

Supplement

1 Impressioned Consciousness (27)*

At the request of the editors, Meher Baba added the following information:

Consciousness is definitely complete as soon as the first human form is taken, but it does not start involving at that point. When consciousness first begins to involve it means that the human being is only beginning to take the first step on the spiritual path.

Between the time of the first human incarnation and the time of going on the path, the complete consciousness of a human being, which is still an impressioned consciousness, has necessarily to indulge in a process that eventually must dislodge these impressions from retaining their hold on it (the consciousness which is complete).

It is to be noted that during that period, which covers thousands of reincarnations, the impressions which were hard-set or dense get shaken up so thoroughly by the reincarnation process that their tight grip on consciousness becomes loose. These hard-set (dense or gross) impressions thin out or become feeble through innumerable and varied experiences of opposites. The limit to these experiences is reached by persistent reincarnations which give experiences of opposites.

It is also to be noted that it is only when these dense, hard-set or gross impressions become less dense or become feeble, that the limit to the experiences of the gross world through gross impressions is reached by the gross medium, the human body. When the dense, hard-set impressions become less dense, they no longer give rise to gross experiences because these less dense (feeble) impressions are refined or fine and no longer crude or gross. The aggregate

* Parenthetical numbers refer to the page number of this book where the supplement reference appears.

of such refined or fine impressions is called subtle impressions. These subtle impressions give rise to experiences of the subtle type (i.e., pertaining to the subtle world) and the subtle body experiences these subtle impressions and tries to exhaust them.

When these subtle impressions become even less dense and still more refined, the aggregate of such impressions is called mental impressions. These mental impressions give rise to experiences pertaining to the mental world, and the mental body experiences these mental impressions and tries to exhaust them.

When the last traces of mental impressions are exhausted through experiences by the mental body, the complete consciousness of the soul (which was all along in the grip of impressions from the instant it identified itself with the most-first human-form up to the last human-form—which is the mental-conscious human being), is unburdened of impressions. Only such impressionless complete consciousness can realize the final experience of the “I am God” state of the soul.

When the gross or hard-set impressions get thinned out by the reincarnation process, they become subtle impressions. These subtle impressions can no longer give rise to experiences of the gross world. At this stage the consciousness of the gross-conscious human being automatically begins to indulge in experiences of the subtle world. This marks the advent of the process of involution of consciousness and the aspirant begins to tread the Path. It is obvious that the subtle impressions must give rise to the subtle experiences of the subtle world. These subtle impressions get exhausted by the subtle body through experiences of the subtle world and the process of involution of consciousness continues.

2 Practical Mysticism (41)

Approach to Truth Is Individual

There is no general rule or method applicable to all who aspire to realize God. Every man must work out his own salvation, and must choose his own method, although his choice is mostly determined by the total effect of the mind impressions (*sanskaras*)

acquired in previous lives. He should be guided by the creed of his conscience, and follow the method that best suits his spiritual tendency, his physical aptitude and his external circumstances. Truth is One, but the approach to it is essentially individual. The Sufis say, "There are as many ways to God as there are souls of men" (*Av-vuruqu ilallahi kanufusi bani adam*).

*Jamal-i fivrat ke lakh partao
Qubul partao ki lakh shaK ij
Tariq-i 'irfaj maij kiya batauj
Yah rah kiski wah rah kiski.*

—Akbar

"Nature's beauty has thousands of facets for which there are thousands of ways and means of acceptance (understanding); in the Path of Gnosis, who can determine which particular mode or mood is earmarked for a given individual?"

Renunciation

When a pilgrim, and by pilgrim we mean here aspirant or disciple, feels drawn to renunciation, it means that the spirit of renunciation was already latent in him. This readiness results from the swinging of the terrible pendulum from pain to pleasure and pleasure to pain, in the countless forms of evolution and in the countless entrances and exits through the doors of birth and death experienced during reincarnation. Because this spirit of renunciation is latent, it needs only some exciting cause to bring it to the surface, and it is only when it comes to the surface that we are able to see the power and nature of the latent spirit.

If the latent spirit is simply a spiritual indigestion from a temporary surfeit of pain, combined with a mild desire for something more pleasant, the overt renunciation will be only of a fleeting and feeble kind, a mere temporary escape from unpleasantness. At its best however, this latent spirit is a secret pact of aggression between an incurable disgust for the world and an ardent and burning thirst for God. When it comes to the surface it shows itself as an invincible determination to marshal the entire being to the attainment

of victory over the lower self, and to reject everything that is irrelevant to this great and terrible struggle. Note this word “reject”; it means that such a pilgrim casts aside irrelevancies. We might call renunciation the fruit of the flower of spiritual longing, fertilized by the pollen of disgust for the futility of endless births and deaths. Once renunciation expresses itself there are many ways of looking at it, of which the simplest is to divide it into two main types, internal and external.

External renunciation means giving up completely all worldly delights and physical attachments to material things. In the early stages, this renunciation is helpful to the extent to which it leads to internal renunciation and preoccupation with God. Tens of thousands of so-called *sanyasis* (renunciators) are to be found in India, of whom far too many have adopted this external renunciation only as a profession that enables them to indulge in an unproductive life of idleness. External renunciation, however, can be and often is real. When this is so it will inevitably lead on to internal renunciation, and this is the renunciation that matters. Internal renunciation means the control of desires at their very source so that the mind does not fall a prey to the demands of lust, greed and anger. This does not mean that one shall cease at once to have such thoughts. This is impossible, as such thoughts will continue to be troublesome as long as the *sanskaras* from which they arise are part of one's being. The fight is necessarily hard and long.

For the West in particular, external renunciation is inadvisable and impracticable. It should be internal and of the mind from the start. 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. The Sufis say, “*Dil ba yar, dast bikar*” (The heart with God; the hands for work).

Hazrat Nizamuddin Awliya, the Perfect Master of Delhi, was once asked by a visitor how one should live in the world. At that moment it so happened that a few women were passing by with pitchers of water balanced on their heads, and, as they walked, they gossiped and gesticulated. Pointing to them Nizamuddin said, “Look at those women—that's how you should live in the world.”

Asked to explain this cryptic remark, the Master continued, "These women returning from the well with pitchers balanced on their heads seem to be thinking of nothing else but exchanging tid-bits of gossip with each other; and yet they are all the time concentrating on something far more important, on balancing the pitchers on their heads. Thus, whatever your body, your senses or the purely surface part of your mind may be occupied with, see that the root of your mind is constantly focussed on God."

Vaitag and Vairagya

If we look upon renunciation as being a state of mind, we can understand how this state of mind may be either temporary or permanent. The former is known as *vaitag* and the latter as *vairagya*.

Vaitag (temporary renunciation) is simply a temporary disgust for the world and its affairs resulting from some shock, disappointment or loss, combined with a vague desire for God; or it may come from a sudden impulse. In *vaitag* the mind turns away from the world and takes to godly ways; but this attitude is not lasting, and the mind returns to its old ways as soon as circumstances alter, or as soon as the impulse dies down.

Vairagya (irrevocable renunciation) however is an attitude of mind involving such a longing for God and such a deep indifference to things worldly that, once roused, it knows no retreat and is proof against all temptations to give it up. The famous example of Gautama Buddha is illustrative of *vairagya*.

We have already explained that renunciation is the overt expression of a latent desire for union with God combined with a latent spirit of disgust for the world, and we used an analogy of flower, pollen and fruit. As far as fertilization is concerned the flower and the pollen by themselves are helpless, for the two can only be brought together by some outside agency, such as the wind, the bee or the insect. Whether or not fertilization takes place in nature may depend upon so many thousands of unknown factors that modern science gives up trying to predict it, and labels it chance. That, however, is beside the point at the moment, and in our analogy we shall think of this fertilization as a gift.

To return to *vairagya*, let us remember that the longing for union with God is latent in every living being. However, it only pushes its way into consciousness when the soul approaches the beginning of what Meher Baba, in the "Divine Theme," calls "the realization process." The disgust for the world is also something that develops naturally in all of us and which grows more and more powerful as we draw nearer to the beginning of this realization process. When the flower is in full bloom and the pollen ripe, the wind or the bee gives the gift of fertilization that produces the fruit. In the same way also, when this moment of inner readiness comes, a divine gift descends upon the soul which fertilizes the longing for God and the disgust or indifference for the world, and so brings about the priceless fruit of *vairagya*. This divine gift may be a touch of inner grace from the indwelling God, or it may be the result of contact with a saint or a Perfect Master. But it is always a gift.

Vairagya, when it first becomes manifest, will almost certainly express itself for a time as an external renunciation. But *vairagya*, being permanent, will always lead sooner or later to the real renunciation which is internal.

When an aspirant has such an intense longing for Truth he is qualified to enter the Path. There is a story of a Master who was pestered by a disciple as to when he would realize God. Once when they went to bathe in a river the Master held the aspirant under water for a few moments. When the disciple was on the verge of suffocation the Master pulled him out and asked what he had thought of and longed for most while under the water. The aspirant replied, "Air." The Master explained that when the disciple had just as intense a longing for God then Realization would come. Maulana Rumi says:

Ab kamju, tishnigi avar bidast.

"Call out for water less, but create thirst for it more."

In the words of Meher Baba, "The Path begins with a conscious longing for a deeper reality. As the fish which is taken out of water longs to go back to the water, so the aspirant who has sensed the Goal longs to be united with God.

“In fact, the longing to go back to the Source is present in each being from the very time that it gets separated from the Source by the veil of ignorance, but it is unconscious till the aspirant enters the Path.”*

The Sufis call this attitude of mind “*tauba*” meaning repentance and implying the turning away from or renouncing of the life of the senses for the life of the spirit. One who has taken this great step does not look back again at that which he has left behind.

Meher Baba says that there may be a thousand seekers enjoying as many spiritual experiences, but there is only one Path of Gnosis. It is an internal but an actual pathway. Though not an ordinary path it is distinctly perceptible as such to the internal eye of the true pilgrim who travels along it. But even those mystics who have truly “experienced” can only explain the sections of the Path that they themselves have traversed. Those who have reached the critical point on the third plane can know nothing about the fourth plane, nor can they lead any one up to their own level. Their knowledge and experience are limited to themselves. Only those on the fifth and sixth planes can bring others up to their own level and anyone upon whom their grace descends will be greatly benefited.

The individual souls of the world are within the limits of the gross sphere which includes all the gross suns, moons, worlds and all space. A savage, ignorant of the most elementary scientific laws and of the code of right and wrong, and a great philosopher or scientist are both within the bounds of the gross sphere. The philosopher may be quite familiar in theory with the subtle sphere; and the scientist may be an authority on the extreme frontiers of modern physics; but, from the standpoint of the subtle, they and the savage belong to the gross sphere. Until the subtle sphere is experienced, gnosis remains a subject for intellectual quibbling for all those belonging to the gross sphere because by “subtle” we do not mean merely the finest form of the gross. In the ordinary sense of the word it may be correct to call very fine substances such as ether, the atom, vibration, light and space, “subtle”; but they are unquestionably gross, though in a very fine form.

* [See also Meher Baba, “The Stages of the Path,” *Discourses*, 128–134. Ed.]

