

SHRI MEHER BABA

Philosophy and Religion Department  
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THE  
PERFECT MASTER

QUESTIONS  
AND  
ANSWERS

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## *Preface*

SHRI MEHER BABA was born thirty-nine years ago of Persian parents in Poona, India. He is a Parsee Zoroastrian by birth, and is unmarried.

When he was nineteen years old he met a Moham-  
medan saint, Hazrat Baba Jan, and had a profound  
spiritual experience that made him aware of his high  
spiritual destiny. Then after years of close contact with  
a Hindu saint, Shri Upasni Maharaj, he consciously  
became "One with the Infinite." He began his spiritual  
work, and now has followers all over the world.

Since July 10, 1925, he has observed complete  
silence.

During the following two years he wrote a book on  
Spiritual Truths, but since 1927 he has stopped all  
writing. He reads and can speak five languages fluently.  
He now communicates by pointing to the roman  
letters and digits printed on a small board.

During the last two years he has visited the West  
five times and has travelled round the world. His eight  
years' silence is the prelude to his manifestation.

Many questions relating to Shri Meher Baba have  
been asked by Western people, and in this small book  
a number of these questions has been gathered together  
with the answers to them which Shri Meher Baba has  
himself given to enquirers. Since he neither speaks nor  
writes, his answers, usually in English, are spelt out  
letter by letter on the board. After watching his fingers  
the followers have to write down the words and sen-  
tences. The continuity that is required for good prose is  
thus interrupted.

"I have come not to teach but to awaken."

SHRI MEHER BABA<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Shri is an Indian title of respect meaning saintly or holy;  
Meher means merciful or compassionate—in Persian Meher means  
light; Baba means father or friend.

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THE answers to Questions 10, 12, 26, 31, 35, 41, 49, 51 were previously given in his *Messages to London, New York, Hollywood, and India*.

The answers to Questions 27 and 49 were written in America, and the answer to Question 19 was suggested by an English writer.

I

QUESTIONS ABOUT CHRIST

1. Will Shri Meher Baba explain Christ's words concerning the Second Coming ?
2. There have been and still are so many false Messiahs. How can we recognize the *true* Messiah?
3. Was Christ the only Son of God?
4. What is his opinion concerning the ritual or ceremonial observances of religion?
5. What is the right way to attain "Christ Consciousness"?

## ANSWERS

1. Will Shri Meher Baba explain Christ's words concerning the "Second Coming"? (St. Mark xiii. 21, 26, 27.)

"And then if any man shall say to you, Lo, here is Christ; or, lo, *he is* there; believe *him* not. . . ."

"But in those days, after that tribulation . . . then shall they see the Son of man coming in the clouds with great power and glory. And then shall he send his angels, and shall gather together his elect from the four winds, from the uttermost part of the earth to the uttermost part of heaven."

The gathering of the elect refers to the reincarnation and final assembling of His close disciples and followers at the time of His Second Coming. It is wrong to associate the Second Coming with the imprisonment of the Devil and a thousand years' peace, or with a literal interpretation of the Last Day of Judgment.

All the great mystics have understood the word "clouds" as a symbolic expression for states of consciousness or spiritual planes. When the Christ descends from the Infinite, i.e. Seventh Plane, He brings with Him to earth the Infinite Goodness, Wisdom, Power, and Love, and also the powers, signs, and experiences of the six lower planes. In the words of a great Sufi saint:

"Behold the sky, and clouds and the world:  
First is God, then the planes, the last is earth;  
but all three are linked."<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> "Asman o Abro dunya basta been  
Avalin Haq bad manzil pus zamin."

We read in St. Mark ix. 2 and 7 that the Transfiguration of Jesus occurred when He ascended into a mountain: "And there was a cloud that overshadowed them: and a voice came out of the cloud saying, This is my beloved Son: hear him."

Brother Leo relates of the Vision of St. Francis in Mount Alvernia that he "saw coming down from Heaven a torch of flame exceeding beautiful and light, which, descending, rested on the head of St. Francis; and out of the flame there came a voice. . . ." St. Francis explains to Brother Leo: "Then was I in a light of contemplation, in which I saw the abyss of the infinite goodness and wisdom and power of God. . . . And in the flame that thou sawest was God, who also spake in such a manner unto me, even as in old time He had spoken unto Moses."

On Mount Sinai God appeared in a thick cloud and with fire.

Therefore we see that "clouds," "the house of clouds" (*manzil*), is a symbolic expression among mystics for "the six planes."

See page 21, note 2, "The Seven Planes."

2. There have been and still are so many false Messiahs. How can we recognize the "true" Messiah?

The feeling and inspiration for things sublime and the Divine Love are imparted by a *real* Messiah to anyone who comes in contact with Him. A *false* Messiah cannot do this.

Through His Divinity the *true* Messiah gradually attracts the world to Himself, and people come to know and feel that He is REAL. The knowledge and feeling of confidence in His words and works grow gradually into certainty, and masses follow Him, drawn by an irresistible force.

