8.17	35
8.18	11
8.19	35
8.20	11
8.21	11
8.22	11
8.23	11
8.24	11
8.25	11
8.26	11
8.27	11
8.28	11
8.29	11
8.30	73
8.31	18
8.32	18
8.33	18
8.34	11
8.35	18
8.36	11
8.37	11
8.38	11
8.39	11
8.40	11
8.41	11

Quotation Number	Reference Number
8.42	62
8.43	11
8.44	11
8.45	5
8.46	5
8.47	5
8.48	5
8.49	5
8.50	5
8.51	11
8.52	11
8.53	11
8.54	5
8.55	11
8.56	74
8.57	11
8.58	11
8.59	5
8.60	5
8.61	5
8.62	11
8.63	11
8.64	5
8.65	5
8.66	11
8.67	75
8.68	11
8.69	11
8.70	76
8.71	76
8.72	76
8.73	76
8.74	5
8.75	5

Quotation Number	Reference Number
8.76	5
8.77	143
9.1	1
9.2	79
9.3	7
9.4	80
9.5	24
9.6	11
9.7	11
9.8	11
9.9	81
9.10	81
9.11	81
9.12	81
9.13	82
9.14	82
9.15	83
9.16	35
9.17	18
9.18	55
9.19	11
9.20	84
9.21	2
9.22	20
9.23	2
9.24	20
9.25	23
9.26	23
9.27	85
9.28	85
9.29	23
9.30	54
9.31	86
9.32	81

Quotation Number	Reference Number
9.33	28
9.34	11
9.35	11
9.36	23
9.37	87
9.38	87
9.39	87
9.40	1
9.41	87
9.42	87
9.43	87
9.44	1
9.45	1
9.46	1
9.47	88
9.48	88
9.49	85
9.50	85
9.51	85
9.52	85
9.53	85
9.54	85
9.55	85
9.56	11
9.57	11
9.58	11
9.59	2
9.60	20
9.61	11
9.62	81
9.63	18
9.64	23
9.65	44
9.66	89

Quotation Number	Reference Number
9.67	24
10.1	86
10.2	86
10.3	11
10.4	93
10.5	18
10.6	94
10.7	2
10.8	2
10.9	11
10.10	11
10.11	55
10.12	88
10.13	86
10.14	86
10.15	18
10.16	18
10.17	95
10.18	95
10.19	11
10.20	11
10.21	75
10.22	11
10.23	18
10.24	11
10.25	9
10.26	11
10.27	11
10.28	96
10.29	96
10.30	75
10.31	5
10.32	62
10.33	62

Quotation Number	Reference Number
10.34	97
10.35	98
10.36	98
10.37	5
11.1	86
11.2	13
11.3	79
11.4	5
11.5	20
11.6	20
11.7	20
11.8	74
11.9	74
11.10	74
11.11	1
11.12	1
11.13	101
11.14	101
11.15	74
11.16	103
11.17	79
11.18	14 (Vol. 4)
11.19	14 (Vol. 4)
11.20	79
11.21	102
11.22	102
11.23	103
11.24	14 (Vol. 4)
11.25	14 (Vol. 4)
11.26	14 (Vol. 4)
11.27	18
11.28	74
11.29	93
11.30	104

Quotation Number	Reference Number
11.31	20
11.32	1
11.33	1
11.34	1
11.35	93
11.36	93
11.37	93
11.38	11
11.39	11
11.40	62
11.41	11
11.42	20
11.43	20
11.44	20
11.45	11
11.46	11
11.47	74
11.48	74
11.49	62
11.50	11
11.51	11
11.52	11
11.53	62
11.54	11
11.55	18
11.56	18
11.57	18
11.58	18
11.59	18
11.60	18
11.61	11
11.62	74
11.63	74
11.64	74

Quotation Number	Reference Number
11.65	18
11.66	93
11.67	18
11.68	74
11.69	11
11.70	11
11.71	14 (Vol. 4)
11.72	14 (Vol. 4)
11.73	14 (Vol. 5)
11.74	14 (Vol. 3)
11.75	14 (Vol. 3)
11.76	14 (Vol. 4)
11.77	74
11.78	74
11.79	74
11.80	74
11.81	14 (Vol. 3)
11.82	105
11.83	106
11.84	107
11.85	6
11.86	6
11.87	108
11.88	108
11.89	109
11.90	109
11.91	74
11.92	103
11.93	110
11.94	14 (Vol. 7)
11.95	110
11.96	111
11.97	111
11.98	111

Quotation Number	Reference Number
11.99	111
11.100	112 (Vol. 3)
11.101	14 (Vol. 10)
11.102	74
11.103	14 (Vol. 4)
11.104	113
11.105	74
11.106	14 (Vol. 10)
11.107	74
11.108	114
11.109	112 (Vol. 3)
11.110	112 (Vol. 3)
11.111	74
11.112	74
11.113	74
11.114	74
11.115	74
11.116	112 (Vol. 3)
11.117	114
11.118	114
11.119	74
11.120	74
11.121	114
11.122	115
11.123	74
12.1	112
12.2	121
12.3	8
12.4	103
12.5	14 (Vol. 4)
12.6	14 (Vol. 4)
12.7	14 (Vol. 4)
12.8	122
12.9	5

Quotation Number	Reference Number
12.10	114
12.11	114
12.12	123
12.13	124
12.14	125
12.15	107
12.16	107
12.17	107
12.18	126
12.19	20
12.20	20
12.21	20
12.22	125
12.23	125
12.24	125
12.25	74
12.26	112 (Vol. 3)
12.27	74
12.28	24
12.29	20
12.30	24
12.31	74
12.32	122
12.33	8
12.34	123
12.35	127
12.36	107
12.37	14 (Vol. 10)
12.38	74
12.39	144
12.40	115