Spiritually speaking, subtle means something completely different from the physical, however attenuated physical things may be. Although the gross sphere is the outcome of the subtle sphere and is dependent on it, the subtle sphere is completely independent of the gross sphere. As an example, we may take the act of eating. The gross act is the outcome of the thought, and depends upon it; but the thought is independent of the physical act.

Forgetfulness

The whole philosophy of approaching and realizing the Truth hinges on the question of what we may call forgetfulness. The word “forgetfulness” used here must not be associated with its commonly accepted meaning of forgetting to post a letter, or of a state of mind that is simply dull and blank. Forgetfulness in this special sense is an attitude of mind that develops gradually into spiritual experience. External renunciation is not forgetfulness, because it is mostly physical and partly mental; but internal renunciation, when it becomes purely mental, does assume the quality and dignity of forgetfulness. Thus one may renounce the world, but it is not so easy to forget it.

Forgetfulness in this special sense thus explains the secret that lies behind all happiness, spiritual or otherwise, that human beings experience. The Sufi term for this forgetfulness is *bikhudi*, and it should not be mixed up—though it often is—with *bihoshi* (unconsciousness).

The difference between forgetfulness and unconsciousness is important, and a few examples of types of unconsciousness will help to make it clear. To begin with, one must remember that forgetfulness is the partial or total **detachment** of the mind from the physical world, and unconsciousness the partial or total **deadening** of the mind to the physical world. The former gives rise to various degrees of spiritual ecstasy and the latter to various degrees of cessation of pleasure and pain.

Let us then look at one or two examples of unconsciousness. In perfect health one does not bother about the functioning of a vital organ like the heart. This means that one forgets that this organ

is beating ceaselessly and perfectly in the human body for the maintenance of life and health. If, however, there is a disturbance in the cardiac rhythm there is immediate discomfort, and if there is a cardiac infarct there is immediate precordial pain. In either case one is reminded that one has a heart. The sensation of discomfort or pain, though it arises from the heart, is felt only because of the functioning of the mind. The more the mind is directed to the heart, the more the discomfort or pain is felt. When pain reaches its climax, unconsciousness may supervene—a break in the threads of consciousness that enables one to forget the pain. But this is unconsciousness and not forgetfulness in its spiritual sense. A surgeon by performing a prefrontal leucotomy can interfere with some of the nervous pathways that serve this focussing of the mind on the intractable pain of some incurable disease like cancer. After this operation the pain is still there, but the patient ceases to direct his mind towards it, and so ceases to bother about it. This again is a partial unconsciousness brought about by purely physical means, and not true forgetfulness in its spiritual sense. Sleep is a state of unconsciousness that affords a temporary respite from the wear and tear of life; but sleep is not true forgetfulness in its spiritual sense.

The whole philosophy of happiness and unhappiness therefore hinges on the question of forgetfulness of some kind or another, and of remembrance of some kind or another. Remembrance is an attachment of the mind to a particular idea, person, thing or place, and forgetfulness is its opposite. Once it is understood that remembrance causes pain, it follows that the only cure is some kind of forgetfulness, and this forgetfulness may be either positive or negative. The positive forgetfulness is one in which the mind remains aware of external stimuli, but refuses to react to them. The negative forgetfulness is either mere unconsciousness—a stopping of the mind as in sound sleep—or an acceleration of it as in madness, which has been defined as a way of avoiding the memory of suffering. Either sleep or madness may be artificially induced in various degrees by the use of intoxicants or drugs; but this also is a negative way of overcoming remembrance.

Positive forgetfulness, then, is the cure, and its steady cultivation develops in man that balance of mind which enables him to

express such noble traits as charity, forgiveness, tolerance, selflessness and service to others. One who is not equipped with this positive forgetfulness becomes a barometer of his surroundings. His poise is disturbed by the slightest whisper of praise or flattery, and by the faintest suggestion of slander or criticism; his mind is like a slender reed swayed by the lightest breeze of emotion. Such a man is perpetually at war with himself and knows no peace.

In the exercise of this positive forgetfulness, not only is non-reaction to adverse circumstances essential, but also non-reaction to favourable and pleasurable circumstances. Of these two the latter is the harder and is less often described, although it matters just as much.

Positive forgetfulness, although it lies at the very root of happiness, is by no means easy to acquire. Once a man attains this state of mind, however, he rises above pain and pleasure; he is master of himself. This forgetfulness, to be fully effective for the spiritual life, must become permanent, and such permanence is only acquired through constant practice during many lives. Some people, as a result of efforts towards forgetfulness in past lives, get spontaneous and temporary flashes of it in a later life, and it is such people who give to the world the best in poetry, art and philosophy, and who make the greatest discoveries in science.

In such moments of true forgetfulness there is a mental detachment from all material surroundings in which the poet allows his imagination to soar. An artist, when he gives form to an ideal in which he completely forgets himself and all irrelevant surroundings, creates a masterpiece. The best of philosophy is uttered when a man surveys the problem of life without reference to the ups and downs of his purely personal circumstances; and some of the greatest scientific discoveries have been made in this same frame of mind. Such manifestations of genuine spontaneity of forgetfulness are very rare indeed, and although it is said that poets, artists and philosophers are born and not made, these fleeting phases of real forgetfulness are the result of efforts made in past lives.

In an attempt to make life bearable some people develop a feeble kind of stoicism—a sort of “who cares, anyway” outlook—and others plunge recklessly into epicurism. The former is the apathetic

acceptance of defeat, and the latter the effort to forget defeat in the arms of pleasure. Neither is true forgetfulness. But when a man acquires the true forgetfulness, he enters the spiritual kingdom and passes through different degrees of forgetfulness until the Goal is reached. Meher Baba tells us, “Forgetfulness of the world makes one a pilgrim (*rahrav, sadhak*); forgetfulness of the next world makes one a saint; forgetfulness of self means Realization; and forgetfulness of forgetfulness is Perfection.”

3 The First Plane (42)

Hafiz evidently refers to the first plane when he says:

*Kas nadanist kih manzilgah-i maqsud kujast
In qadar hast kih bang-i jarasi miayad.*

“It is not known where the real abode of the Divine Beloved is; only this much is clear, that I hear the sound of bells (from the travelling caravans).”

On this subject of sound and the planes Meher Baba says:*

“However, know this, that sound exists throughout all the seven planes, differing in its expression of feeling, ecstasy and bliss.

“The sound, sight or smell of the higher planes can with no stretch of the imagination be likened to what we are used to on the physical plane. . . . Our physical organs of hearing, seeing and smelling are useless for experiencing and enjoying the higher planes. Therein it is a different eye that sees, a different ear that hears and a different nose that smells. You know already that there are inner senses, counterparts of the external senses in man, and it is with the former that one experiences the higher planes.

“Avoid the mistake of likening the sound of the higher planes to something different in intensity and frequency of vibrations to the sound of the physical plane; know it for a certainty that there is actually what may be called ‘sound’ in the first three planes. The form, beauty, music and bliss of this sound are beyond description. The *nad* or celestial music is peculiar to the first plane, which Hafiz refers to as *bang-i jarasi* (the ringing of bells).

* “Questions Baba Answers,” *Meher Baba Journal*, vol. 1, no. 3 (January, 1939), 83–84.

“As stated above, although there is sound in all the seven planes, it is smell that is peculiar to the second and third planes, while sight belongs to the fifth and sixth planes . . .

“The seventh plane stands unique. Here the sound, sight and smell are divine in essence and have no comparison to those emanating from the lower planes. In this plane one does not hear, smell or see but one **becomes** sound, smell and sight simultaneously, and is divinely conscious of it.”

4 The Second Plane (43)

Hafiz evidently refers to the second plane when he says:

*Ciguyamat kih bimayK anih dush mast o Karab
Surush-i 'alam-i Gaybam cih muzhdiha dadast?*

“How should I reveal to you that last night in the tavern, intoxicated and unsteady as I was, great good tidings were brought to me by the angel of the hidden world?”

5 The Third Plane (43)

Hafiz refers to the third plane in the following words:

*Cih rah mizanad in mu'rib-i muqam shinas
Kih dar miyan-i Gazal qul-i ashina avard.*

“What perturbation and distress this musician with knowledge of (spiritual) states and stages is causing the listeners (lovers), by interpolating in the midst of his performance the words of the Divine Beloved.”

6 The Stage Between the Third and Fourth Planes (44)

The journey between the third and fourth planes is at once difficult and dangerous because between these two planes there is the point of enchantment (*muqam-e-hairat*). It is very difficult to pass out of this state of enchantment if the pilgrim once stops there, although most pilgrims pass directly from the third to the fourth plane. Unless the pilgrim gets out of this state quickly and proceeds onwards to the fourth plane, his progress will be held up

indefinitely. Once a pilgrim becomes thus enchanted he remains so for days, months or years together. He can neither make further progress nor can he retrogress. He is neither gross-conscious nor subtle-conscious. Neither can he be called **unconscious** because he is fully conscious of the enchantment, and it is because of this consciousness of the enchantment that he lives this living death.

The physical condition of the deeply enchanted pilgrim is no less strange, for if he seats himself in a particular position, he remains in that position for months or years together. Similarly, if he becomes enchanted while standing, he will continue standing until the enchantment ends. In short, he remains stationary in the position in which he first becomes enchanted, and, although he may appear to be a lifeless statue, he is in fact more alive than the ordinary man of the world.

It is well known to the Sufi world how Ali Ahmed Sabir of Piran Kalyar, who afterwards became a Perfect Master, once remained standing for years near a certain tree. During this period Sabir's mind was absorbed in the enchantment of this *muqam-e-hairat* and he was delivered from it by a *Qutub*. Only natural death or divine help from a living Master can help such a dazed pilgrim out of his spiritual stalemate. A Master would help such a pilgrim either by bringing him back to the third plane or by pushing him onwards.

Hafiz no doubt thinks of this stage of the pilgrim when he says:

Mastam kun an cunan kih nadānam zi biK vudi
Dar 'arsih K iyal kih amad kudam raft.

“Make me so dazed and intoxicated that, on account of this state of forgetfulness, I should be oblivious of what came into my mind and of what passed out of it.”

Meher Baba explains that a pilgrim runs the risk of entering *muqam-e-hairat* (state of enchantment) when he passes from the third to the fourth plane. There are, he says, states of enchantment on other parts of the Path also, but the most important is that between the third and the fourth planes. This *hairat* (enchantment) may be strong or feeble. If there is no hitch or disturbing factor present at the moment that a pilgrim becomes enchanted, then the *hairat* is deep, or strong. If there is a disturbing factor present at

that moment then the *hairat* is feeble. If a pilgrim experiences either strong or feeble *hairat* between the third and fourth planes and is then pushed forward by accident to a higher plane, he invariably goes to a position between the fifth and sixth planes, again with the same strong or feeble *hairat*. However, such instances are very rare. Ali Ahmed Sabir of Kalyar and Baba Abdur Rahman of Bombay both were precipitated from a very strong *hairat* between the third and fourth planes into a very strong *hairat* between the fifth and sixth planes, the former by a gift of grace from a *Qutub* and the latter through God's gift in the shape of an accident.