A mirage attracts the thirsty, but soon it is discovered to be an illusion and not the life-giving water. A *false* Messiah may attract the attention of the people through outward appearances, by force of personality, or by intellectual dissertations about spirituality, but he cannot do that which the *true* Messiah can do, i.e. arouse the highest ideals in men and touch the hearts of millions.

*See also Question 21.*

### 3. *Was Christ the only Son of God?*

Christ, and not Jesus, was the only Son of God.

By Christ is meant He who is at One with the Infinite, and so all those who come to realize the Ultimate Reality may be said to be in the "Christ State."

By Jesus is meant "the historical Man-God of Nazareth," who attained to the Christ Consciousness, i.e. who gained *perfection*.

*See also Questions 14, 15, 20.*

### 4. *What is his opinion concerning the ritual or ceremonial observances of religion?*

Dogmas, creeds, and conventional ideas of *heaven* and *hell* and of *sin* are perversions of Truth, and confuse and bewilder the mind.

Rituals and ceremonies, instituted by the priest-ridden Churches, have concentrated on outward forms,

and have ignored the essence of spiritual life. The elementary virtues—love, obedience, humility, and sincerity—are represented by allegorical statues, and the way to Eternal Life is forgotten in their sumptuous and magnificent temples. Man seeks life and is given a stone.

India is, at the moment, ridden with caste prejudices, innumerable cults and ceremonies, which ignore and contradict the spirit of their religious teachings. And this in a country which has wonderful spiritual traditions stretching back thousands of years!

*See also Questions 7, 15, 16, 26, 54.*

### 5. *What is the right way to attain "Christ Consciousness"? In other words, How can we overcome or escape from our "Ego"?*

So much has been said and written about God-realization and "The higher Consciousness" that people are bewildered as to the right way to, and the immediate possibility of, its attainment. The *enquiring* mind, after wading laboriously through such mystical and theosophical literature, only succeeds in learning some pseudo-philosophical terms that confuse and puzzle it. The highest state of consciousness is latent in all. The Son of God is in every man; but He has to be manifested.

The best and the easiest way of overcoming the "Ego" and of attaining the "Divine or Christ Consciousness" is to purify and deepen our love, and

widen continually the circle of those we love, and to render selfless service to humanity in whatever circumstances we are placed. All the ethical and religious practices ultimately lead up to this. Our animal desires are gradually sublimated if we live more for others and less for ourselves; slowly our crude sense of "Ego" is transmuted. The "Ego" persists till the last stage of the Path. Not until the seventh stage of the Path, when the "God or Christ Conscious" state is reached, can the "Ego" be completely transmuted from finite to Infinite, reappearing again on the seventh plane as the Divine "I." This is that state of "Christ Consciousness" to which Jesus referred when He said, "I and my Father are one," and which implies living simultaneously in the Infinite and in the finite. This is the right way for the independent aspirant.

The shortest and the easiest way is that of the seeker, who has the good fortune (Karma) to be accepted as a disciple by a Perfect Master. Certain pitfalls are avoided by the Master's love and prevision.

It is absolutely impossible for the independent aspirant to pass from the sixth to the seventh plane without the help of a Perfect Master.

*See page 21, note 2, "The Seven Planes."*

## II

## QUESTIONS ABOUT THE SPIRITUAL PATH

6. What way of approach does Shri Meher Baba recommend for those who aspire to Perfection?
7. Which is the right way to attain "Wider Consciousness"? (Do religions help or hinder spiritual development?)
8. What is the right way to attain "Christ Consciousness"?
9. What discipline or qualification is necessary to enter the Path?
10. Do *intellectual* attainments help or hinder man's progress on the Spiritual Path? (Intellectual and Spiritual *understanding* compared.)
11. Does renunciation help a man's progress on the Spiritual Path?
12. (a) How does a Master help an aspirant and how does a Master help mankind?  
(b) Why is it necessary to have the aid of a Perfect Master in order to attain Perfection?
13. Why is meditation on a Perfect Master the most effective form of meditation?

## II

## ANSWERS

6. *What way of approach does Shri Meher Baba recommend for those who aspire to Perfection?*

All ways: Divine Love, the various yogas, Religion, Science, Art, household duties. But after a certain point the usefulness of each ceases.

And then the aid of a Perfect Master is needed if further progress is to be made.

See also Question 13.

7. *Which is the right way to attain "Wider Consciousness"? (Do religions help or hinder spiritual development?)*

No general rule or process can be laid down for the attainment of the Ultimate Reality or, as you term it, the "Wider Consciousness."

✓ Every individual has got to work out his or her own salvation, and for that end he himself has to create and choose the *path*, which is mostly determined by the total effect or momentum of impressions (called *sanskaras* in Sanskrit)<sup>1</sup> acquired in previous life. The panaceas the world hears about, the pseudo-religions for the guidance of humanity, do not go far towards solving the problem. As time goes on, the Founder, the One who supplied the motive force, is relegated more and more into the background of time and obscurity. The aftermath of his manifestation, usually a religion or an organization, gradually loses its

<sup>1</sup> See Question 58.

glamour and attractiveness. Finally, a mental revolt against the old order of things arises, and with it is felt a thirst for the Way, the Truth, and the Life. This thirst or demand has to be met, and will be met.