A complete fixity of posture that lasts until death, or until a Perfect Master is contacted, is seen only in those pilgrims who have a very strong *hairat*. A *mast* (God-intoxicated) who has been with Meher Baba for many years was in this *muqam-e-hairat* between the third and fourth planes when he was brought to Meher Baba in Rahuri in 1936; but his *hairat* was feeble, and although he would stand for many hours at a stretch in one position, this position would not be maintained permanently. The enchantment of Ali Ahmed Sabir, however, was a strong one, and he remained in one posture until he was finally delivered from the enchantment by a *Qutub*.

This state of enchantment should on no account be confused with the catatonic stupor of a schizophrenic, although it may appear similar. Both are states of enchantment, but they are poles apart.

7 Pilgrim of the Mental Sphere (48)

Meher Baba says that if a pilgrim of the mental sphere is in India and conceives the idea of seeing America, simultaneous with the wish on his part, either mentally or physically as he wishes, he will be there. One may ask how he travels as fast as thought itself. The answer is that the mind is everywhere, and therefore the pilgrim of the mental sphere does not have to travel. He can be anywhere he likes without using his gross or subtle organs. He can know anything and everything about the gross, subtle and mental spheres as far as the sixth plane, simply by willing to know. More important still, he can help less advanced souls and also ordinary human beings to come up to his own level of progress. When he wants to help anyone directly, the pilgrim of the fifth plane can lead an

aspirant “by the hand” along the Path. When he does so, the aspirant himself also perceives internally the continual presence of the master of the mental plane (known to Sufis as a “wali”), and also feels himself being actually led by him along the path to perfection. Hafiz, in the following couplet, evidently visualizes the particular sensation of one who is being led in this way:

*Tu dastgu shu ay Kiyr-i pay Kujastih, kih man
Piyadih miravam o hamrahan savaranand.*

“O august master, lead me by the hand because I am traversing the Path on foot (helplessly) as compared with other companions who are riding along it.”

Generally, however, a wali (*mahapurush*) helps an aspirant by gazing into his eyes, thereby tearing away the inner veil from the real eye within. This spiritual influence of the wali through sight is known to Sufis as *tawajjoh*. The term *tawajjoh* does not apply to Perfect Masters. In their case the term “will” is correct for they can also render this help without the physical contact that is necessary in the case of masters of the planes.

Meher Baba explains that on the fifth plane the pilgrim sometimes desires to have the divine presence, and sometimes attends to worldly duties. In fact so far as divine presence on the fifth plane is concerned, God is always present, but the pilgrim may not always desire this presence when he turns his attention to worldly duties. On the sixth plane the pilgrim persists in desiring the presence of God one hundred percent. Hafiz evidently refers to his experience of the fifth plane when he says:

*Huyuri gar hami Kvalu
Azu Gayib mashu Hafiz.*

“O Hafiz, if you desire the divine presence, then do not allow yourself to be absent.”

8 The Sixth Plane (50)

The traveller who succeeds in reaching this plane is entitled to be called a *pir* or *satpurush*. There is no adequate translation of

these words in English. The word “saint” would perhaps do, but it suffers from the handicap of very loose usage.

Hafiz remembers this sixth plane in the following words:

*Ma dar piyalih 'aks-i ruK-i yar didih im
Ay biKabar zi laxxat-i shurb-i mudam-i ma.*

“We have seen the face of the Beloved reflected in the cup (of our mind or heart). O ignorant one, no notion have you of the bliss that we imbibe therefrom.”

9 Gnosis of the Sixth Plane (51)

Concerning the gnosis of the sixth plane Meher Baba tells us: “Only God exists, and if anything exists due to ignorance, its reality is illusory. It then exists as God’s shadow, which means that God is both in the stage of Knowledge and ignorance. The following four angles of the one experience, written in the language of Sufi gnosis, are different aspects of gnosis of souls in the sixth plane when they are face to face with God, but still in the domain of duality. All of these aspects are experienced together at the same time.

1. *Hama ust* This means ‘Everything is He’; and for one who experiences this gnosis, only God exists.
2. *Hama az ust* This means ‘Everything is from Him’; and for one who experiences this gnosis, all phenomena, diversities and manyness exist as illusion when ignorance prevails.
3. *Hama ba ust* This means ‘Everything is with Him’; and for one who experiences this gnosis, God is both attributeless and with attributes. His attributes are unlimited when Knowledge prevails, and limited when ignorance prevails. Body, mind and the three worlds do not exist; but if they seem to exist, they exist as shadows.
4. *Hama dar ust* This means ‘Everything is in Him’; and for one experiencing this gnosis, even ignorance has no reality in itself. Its existence, when expressed,

comes out of God's unconscious and infinite Knowledge; and so whatever exists in duality due to ignorance has come out of God where it everlastingly existed."

10 The Seventh Plane (52)

It should be understood that at the moment of being merged into the seventh plane, all links with the gross, subtle and mental bodies and with the universe are necessarily snapped. In ordinary gross existence there is no parallel to this snapping of these long-enduring vital connections that bind the individual to his three bodies and to the universe. Physical death is, by comparison, an insignificant thing, about as significant as the snapping of a piece of string. 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 four days after death and, to a slighter degree, for seven days more after that. In the final annihilation (*fana*), however, the separation is not between body and mind; it is the actual annihilation of mind and of all *nuqush-e-amal* (*sanskaras*).

11 Different Types of Miracles (67)

Meher Baba has given us an explanation of the difference between the miracles of:

1. A Saviour (*Avatar*)
2. A Perfect Master (*Sadguru*)
3. A *pir* and a *wali* (i.e., one on the 6th or 5th plane, respectively)
4. Those on the lower planes (i.e., 1st, 2nd, 3rd and 4th)

In connection with these four types Meher Baba tells us:

1. **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.

2. **The miracles of a Perfect Master** are on a very large scale, but they do not cover the whole universe. Like the Saviour's miracles, however, they are wrought solely for the spiritual awakening of others. Like the Saviour also, the Perfect Master who intends working a miracle stations himself on the 6th, 5th or 4th plane for the time being; and for a very forceful miracle, he stations himself for the time being on the 4th plane. No miracles are ever wrought by the *Majzoob-e-Kamil* of the 7th plane for the simple reason that the three spheres, the mental, subtle and gross, do not exist for such a soul.
3. **The miracles of a *pir* or *wali*** are on a limited scale. In fact they perform no miracles directly. However, such miracles as can be attributed to them are wrought from their mental influence over the thoughts and feelings of others, yielding both spiritual and material benefits. They do not come down to the 4th plane—the plane of almighty spiritual powers.
4. **Pilgrims of the 1st, 2nd and 3rd planes** can use or demonstrate powers from their own plane, such as reading the minds of others, producing things from nowhere, reciting words or passages from a book without seeing it, stopping trains, allowing themselves to be buried alive for hours together, levitation, etc., etc. These are actual powers acquired by the pilgrim on the different planes and, as such, cannot be called mere jugglery. Perfect Masters and the *Avatar* can snatch away a pilgrim's ability to use the powers from the lower planes, viz., 1st, 2nd and 3rd, and can even snatch away the almighty powers of one on the 4th plane. Such a snatching away of powers of those on the lower planes is known to the Sufis as *salb-e-wilayat*.

On the fourth plane are stored all the almighty powers* which, if misused by the pilgrim, result in his utter ruin. But such miracles do not affect the world adversely, because the *Qutub-e-Irshad*—the

* One on the fourth plane is known as a *mahayogi* (a great yogi).

head of the spiritual hierarchy of the age—takes care to make these actions ineffective.

Meher Baba further explains that the indiscriminate display of powers by a pilgrim of the first three planes is fraught with serious dangers, but that one who misuses the powers of the fourth plane invariably falls back to the lowest phase of evolution—the stone state.

Kabir has referred to these dangers when he says:

Saheba ka ghara dura hai jaisi lambi khajura
Carhe so cakhe prema-rasa gire cakanacur.

“The Lord’s house is high, like the top of the tallest date palm.
 If he climbs it, he tastes the nectar of love; if he falls, he
 breaks his neck.”

Conscious and Unconscious Occurrence of Miracles

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 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 means of 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.

Why Do Saviours and Perfect Masters Perform Miracles?

Very worldly people are spiritually obtuse, and they sometimes need miracles to save themselves or other quite innocent people from the results of this insensitivity. The following analogy shows what is meant thereby.

Let us suppose that a child is holding a sparrow in his hand and in so careless a way that he is on the point of strangling it. In order to save the sparrow’s life it would be inadvisable to try to snatch the

bird from the child's hand, for the child would probably tighten his grip on the sparrow and so kill it. But if the child is offered a coin, he will almost certainly relax his hold on the sparrow and so release it. The child is thus prevented from killing the bird out of sheer ignorance of what he is doing. The miracles of a Perfect Master accomplish the same sort of thing; they prevent people from doing themselves and others harm out of sheer ignorance of spiritual values.

If gold is defined to represent miracles, a yogi of the lower planes dazzles worldly people by dangling this gold in front of their eyes so that they are astounded by his prowess. Should they surrender themselves to such a yogi they will ultimately suffer a cruel disillusionment. But when the Saviour or a Perfect Master dangles this gold in front of the eyes of worldly people, he uses one form of *Maya* to drag them away from other and more binding forms of *Maya*, and so draws them towards the Path that leads to their true destiny, Self-realization.

Let us take another illustration and imagine a man with monochromatic vision to whom the world appears blue for example. His eyes thus act like blue spectacles so that when he looks through them everything seems to be blue. Spiritually speaking the world is illusion and so has no colour at all. It is colourless. A yogi demonstrating his miraculous powers merely replaces this man's blue "spectacles" by green or red ones so that he sees everything as green or red. To his ignorant eyes, accustomed to seeing the world blue, this sudden change to green or red is astounding, and reflects great apparent credit on the yogi.

A Perfect Master, knowing that neither blue nor red nor green is the true colour, but that everything is colourless (*i.e.*, nothing), wastes no time in changing "spectacles," thereby enabling the man to see the world as it really is: colourless, or nothing. The yogi and those lesser masters who are not perfect merely replace one illusion by another. But a Perfect Master permanently tears away the veil of all illusion and reveals the truth that Creation is imaginary and that God alone is real. This working of the Perfect Master is a slow and painful process that lacks the colourfulness of the yogi's spectacular

and misleading method, and it is for this reason that the working of the Perfect Masters is unfathomable.

Who Owns the Powers by Which Miracles Are Wrought?

The miraculous powers of a Perfect Master appear the same as those of a yogi of the fourth plane, but there is this important difference, that the powers of a Perfect Master are his own, because he is Power itself. He has simply to will a thing and it is done. “Be and it was” (*Kun faya kun*) refers, according to the Sufis, to the divine manifestation of power.

The yogis’ powers, however, are not their own and they have to depend on extraneous sources of power for working miracles. The inherent powers of Perfect Masters are continually overflowing, and yogis and pilgrims of the lower planes borrow these overflowing powers and work miracles with them. This is quite in consonance with the Sufi belief that *walis* are the Prophet Muhammad’s witnesses, and that all their miracles, like drops oozing from a skin filled with honey, are derived from him. Endorsed by orthodox Muslims, this belief is limited in scope however, because it is applied only to the personality of the Prophet Muhammad. Its universal applicability is at once suggested though by the Sufi belief that from the beginning there has been only **one** *Rasool* who appears from time to time in different countries under different names.

Illuminating this point still further, Meher Baba has explained, “In *fana-fillah* (the *Majzoob* state) there are no miracles, direct or indirect. In Divine Junction (*turiya avastha* or *muqam-e-furutat*) the *Jivanmukta* (*Azad-e-Mutlaq*) has no duty and performs no miracles. But there is always a possibility of miracles happening through the *Jivanmukta* without his being aware of it. The agents or pilgrims of the lower planes very often borrow his powers and work miracles with them, but the powers of the *Jivanmukta* are not in any way lessened thereby.”

*Miracles of the Saviour (Rasool or Avatar)
and Perfect Masters (Sadgurus)*

When God becomes man, He becomes a Saviour (*Rasool* or *Avatar*) and when man becomes God, he becomes a *Majzoob*, and,

if he has duty to perform to humanity, he traverses the second and third divine journeys and becomes a Perfect Master (*Sadguru*). Both the Saviour and the Perfect Master are spiritually perfect, because both are one with God, and although both have a duty towards humanity, that of the Saviour is of a special kind.

The Sufis say that the “relationship” (*qurbat*) with God differs in the Saviour and the Perfect Master, and they refer to them as *qurb-e-farayiz* (involuntary necessary nearness) and *qurb-e-nawafil* (voluntary nearness) respectively. *Qurb-e-farayiz* thus belongs to the Saviours and *qurb-e-nawafil* to the Perfect Masters.

The Sufis explain that in the working of miracles by the *Rasool* (the *Avatar*), God is the actor and man the instrument; while in a Perfect Master it is the other way round—man is the actor and God the instrument. The famous incident of the Prophet Muhammad throwing a handful of dust at the enemy in the battle of Badr and thereby routing them is an example of a Saviour working a miracle. Although to all appearances it was Muhammad as a man who threw the dust, in reality it was God as Muhammad who threw the dust, and Muhammad as a man who routed the enemy. A miracle such as this is therefore an illustration of *qurb-e-farayiz*.

The miracles performed by Perfect Masters are, however, illustrations of *qurb-e-nawafil*, of which the miracle of Shamsi Tabriz—that of raising the dead to life—is a good example. When Shams uttered the words “*Qum bi ixnillah*” (arise in the name of God) the prince did not come to life; but when he said “*Qum bi ixni*” (arise in my name) the prince at once came to life. Here Shamsi Tabriz as man gave the order, and God as Shamsi Tabriz clothed himself with the attribute of Himself—in this case with the attribute of life—and so restored the prince to life. In *qurb-e-nawafil* man is the actor and God the instrument.

Let us for a moment discuss the difference in the attitude of East and West towards miracles. The East, which possesses a long record of familiarity with Perfect Masters and advanced souls, has come to accept that God, because He is infinite, cannot be comprehended by the finite mind. The East knows that human intellect, which is limited in scope, has its use only up to a certain stage in tackling metaphysical problems. As sung by the philosopher Dr. Iqbal:

'Aql go astaj se dur nahij
Uski taqdir maij huyur nahij

“Intellect, though not far away from the threshold (of the Beloved) is not destined to enjoy the Divine Presence.”

The East thus knows that at the point where intellect gives up its efforts in grappling with that which is transcendental, love must take up the link. The West sets great store by the intellectual approach, and that which refuses to come within the orbit of intellect is apt to be either denied or scoffed at. As a by-product of this occidental attitude we may cite the utter misuse of the word “mystic” in current American idiom. The ardent religious enthusiasm of medieval Europe has been almost replaced by great enthusiasm for culture and science.

The doctrines of science are, however, fluid to a certain extent, and the genuine scientist does look facts in the face, but Meher Baba has often declared that in spite of its great progress science is yet far from the core of material things, and further from the outermost fringe of spiritual things. The heart must cooperate with the head.

It may be that some of the purely physical feats of yogis, which pass for miracles with the multitude, can be explained away by medical science. But real miracles, particularly the miracles of Perfect Masters, do not admit of scientific explanation. Many of the miracles wrought by Saviours, Perfect Masters and saints are recorded in the spiritual legends and classics of all peoples and all religions, and the ever-functioning spiritual hierarchy is daily adding to these miracles. The facts are there; Jesus and other Perfect Ones have raised the dead to life, and have healed diseases. But even if one were to see a miracle take place before one's very eyes, and even if one were convinced that it was a miracle and not trickery, one would never be able to formulate a rational explanation of it, for miracles are utterly beyond the reach of intellectual explanation. They are a mystery as deep as life itself.

Perhaps, however, the fault is not entirely without reason, for the world at large seldom gets an insight into the workings of Perfect Masters, and, in truth, most of these workings lie treasured in the breasts of a few intimate associates and deserving initiates,

and are safely hidden from curiosity. In the words of the famous Sufi Abdul Hasan Kharqani, "If a few drops of that which is under the skin of a Perfect Master should come forth between his lips, all the creatures of heaven and earth would fall into panic."

In spite of the mass appeal of miracles and of the claims of spiritual masters, the East, like the West, is also very circumspect in its attitude towards them. It may be said to its credit, however, that the East has learned by long experience not to deny the actions of the spiritual hierarchy, even if it cannot see its way to accept or believe in them. One of the earliest Sufis has declared, "Miracles are only one of the thousand stages on the way to God"; and the *Avatar* of this cycle, Meher Baba, affirms that the greatest miracle a Perfect Master can perform is to make another man spiritually perfect like himself.

12 Kinds of Powers (67)

Spirituality and spiritualism are two different things. Spirituality has nothing to do with any kind of power in any form. Spirituality is the path of love for God and obedience and surrender to the Perfect Master.

As one travels the Path, one comes across powers on the planes of consciousness. Those on the planes from first to fourth are sometimes tempted to demonstrate these powers.

There are three kinds of powers:

1. The divine powers of the fourth plane.
 2. The occult powers of the first three planes of consciousness. These are called the mystic powers.
 3. Other occult powers.
1. **The divine powers** of the fourth plane are the almighty powers of God. They are the source of all powers, whether mystic or other occult powers.

The mystic and other occult powers are infinitely insignificant in comparison with the divine powers.

The divine powers remain always the same because God is always One and the same. The occult powers, whether they are of the planes or not, are different in kind and vary in expression.

The miracles performed through the manifestation of the divine powers by the *Avatar* and the *Qutub* are called *mojezat*. These are performed for the good of all—on a limited scale by the *Qutub* and on a universal scale by the *Avatar*. However, these can be performed for any individual in close association with the *Avatar* or the *Qutub*.

The miracles performed indirectly by those on the fifth and sixth planes with the help of the divine powers are called *karamaat*.

The display of the mystic powers by those on the first up through the third plane cannot in fact be termed miracles. Such a display is nothing but a show of powers that they come across while traversing the planes; such a display of powers is called *shobada*.

When the one on the fourth plane makes good use of the divine powers and performs a miracle, it can be termed as *karamat-e-mojeza*; when he makes a bad use of them, *i.e.*, misuses the divine powers of the fourth plane, it is termed *mojeza-e-shobada*.

The fourth plane is regarded as the “threshold” of the mental sphere, and so the misuse of the divine powers on the fourth plane results in a “fall” as far back as the stone state and results in disintegration of consciousness.

2. **The occult powers** of the first three planes, called the mystic powers, **cannot** be misused by the aspirant on these planes, though they sometimes are tempted to display them. These mystic powers are different and vary in expression, such as: reading the minds of others; reciting words or passages from a book without seeing it; allowing themselves to be buried alive for hours together, etc.

The powers of the planes are not induced. These powers are ever accessible to those on the planes, within their own limited environment, and as such need no concentrated effort to display them. This display of powers should not be confused with the demonstrations of mind readers and of others who put on stage performances.

The one on the third plane of consciousness can raise dead sub-human creatures but can never make a dead human being alive. This he can do because of the nearness to and “warmth” of the divine powers of the fourth plane.

But one on the fourth plane can raise the dead including human beings by the use of the divine powers of the fourth plane.

The one on the third plane can change his physical form at will, and one who does this is known as *abdāl*. This act is also a display of the mystic powers, but not the misuse of powers. However, this act should not be confused with the dematerialization or materialization of the human forms by the *tantriks*.

3. **Other occult powers** have nothing to do with spirituality or with the mystic powers of the planes.

These occult powers are of two types:

- a. Superior occult powers.
- b. Inferior occult powers.

The one who has these occult powers can make good or bad use of the same. Good use of occult powers helps one to put himself on the planes of the Path and may even make one a *mahayogi*. Bad use of these occult powers makes one suffer intensely in the next human form. Good use of superior occult powers puts one on the fifth plane of consciousness after four lives (reincarnations).

- a. Superior types of occult powers are derived from *tantrik* exercises such as *chilla-nashini* or repetition of certain *mantras*, etc.

The one who holds these powers can perform the so-called miracles such as levitation, flying and floating in the air, dematerialization and materialization, etc.

- b. Inferior types of occult powers need no *tantrik* or any special exercises. They are had through *sanskaras* of past lives. For example: if someone has done certain good deeds many times in the past, his next incarnation may give him the

faculty of inferior occult powers without undergoing any strenuous exercises. His *sanskaras* give him the faculty of inferior occult powers such as clairvoyance, clairaudience, healing, producing sweets or money seemingly out of nothing, etc.

All such capabilities form part of the lower or inferior type of occult powers.

If one makes good use of the inferior type of occult powers, he derives superior type of occult powers in his next life without undergoing any *tantrik* exercises. Likewise, the one who puts to good use his faculty of hypnotism gains the superior type of occult powers in his next life.

13 Meditation (68)

A Scheme for Beginners Based on a Study of the Divine Theme by Meher Baba

Meditation has often been misunderstood as being a mechanical process of forcing the mind upon some idea or object. It is therefore only natural that most people should find great difficulty in their attempts to coerce the mind in a particular direction or to pin it down to one particular thing. Any purely mechanical handling of the mind is not only irksome but is ultimately bound to be unsuccessful.

The first principle which the aspirant should therefore remember is that the mind can be controlled and directed in meditation only according to the laws inherent in the make-up of the mind itself, and not by the application of any feats of simple will power.

Many people who do not technically “meditate” are often found to be deeply and intensely engrossed in systematic and clear thinking about some practical problem or theoretical subject. In a sense, their mental process is very much like meditation, inasmuch as the mind is engrossed in intense thinking about a particular subject matter to the exclusion of all irrelevant things. The reason meditation is often easy and spontaneous in such a mental process is

that the mind is dwelling upon a subject in which it is interested and which it increasingly understands. But the spiritual tragedy about ordinary trains of thought is that they are not directed towards things that really matter. The subject matter of meditation must therefore always be carefully chosen and it must be spiritually important. In order to attain success in meditation we must not only get the mind interested in the divine subjects or truths, but we must also begin by trying to understand and appreciate them. Intelligent meditation is a natural process of the mind, which avoids the monotonous rigidity and regularity of mechanical meditation. It therefore becomes not only spontaneous and inspiring, but easy and successful.