See also Questions 4, 15, 16, 26.

8. *What is the right way to attain "Christ Consciousness"?*

(See answer to Question 5.)

9. *What discipline or qualification is necessary to enter the Path?*

To say that decent living is the only requisite for attaining "Wider Consciousness" is but giving one side of the picture. What you are to-day is the result of both your decent and your indecent living in the past. Occult, religious, or spiritual training serves merely as means to an end, and is only the threshold to entering the Path.

But when you are accepted as a disciple by a "Perfect Master," no such disciplinary process is necessary. The only requirements then are complete surrender to his supreme will, perseverance, love, courage, and trust in the Master.

10. *Do intellectual attainments help or hinder man's progress on the Spiritual Path?*

(Intellectual and Spiritual "understanding" compared.)

It is impossible to reach Spiritual Truth and Realiza-

tion by talks, arguments, or by reading books. It can be reached by the *heart* alone; but that would be a very slow process. But when the *heart* and the *head* are equally developed and balanced, then man's progress is much quicker.

The man in whom the *head* (intellect) is more developed than the *heart* is liable to get fixed ideas, and he becomes attached to his own intellectual achievements.

The man with a warm *heart* is more likely to have faith, and for Love and Truth to give up all.

Intellect is the *lowest* form of *understanding*, and is developed by reading, listening, reasoning, and logic. These processes create an *illusion* of the real knowledge.

The *higher* form of *understanding* is "permanent illumination," through which one experiences and sees things *as they are*. In this state one feels in harmony with everyone and everything and realizes Divinity in every phase of life, and one is able to impart happiness to others. And although performing efficiently and intelligently all duties and material affairs, one feels mentally detached from the world. This is *true renunciation*.

The last and the *highest* state of *understanding* results from the merging of the soul into the limitless Ocean of Infinite Knowledge, Bliss, and Power. One who has himself attained to this can enable thousands to attain Perfection.

11. Does *renunciation* help a man's progress on the *Spiritual Path*?

Shri Meher Baba does *not* believe in *external* renunciation. For the West particularly, it is impracticable and inadvisable.

Renunciation should be mental. One should live in the world, perform all legitimate duties, and yet feel mentally detached from everything. One should be *in* the world, but *not of* it.

See also Questions 46, 53, 57.

12. (a) How does a Master help an aspirant and how does a Master help mankind?

As a rule, Masters help individually according to the temperament and preparedness of the aspirant. But this being the Avataric period, i.e. the end of the previous cycle and the beginning of the new one (it usually occurs every seven to eight hundred years), Shri Meher Baba's spiritual help to humanity will be both individual and collective. He rejuvenates and infuses new life into the old order of things, and imparts the highest state of spirituality—the state of Oneness with the Infinite Ocean of Bliss, Knowledge, and Power to his close disciples. He gives a general *spiritual push* to the whole universe.

See also Question 51.

12. (b) Why is it necessary to have the aid of a Perfect Master in order to attain to Perfection?

Only a Perfect Master, who is the veritable incarnation of Divinity, can awaken in the individual the fire of Divine Love, which consumes in its flames the lesser desires of the body, mind, and world, all of which must be completely relinquished before Perfection can be realized.

13. Why is meditation on a Perfect Master the most effective form of meditation?

By meditation on a Perfect Master, who is Divine and fully conscious of his Divinity, the individual who is divine but not fully conscious of his divinity is led into Divine Self-consciousness.

(There are two aspects of the Infinite One—Personal and Impersonal. The *Impersonal* aspect lies beyond the domain of creation and transcends even the mental plane. The *Personal* aspect of God is the Perfect Master who, having attained to the *Impersonal* aspect, lives in the world and helps others towards Truth.)

*Editor's Note.*—"The Perfect Master of the Age" is called by Hindus and Buddhists the Avatar; by Jews and Christians he would be called the Messiah. The terms "saint," or even "Mahatma," do not imply the absolute spiritual perfection or Christ Consciousness which is experienced continually by the Perfect Masters.

### QUESTIONS ABOUT MESSIAH OR AVATAR

14. What is the theory of the manifestation of an Avatar?

15. Why, when so many inspired religions already existed, were additional revelations of God as Avatar required?

16. (a) Will the new Avatar replace existing organized religions by something else?

(b) Will any changes take place in the existing religions when Shri Meher Baba imparts the *spiritual push* to the world?

17. Will an Avatar ever appear in feminine form?

18. Will the West ever give birth to an Avatar?

*Editor's Note.*—(1) In several of these answers a knowledge of the doctrines of Reincarnation and of Karma is assumed: Reincarnation means rebirth of the Spirit in another physical body; Karma is that law of Cause and Effect which governs every detail of our present lives and also of our subsequent rebirths.

(2) The Seven Planes of Consciousness are often referred to. They are intellect, lower inspiration, intuition, insight, higher inspiration, illumination (the Sixth Plane which is only experienced by the greatest saints), and Christ Consciousness. The Seventh Plane is separated by a great gulf from the Sixth and no one can cross it and attain Christ Consciousness without the aid of a Perfect Master.