Since intelligent meditation consists in thorough thinking about a particular subject, it follows that the best way to meditate would be to make a brief and clear exposition of an appropriate subject. For this purpose there could be nothing better than the Divine Theme with its charts which is reproduced in the following section.

The process of meditation which Meher Baba recommends has three stages:

1. In the first stage the aspirant will read through the Divine Theme daily, studying the charts also, and thinking about it thoroughly as he does so.
2. In the second stage when the aspirant has the entire subject at his fingertips, actual reading becomes unnecessary, but the subject matter of the exposition will be mentally reviewed with the help of the charts when necessary.
3. In the third stage, which will develop naturally out of the second, it will be quite unnecessary for the mind to review the words or the thoughts in the exposition separately and consecutively or even to refer to the facts, and all discursive thinking about the subject matter will come to an end. At this stage of meditation the mind will no longer be occupied with any trains of thought, but will have a clear understanding of the sublime truths expressed in the exposition.

14 The Divine Theme (68)

By Meher Baba

Evolution, Reincarnation and the Path to Realization (Introduction to the Charts)

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

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

Up to the human form, the winding process of *sanskaras* becomes stronger and stronger in the process of evolution. In the human form, in the process of reincarnation, the winding retains its full strength; but in the process of realization, the *sanskaras* gradually unwind themselves, till in the God-state, they are completely unwound.

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

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

* See chart IX. "A" soul becomes "Z" soul.

The souls of all men and women, of all nationalities, castes and creeds, are really one; and their experiences of good and evil, of fighting and helping, of waging wars and living in peace are all a part of illusion and delusion, because all these experiences are gained through bodies and minds, which in themselves are nothing.

Before the world of forms and duality came into existence, there was nothing but God, *i.e.*, an indivisible and boundless ocean of Power, Knowledge and Bliss. But this ocean was unconscious of itself. Picture to yourself this ocean as absolutely still and calm, unconscious of its Power, Knowledge and Bliss and unconscious that it is the ocean. The billions of drops which are in the ocean do not have any consciousness; they do not know that they are drops nor that they are in the ocean nor that they are a part of the ocean. This represents the original state of Reality.

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

Now let us study the life of one drop-soul through its different stages. Owing to the arising of the bubble, the drop-soul which was completely unconscious is invested with individuality (or a feeling of separateness) as well as with very slight consciousness. This consciousness, which has sprung up in the drop-soul, is not of itself nor of the ocean; but it is of the bubble or the form, which in itself is nothing. This imperfect bubble at this stage is represented by the **form** of a stone. After some time, this bubble or form bursts and there springs up in its place another bubble or form. Now, when a bubble bursts, two things happen: (1) there is an increase in consciousness and (2) there is a twist or consolidation of impressions or *sanskaras* accumulated during the life of the previous bubble. The consciousness of the drop-soul has now slightly

increased; but the drop-soul is still conscious only of this new bubble or form and not of itself nor of the ocean. This new bubble is represented by the form of the metal. This new bubble or form also bursts in due course of time; and simultaneously there is a further increase in consciousness and a fresh twist or consolidation of *sanskaras*, which gives rise to the emergence of another type of bubble or form.

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

On gaining the human form, the second process begins; this process is that of reincarnation. At this point, the process of the winding up of *sanskaras* comes to an end. The drop-soul takes numerous human forms one by one; and these forms are exactly eighty-four *lakhs* in number. These human forms are sometimes those of man and sometimes those of woman; and they change nationalities, appearance, colour and creed. The drop-soul through human incarnations experiences itself sometimes as a beggar and sometimes as a king, and thus gathers experiences of the opposites of happiness or misery according to its good or bad *sanskaras*. In reincarnation (*i.e.*, in its successive and several human forms) the drop-soul retains its full consciousness but continues to have alternating experiences of opposite *sanskaras*, till the process of realization begins. And during this process of realization the *sanskaras* get unwound. In reincarnations, there is a spending up of *sanskaras*; but this spending up is quite different from the unwinding of the *sanskaras*, which takes place during the process of realization. The spending up of *sanskaras* itself creates

new *sanskaras*, which bind the soul; but the unwinding of *sanskaras* does not itself create fresh *sanskaras*; and it is intended to undo the very strong grip of *sanskaras*, in which the drop-soul is caught.

Up to the human form, the winding up of *sanskaras* becomes stronger and stronger during the process of evolution. In the human forms of reincarnation, the winding continues to operate as a limiting factor; but with every change of the human bubble or form, the tight twists, gained during the process of winding, get loosened through eighty-four *lakhs* of shakings,* before they are ready to unwind in the process of realization.

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

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

* [Many readers do not discern that Meher Baba customarily described the life cycle as: evolution, reincarnation, involution and the **process** of realization.

Fearing the statement in the text above might seem contradictory to that in paragraph 3, page 176, we asked Eruch B. Jessawala for clarification.

He replied: "Once one is on the planes of consciousness, the reincarnation process may be said to have come to its fag end. On the Path leading to Beloved God, the impatience to 'see' Him and to be One with Him is intense. Such reincarnations as are necessary, due to impressions burdening the consciousness, seem almost nil when compared to eighty-four *lakhs* of shakings." Ed.]

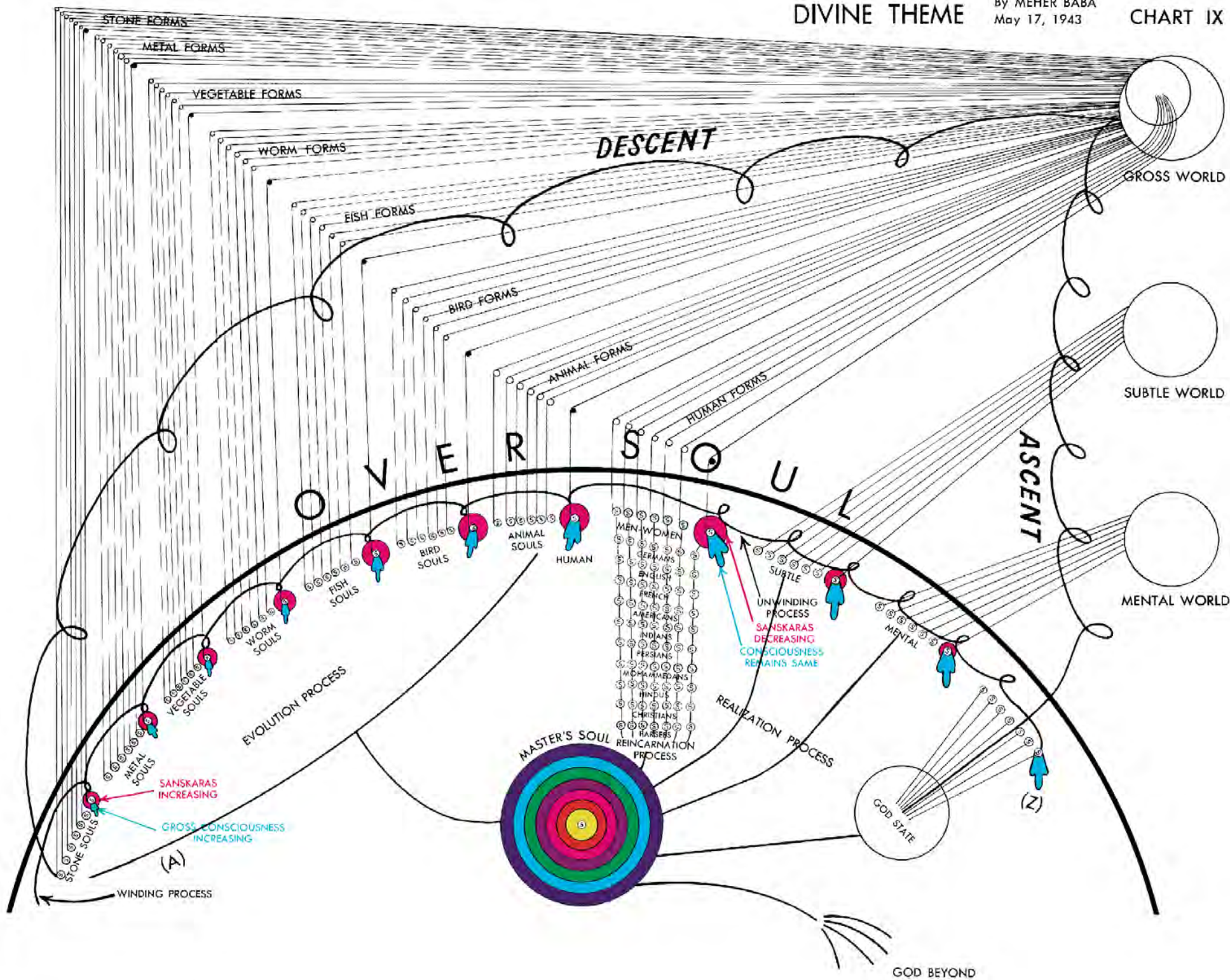
the subtle body; but you do not see and experience the Over-Soul which you are in, since your consciousness is not now directed towards the Over-Soul. In the advanced stage from the fourth through the sixth plane, you use your consciousness in seeing and experiencing the huge mental bubble, which is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

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

Explanation of Charts IX and X

Chart IX

The big semi-circle in Chart IX represents the Over-Soul, which contains everything in the universe. The life of a single individual soul is depicted in the three main stages of evolution, reincarnation and the process of realization. "S" stands for the individual soul. Before attaining the human form, it goes through seven stages of each of the following kinds of existence, *viz.*, stone, metal, vegetable, worm, fish, bird and animal. At the seventh stage, *i.e.*, just before entering a new kind of existence, you will note a pictorial representation of a twist or a knot, which stands for a consolidation of previously acquired *sanskaras*. The outer red circle round the individual soul "S," represents the *sanskaras* accumulated during the process of evolution; and the blue appendage to "S" represents the



consciousness, which comes to be developed simultaneously. “A” soul becomes “Z” soul after going through evolution, reincarnation and the process of realization. It is only in the God state that consciousness is free from *sanskaras*.

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

In the process of reincarnations, the soul may take a male or a female form; and it may belong to any nationality, creed or religion. From the point of view of self-knowledge, the process up to the attainment of the human forms represents an actual descent, though it looks like an ascent; and the process of realization represents an actual ascent, though it looks like a descent; and these two processes are respectively represented by a line (representing descent) of winding knots of *sanskaras*, which goes **up** from the stone stage to the gross world, and by a line (representing ascent) of unwinding knots of *sanskaras*, which comes **down** from the gross world to the God state. The process of ordinary reincarnations begins after the winding is complete; and it continues till the unwinding has begun.

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

subtle-conscious souls; but they act upon them in the mental world through the mental body; and they have no connection with the gross world through the gross body, nor with the subtle world through the subtle body. Therefore, the lines in the chart connect the subtle-conscious souls only with the subtle world; and the corresponding lines connect the mental-conscious souls only with the mental world.

In the God state, in which all the *sanskaras* are unwound, consciousness is turned only to God; this is the state of *Majzoobs-e-Kamil*, who have no connection with the gross nor the subtle nor the mental worlds. But a few who enjoy the God-state also come down and regain the consciousness of the entire Creation. These are the souls of the Masters. The soul of the Master is represented by seven concentric coloured rings.* The following points (which have been brought out by connecting lines) should be carefully noted: (i) The Master's soul is connected with God Beyond, which is the *vidnyan* or the resting place of the Masters, (ii) it is connected with the God state and (iii) it is not only connected with all the three worlds, but all the souls, whether they are mental-conscious, subtle-conscious or reincarnating human beings (who are gross-conscious), or souls who are in the pre-human evolutionary stage.

Chart X

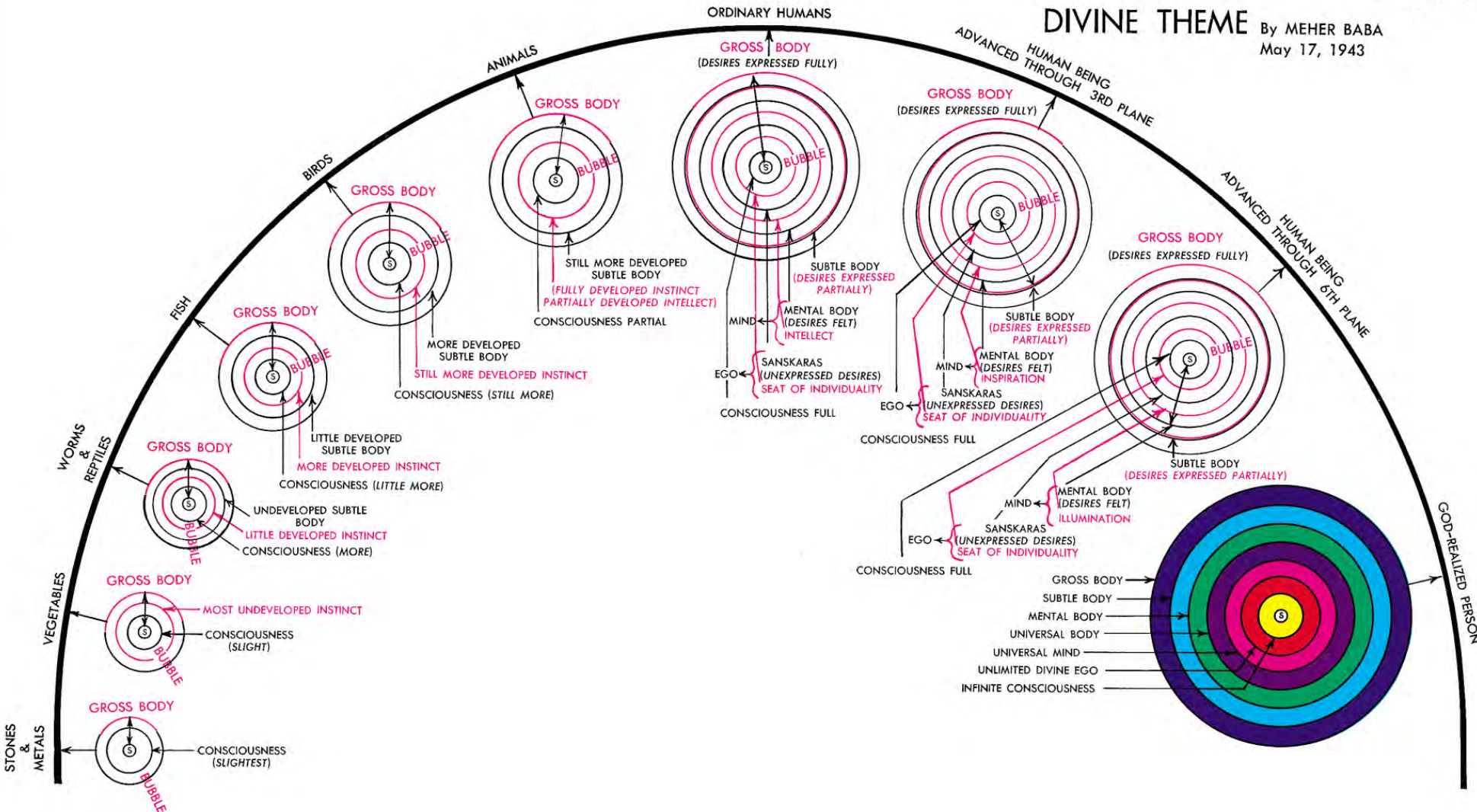
Chart X brings out the details pertaining to the process of evolution up to the human form and the process of realization up to the state of a God-realized being. The innermost small circle which is referred to by "S" represents the individual soul. The soul is shown as having an increasing number of circles around itself up to the human stage; and it is shown as retaining all these circles later on. The second circle, which is next to the soul, represents consciousness, which goes on increasing up to the human form; but afterwards it remains constant. In evolution, vegetables acquire the most undeveloped instinct, but not the subtle body,† which

* For their significance see Chart X.

† Nevertheless, in the gaseous or stone or metal or vegetable form the soul also identifies itself, **though unconsciously**, with its most-finite subtle form and its most-finite mental form. [See page 31 of text. Ed.]

DIVINE THEME

By MEHER BABA
May 17, 1943



emerges in an undeveloped form in worms and reptiles. This subtle body goes on developing until it is fully developed in the human form. Side by side with the development of the subtle body, there is a simultaneous development of instinct. Intellect, in its partial development, makes its first appearance at the stage of animals; but the mental body appears only at the last stage represented by the human form.

In the human form, the first innermost circle represents the individual **soul**; the next outer circle represents **full consciousness**; and then the other outer circles (in the order in which they are drawn) respectively represent (i) the seat of individuality, (ii) *sanskaras* or unexpressed desires, (iii) intellect, (iv) felt desires of the mental body, (v) subtle body (in which there is a partial expression of desires) and (vi) the gross body (in which the desires come to be fully expressed). All the circles round the innermost circle of the soul, with the exception of the first circle of consciousness, are **layers** of consciousness. Of these layers, the outermost circle and the circle next to it respectively represent the gross and the subtle bodies, while the other four layers around consciousness represent four functions of one mental body. Of these four functions of the mental body, two (*i.e.*, felt desires and intellect) are usually included under mind; and the other two (*i.e.*, *sanskaras* or unexpressed desires and the seat of individuality) are included under the ego. Thus, at the human stage, the soul, with its consciousness, has **three bodies**, but **six layers** (including the gross layer known as the gross body).

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

The coloured rings or concentric circles represent the soul of a God-realized person, with all the vehicles at its disposal. In respect to this diagram, the following points should be carefully noted: (i) The three outer rings respectively represent the gross, subtle and the mental bodies. We find all these bodies also in ordinary human beings. (ii) In the God-realized person, there has emerged a new

spiritual body, known as the universal body or *mahakarana sharir*, which is the seat of the universal mind. Just as water is contained in a cup, the universal mind may be said to be contained in the universal body. Therefore, though the universal body and the universal mind are represented by two different circles, they are inseparable from each other. (The universal mind of the Master, which works through his universal body, is in direct contact with the mental bodies of all the individual souls in Creation; and it can, through these mental bodies, bring about any changes in the mental, subtle or gross worlds. Though the Master has a mental body like ordinary humans, he always works only through his universal mind.) (iii) In the Master's soul, the limited ego of the human stage is transmuted into the unlimited Ego, *i.e.*, the feeling of separateness and narrow individuality is replaced by the realization of unlimited, indivisible and all-comprehensive existence. (iv) The soul of the Master is endowed with infinite consciousness. The full consciousness at the human stage does not reveal or express the infinity of the soul, owing to the limitations of *sanskaras*; but in the God-realized person, this full consciousness is not limited by any *sanskaras* and, therefore, it reveals or expresses the infinity of the soul.

15 The Five Spheres Described by Meher Baba (70)

Meher Baba says there are five spheres: (1) gross, (2) subtle, (3) mental, (4) composite and (5) Real. The first four concern relative existences and the fifth one is composed of the one and only Real Existence.

The question of details is all the more important when a subject is beyond ordinary human experience. On the one hand, more details confuse one more, and less details explain things less. This gives rise to a variety of terms and expressions for use from different viewpoints and in different contexts. In the absence of underlying experience, descriptions of the same one thing often sound contradictory. But in the light of relative experiences or the final realization of Truth, the very contradictions prove to be complementary

expressions about the same one Truth. The facts and the fact of facts underlying the five spheres will bear this out.

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, moons, stars, and in fact everything material from the crudest to the finest. Some of the worlds in the gross sphere contain minerals and vegetation only; some others contain countless embodied beings also, and in some there are included human beings. The point of prime importance in the gross sphere is our world (Earth). Here, amongst all other beings who are conscious in greater or lesser degree of the gross, man with his full consciousness is superior to all other beings of all gross worlds.* But until man **here** awakens to the subtle, his full consciousness remains fully occupied with the gross, even when he reads and thinks of spiritual subjects such as the one discussed here.

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 path of Self-realization, the *rah-e-tariqat* of the Sufis and the *adhyatmic marga* of the Vedantists, consisting of seven planes

* This means also superior spiritually amongst all human beings of the gross sphere. Meher Baba tells us that of the three worlds in the gross sphere which are inhabited by human beings, ours (the Earth) is the one where man is the highest spiritually. He explains that, whereas man on this Earth possesses in his personality equal degrees of head and heart (50% head and 50% heart), man on the other two worlds possesses 100% head, and 75% head and 25% heart, respectively. Man, in the course of his reincarnations, is born on any one of the three worlds, but must finally take form and reincarnate on this Earth to fulfill his divine destiny which is God-realization. In the gross sphere, the Earth is the last and nearest stepping stone to the Path. The two other worlds are most close to the Earth in the pattern of habitation. Altogether there are 18,000 worlds with life, but these two worlds and the Earth are akin to one another in the pattern of human life.

(*muqams* or *sthans*), is the one and only bridge between the first sphere of the gross and the fifth, the Real sphere. The path has its first three planes in the subtle, the second 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.

The unlimited diversity and intensity of subtle sights, sounds, feelings and powers have no parallel in the gross sphere, save energy which becomes limited within the bounds of the gross, and human consciousness which is surrounded by gross limitations.

The third, the mental sphere, is the sphere of the 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.

This sphere of the Mind includes everything relating to intellect, intuition, insight and illumination. Herein are also contained the loftier planes of the Path, the fifth and the sixth. The fourth plane is but a junction between the third plane in the subtle sphere and the fifth plane in the mental sphere.

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.

The peculiar nature and position of the composite sphere could be grasped more easily through either of the following tables:

Table I

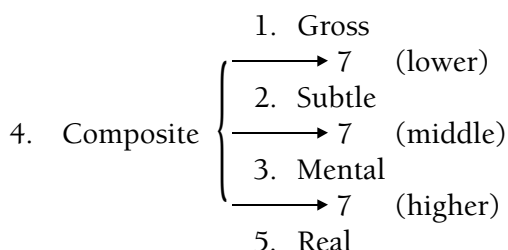


Table II

1. The Gross Sphere (First Sphere)
Seven **lower** sub-spheres
of
4. The Composite Sphere (Fourth Sphere).
2. The Subtle Sphere (Second Sphere)
Seven **middle** sub-spheres
of
4. The Composite Sphere (Fourth Sphere).
3. The Mental Sphere (Third Sphere)
Seven **higher** sub-spheres
of
4. The Composite Sphere (Fourth Sphere).
5. The Real Sphere (Fifth Sphere).

The seven lower sub-spheres are spiritually superior to the gross sphere and they do touch the gross, whereas the seven higher sub-spheres are neither spiritually superior to the mental sphere nor can they ever touch the Real Sphere as will be clear from further details which follow.

On the one hand, the all-important Path, the one and only bridge between man and God, runs through the two spheres of the subtle and the mental, and on the other hand, there are innumerable things and beings in these two spheres as well as in between the seven lower and seven higher sub-spheres, and each one of the things and beings is directly or indirectly vital to the Path.

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.³⁷

The angels (unembodied 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. In this they are superior to the man whose consciousness has not extended beyond the limitations of the gross (meaning a man not yet on the Path). Paradoxically, man, the inferior, who has succeeded in being contaminated with physical embodiment, is actually the superior in the strength of the potentialities latent within him. Experiencing his imperfections, limitations and weaknesses, he is potentially ripe to realize his real strength and purity which are far above those of, and beyond the reach of, even the archangels.

The archangels are the mediums for the expression of God’s principal divine attributes of creating, preserving and destroying limited life on an unlimited scale, and of communicating unlimited Knowledge on a limited scale. The archangels are entities who always enjoy and never suffer.

The abode of the archangels, the sub-supramental spheres of the fourth, the composite sphere which is discussed here, comes after the third—the mental sphere—and is nearest the fifth, the Real Sphere. This is true, yet not the whole truth; for in spite of its proximity it cannot touch the Real Sphere. An archangel, from the highest sub-supramental sphere, can never see God, whereas man in the sixth plane of the third, the mental sphere, can and does see God face to face everywhere and in everything. The last point of the last of the sub-supramental spheres is what the Sufis call the

sadrat-ul-muntaha (the last limit), beyond which, as is popularly and rightly believed by the Muslims, even the archangel Gabriel cannot go.

Man has and man shall (because man alone can) jump over the last seven links of the really non-existent relative existences of all the four spheres into his really own—the fifth, the Real Sphere. In short, angels must necessarily cease to be angels and become man before they can reach the Reality attainable to man. And when man ceases to be man and enters the “I am God” state, he realizes that angels and archangels are in fact his own attributes in one sense or another.

Finally the dissolution of the higher seven sub-spheres of the fourth—the composite—sphere, is the phenomenon called *qiamat* or *mahapralaya*, and when this takes place the whole of the non-existent existence of Creation, with all its spheres and sub-spheres, like a manifested tree, recedes into the unmanifested seed form of non-existent non-existence, only to be manifested anew once more in the very next moment of eternity.

The fourth, the composite sphere, is commonly included in the first three spheres as follows:

1. The gross sphere plus part of the fourth, the composite sphere, is the *alam-e-nasut* of the Sufis and the *anna bhuvan* of the Vedantists.
2. The subtle sphere plus part of the fourth, the composite sphere, is the *alam-e-malakut* of the Sufis and the *pran bhuvan* of the Vedantists.
3. The mental sphere plus part of the fourth, the composite sphere, is the *alam-e-jabrut* of the Sufis and the *mano bhuvan* of the Vedantists.

The latter also call the three (including the fourth) spheres collectively the *tribhuvan* (triple sphere), and the Sufis call them collectively *do alam* (two spheres) meaning the gross on the one hand, and the subtle and the mental (including the composite sphere) on the other hand.

The fifth, the Real Sphere, is also the seventh plane of the Path, the plane of full super-consciousness which, in simple words,

means the full human consciousness fully freed from any vestige or tinge of duality inherent in varying degrees in all of the four spheres of relative existence. It would not be wrong to say that the fifth sphere or the seventh plane is neither any sphere nor plane but the Reality of God's very Selfhood—referred to by humanity as *Allah*, *Paramatma*, Almighty God, *Yezdan*, and so on. According to the different states of the same one God from is to “I am God,” and from “I am God” to “I am everything,” there are different terms for the different stages or aspects of the Real Sphere—such as *alam-e-hahut* and *alam-e-lahut* of the Sufis or *vidnyan bhumika* and *vidnyan*.

16 The Types of Conviction and of Knowledge (73)

According to the Sufis, the spiritual life consists of four stages, and man's life on earth in all its aspects is but a preparation, conscious or unconscious, for the ever-unfolding realms of knowledge and illumination that lead to God-realization. These four stages are *shariat* (*dharma shastra*), *tariqat* (*adhyatma marga*), *haqiqat* (God-realization or *aikya*) and *marefat-e-haqiqat* (Gnosis or *satyanubhuti*).

Imam Muhammad Ghazali has compared these four stages to a walnut, which has four constituents: the outer skin or husk, the inner skin or lining, the kernel, and the oil within. To make the analogy more explicit, we may say that *shariat* is the outer husk, *tariqat* the inner lining, *haqiqat* the kernel, and *marefat-e-haqiqat* the oil.

As the aspirant advances through these four stages, he acquires an ever-increasing measure of certainty concerning Truth. These enduring certainties are known to the Sufis as:

1. *Ilm-ul-yaqin*
 - 2a. *Yaqin-ul-yaqin*
 - 2b. *Ain-ul-yaqin*
 3. *Haqq-ul-yaqin*
 4. *Urf-ul-yaqin*
1. ***Ilm-ul-yaqin***, or intellectual certainty (conviction), is derived through rock-like faith.

- 2a. **Yaqin-ul-yaqin**, or perceptual certainty through awareness of God, is derived from inner feelings, visions or spiritual experiences on the Path. It is conviction of the soul on the first up through the fifth plane.
- 2b. **Ain-ul-yaqin**, or visual certainty (i.e., conviction by sight), is the experience of actually seeing God everywhere and continually; this is *antar drishti*.
3. **Haqq-ul-yaqin**, or certainty of Realization (i.e., conviction by actual experience), is attained by the soul on the seventh plane of the spiritual journey, which is *haqiqat*. Here the soul realizes itself through itself. This state is *aikya* (union with God).
4. **Urf-ul-yaqin**, or certainty of gnosis, concerns the perfection of divinity in man by which man living the life of God knows all the mysteries of the Self and of the universe. The faculty brought into play here is the universal mind (*sarvabhaumic manas* or *aql-e-kull*), which is the seat of all divine discrimination.

To illustrate these types of conviction still further, let us suppose that a man comes to know that there is milk in a certain vessel. To have implicit faith in this knowledge through intellect and intuitive perception is *ilm-ul-yaqin* and *yaqin-ul-yaqin*. If he is not satisfied with this intellectual and intuitive conviction and actually takes the trouble to go over to the vessel and see the milk with his own eyes, and thus feel convinced that the actuality tallies with his intellectual and intuitive knowledge, he experiences the certainty known as *ain-ul-yaqin*. To drink the milk, and to become to all intents and purposes one with it, gives him the experience of *Haqq-ul-yaqin*; and to find within himself the knowledge of all that expresses and represents milk, such as sugar, water, fat, vitamins, etc., and to be able to describe these and the various uses of milk to others in detail, is the certainty of knowledge or gnosis, i.e., *urf-ul-yaqin* which is the stage of *marefat-e-haqiqat*.

Five Types of Knowledge

According to the Sufis, there are five types of knowledge affecting human beings:

The first is the knowledge of the world, which is confined to the attainment of material well-being.

The second is the knowledge of *shariat*, which is mostly used by those who have acquired it to overthrow their opponents with the wordy warfare of logic and argument. This knowledge is that of the exoteric divines.

The third type of knowledge is that of the spiritual Path; and it is found with those who have seriously taken to some inner discipline and have shunned the society of exoterics. In this knowledge the ego still persists, and the consciousness of good and evil still clings to the soul. The knowledge of philosophers and thinkers is on the borderline between the second and third types of knowledge.

The fourth type of knowledge is that of God—the Self (*haqiqat*). One who arrives at this knowledge has no tinge of false ego left and all vestige of duality disappears.

The fifth type of knowledge is the real gnosis—the *marefat* of *haqiqat*, which, Meher Baba explains, is a complete knowledge of God and a complete knowledge of the universe. This is the knowledge of Perfection possessed by the *Rasool* (Avatar) and the *Qutub* (Sadguru).

Unless a soul goes through all the different stages of knowledge, the highest stage of *tasawwuf* (Wisdom) which is *suluk* (return to normal consciousness) can never be attained. Arriving at this stage of gnosis entitles one to be called a perfect Sufi (Perfect Master). There are, however, instances where persons have reached the fourth stage of knowledge without going through the intermediary stages, but they are quite exceptional, and occur only when such persons are led by a Perfect Master.

Meher Baba divides all spiritually advanced souls into five basic types: God-merged (Perfect One), God-intoxicated, God-absorbed, God-communed and God-mad. The reader is referred to Chapter I, pages 21–37 of Dr. William Donkin's book *The Wayfarers* which delineates Baba's treatment of this subject.

17 **Paramatma** Is Infinite and Everything (80)

Paramatma is Infinite and Everything.

All *atmas* are **in** *Paramatma*.

Some *atmas* experience the gross world, some experience the subtle world and some the mental world, and some experience *Paramatma*.

As all *atmas* are **in** *Paramatma* they also have these different experiences **in** *Paramatma*. Those who experience (the experiencers) and the very experiences are all **in** *Paramatma*. Although the experiencers and the experiences are **in** *Paramatma* they are not of *Paramatma*! They are of the Nothing.

Paramatma is the Everything, and the Nothing is in the Everything.

Hence, the *atmas* that are conscious of only *sharir*, *pran* or *manas* are not conscious of Self. In other words, such *atmas* are conscious of the Nothing and not of the Everything. Such *atmas* experience the gross, subtle or mental world and do not experience *Paramatma*. That is, they experience the Nothing and do not experience the Everything. Therefore it can be said that the *atmas* that are **in** *Paramatma* are not conscious of the Self, and are not experiencing *Paramatma*, but they are conscious of the Nothing and are of the Nothing, and they experience the Nothing.

These *atmas* identify themselves with the Nothing so realistically that they apparently become Nothing.

Every being is Nothing personified.

All beings and things are personifications of the Nothing—that is in the Everything.

18 Five Spiritual Facts (107)

- | | |
|------------------------------------|---|
| 1. Ordinary Human Being | Man, as man, sees himself in everyone and everything. |
| 2. <i>Pir</i> in Sixth Plane | Man, as man, sees God in everyone and everything. |
| 3. <i>Majzoob</i> in Seventh Plane | God, as God, sees Himself in everyone and everything. |

4. *Qutub* God, as man, sees Himself simultaneously in everyone and everything.
5. Saviour God, as God and man, sees Himself simultaneously in everyone and everything.

—Meher Baba

19 Real Birth and Real Death (112)

There is one real birth and one real death. You are born once and you really die only once.

What is the real birth?

It is the birth of a drop in the ocean of Reality. What is meant by the birth of a drop in the ocean of Reality? It is the advent of individuality, born of indivisibility through a glimmer of the first most-finite consciousness, which transfixed cognizance of limitation into the Unlimited.

What is meant by the real death?

It is consciousness getting free from all limitations. Freedom from all limitations is real death. It is really the death of all limitations. It is liberation. In between the real birth and the real death, there is no such reality as the so-called births and deaths.

What really happens in the intermediate stage known as births and deaths is that the limitations of consciousness gradually wear off until the consciousness is free from all limitations. Ultimately consciousness, totally free from all limitations, experiences the unlimited Reality eternally. Real dying is equal to real living. Therefore I stress: Die for God and you will live as God.

You are first a child. Then you grow old and drop the body, but you never die and never were born. In the East, Vedantists believe in reincarnation, and in a number of births and deaths until one attains Godhood. The Muslims believe in one birth only and one death only. The Christians and the Zoroastrians hold the same belief. All are right. But Jesus, Buddha, Muhammad, Zoroaster, all meant what I mean by real birth and real death. I say you are born once and die once.

All the so-called births and deaths are only sleeps and wakings. The difference between sleep and death is that after you sleep you

awake and find yourself in the same body; but after death you awake in a different body. You never die. Only the blessed ones die and become one with God.

20 **Fana** and **Fana-Fillah** (128)

Fana is the state of unconscious Consciousness.

In *fana-fillah* soul is unconscious of everything except Self being God.

Before the soul loses its human state and gains the divine state of *nirvikalpa*, it has to experience the vacuum state of *nirvana*.

Nirvana is the infinite vacuum, a state in which the soul is fully conscious of real Nothing, and if in the state of *nirvana* the human body is dropped, one passes into a state of the infinite bliss of God.

In some cases *nirvana* is immediately and inevitably followed by *nirvikalpa* or *fana-fillah*, where the soul is fully conscious of real Everything. *Nirvana* and *nirvikalpa* are so closely linked that each can be said to be the divine goal;

false nothing = false everything

real Nothing = neither everything nor nothing

real Everything = God the Infinite.

False nothing leads to false everything; and real Nothing leads to real Everything. False nothing is linked to false everything; and real Nothing is linked to real Everything. Eventually false nothing ends in false everything, and real Nothing ends in real Everything. In duality false nothing is false everything. In unity real Nothing and real Everything are one.

Meher Baba has also made the following points:

1. The real goal is to realize God in human form; but those who drop their bodies before attaining God-realization (*i.e.*, those who drop their bodies in the state of *nirvana* before attaining the state of *nirvikalpa*), their goal is liberation (*mukti*) from the cycle of rebirth. They experience infinite bliss only.
2. The individuality of the one who attains *nirvikalpa* state is retained as infinite and unlimited even after dropping the human body and there is a continuous experience of "I am God." But the one who attains *mukti* (liberation) experiences "I am *anand*"

(I am infinite bliss); and this limits his experience of unlimited individuality of “I am infinite Power-Knowledge-Bliss” simultaneously.

3. Infinite knowledge is the most important aspect of the trionature of God, when an individual realizes God in human form. Infinite bliss remains the important aspect of one’s experience when one has dropped one’s body in the state of *nirvana* and attains *mukti*, i.e., liberation as the goal.
4. *Majzoob-e-Kamil* experiences infinite Knowledge-Power-Bliss simultaneously and when he comes down to normal consciousness, i.e., when he is also duality-conscious and is no more in the state of *Majzoob-e-Kamil*, he not only experiences Knowledge-Power-Bliss but also uses them while having his human body.

21 The Sufi Conception of **Fana** and **Baqa** (131)

This is a short study of the terms *fana* and *baqa* as understood by the Sufis. Every plane has a *fana* and *baqa* of its own. It must be remembered that the *fana* of the planes is not the *fana* of the seventh plane, and that the *baqa* of the planes is not the *baqa* of the *Qutub* state—the state of perfection.

The following are some of the chief points of comparison in Sufi gnosis, and it will be seen that their exposition is mostly in relation to the seventh plane and that their terms have, of course, a transcendental application.

Fana literally means effacement or annihilation. It is a state that is not permanent.

Baqa literally means permanence and is a state that abides forever.

Fana signifies the end of travelling **towards** God.

Baqa signifies the beginning of travelling **in** God.

Fana is not to be considered as an attribute; it is not like the dissolution of sugar in water. According to Hujwiri, it does not signify the disappearance of essence.

Baqa represents that which was not non-existent before, and will not be non-existent afterwards, like the essence of God.

Fana is the disappearance of the cognition of *ghair* (the other, i.e., duality).

Baqa is the knowledge of God that one gains after the disappearance of *ghair*.

Fana according to Mahmud Shabistari in *Gulshan-e-Raz*, is death of passion, of self-will and of the ego, resulting in the spiritual awakening to eternal life (*baqa*). It also means the forgetfulness of the false ego (*khudi*) which has so long been concealing man's reality (God) from himself. If it occurs to the aspirant that he is effaced from self, it is a defect. The highest state is to be effaced from effacement.

Fana is of two kinds, outward and inward:

Outward *fana*. This is the *fana* of deeds and the glory of divine deeds. The possessor of this *fana* becomes so immersed in divine deeds that he is oblivious of himself and of everything except of the desire and the will of God. Some holy aspirants have attained this *muqam* wherein they are so indifferent to physical needs that God appoints someone to look after them.

Inward *fana*. This is the *fana* of qualities in *zat* (Reality). The possessor of *hal* (experience) in the revelation of the attributes of God is immersed sometimes in the *fana* of his own qualities, and sometimes in the manifestation of the influence (*asar*) and the glory (*tajalli*) of God.

Outward *fana* is a portion of the lords of the heart and of the companions of *hal*.

Inward *fana* is peculiar to the noble ones who have outgrown the sway of *hal* and have pierced the veil of the heart; and from the society of the men of the heart they have joined the society of the converter of hearts (God).

Baqa that is in relation to outward *fana* is this: After *fana* of desire and of will God makes the slave into a master of desire and will and gives him absolute control of the reins of guidance.

Baqa in relation to inward *fana* is this: The soul becomes neither God as the veil of Creation nor Creation, the veil of God. In *fana* God is the veil of Creation, and to those who have not reached the state of *fana*, Creation is the veil of God.

22 Involution of Consciousness (135)

Meher Baba comments further:

“Full consciousness, which is complete as soon as the first human form is taken, gradually withdraws, plane after plane. This involution of consciousness (which consciousness is already complete) begins for the first time when the hard-set gross impressions become thinned out. Consciousness thus experiences the first plane. As the impressions get thinned out still more the consciousness withdraws (involves) more and experiences the second plane, and so forth until the seventh plane is attained.

“Withdrawal of consciousness means that at first the consciousness which was complete was focussed on gross impressions and far from being focussed on Self. Later on, in the process of involution, as the impressions thin out more and more gradually, with the help of diverse experiences of opposites, the consciousness also concurrently shifts its focus gradually towards Self. In the seventh plane the consciousness is no longer impressioned consciousness, and this naturally results in the consciousness focussing upon its Self. This means that the consciousness identifies itself with Self as all impressions have vanished.”

23 Five Algebraic Definitions (137)

1. GOD = Infinite Existence + Infinite Knowledge + Infinite Bliss minus Unconsciousness
 = *sat + chit + anand* minus unconsciousness
 = *satchitanand* minus unconsciousness
2. Perfect Master = *Qutub* = *Sadguru*
 = Infinite Existence + Infinite Knowledge + Infinite Bliss + Consciousness
 = Conscious of being infinite and conscious of finite simultaneously.
3. Saviour = Perfect Man = *Insan-e-Kamil* = *Puratan Purush* = Buddha = *Saheb-e-Zaman* = *Rasool* = *Avatar* = Living Christ
 = Infinite Existence + Infinite Knowledge + Infinite Bliss + Consciousness
 = Conscious of being infinite and conscious of being finite simultaneously.

4. Man
or
jiv-atma
or
insan } = Body + Energy + Mind + Consciousness + Soul
5. *Majzoob-e-Kamil* = Divine "I"
= Divine Consciousness minus finite consciousness

24 The Four Types of **Mukti** or Liberation (138)

Certain well-known terms to describe various types of perfection are stated here briefly so that the seeker may fit them into the framework of the subject of God-realization. In describing these types of perfection, the key word *mukti*, which literally means "liberation," is used here to define four types of liberation.

In the following table all the four types of liberation (*mukti*) of the soul belong to the seventh plane.

1. Ordinary *mukti* (Ordinary *moksha*)
 2. *Videh mukti*
 3. *Jivanmukti*
 4. *Param mukti*
1. Ordinary ***mukti*** (*najat*) is achieved only after death by some exceptionally God-fearing, Truth-loving, good souls; and this *mukti* usually comes three to five days after the soul has left the body. Since this *mukti* is attained without the body, the individual soul enjoys only bliss (*anand*); and although power and knowledge are there, such a *Mukta* cannot experience them. Such a liberated soul is conscious only of the bliss of Union, and for him Creation no longer exists, thereby bringing to an end the constant round of births and deaths.

Nirvikalpa samadhi must not be confused with this ordinary *mukti* or *moksha* state. Should a soul reach the *mukti* state, it does so **after** the death of the physical body. Such a soul reaches God, but this occurs only after death. Thus there is an important distinction between ordinary *mukti* on the one hand

and *nirvikalpa samadhi* on the other, because the latter is experienced while the soul retains the body and thus becomes *Videh Mukta*.

2. Some God-realized souls known as **Videh Muktas** retain the body for three or four days after becoming realized. Their consciousness is merged completely in their own Real Self (God), and they are not, therefore, conscious of their bodies or of Creation. They experience constantly the infinite bliss, power and knowledge of God, their own Self now, but they cannot consciously use them in Creation, nor help others to attain liberation. Nevertheless, their presence on earth, for the few days they remain there, is a centre for the radiation of the infinite power, knowledge and bliss of God; and those who approach them, serve them and worship them are immensely benefited. Others retain the body for years according to the momentum of their “*prarabdha*.” The *Videh Mukta* is the *Brahmi Bhoot*, or the *Majzoob-e-Kamil* of the Sufis, and he experiences the trionature of God—*sat-chit-anand*—automatically.
3. The **Jivanmukta** (*Azad-e-Mutlaq*) in *turiya avastha* (*fana-ma-al-baqa*) enjoys All-Bliss, All-Knowledge and All-Power, and his consciousness is of the “I am God” state, and also of the three spheres—the gross, subtle and mental; but, being without duty, he does not use the bliss, knowledge and power for others.
4. The **Param Mukta**, who is known as the Perfect Master, *Qutub* or *Sadguru*, comes back to normal consciousness after God-realization, and is simultaneously conscious of the “I am God” state and the three relative existences and their corresponding spheres. He not only enjoys All-Power, All-Knowledge, All-Bliss, but uses them in all the planes of existence through the universal mind and the universal body.

Such *Param Muktas* are conscious of themselves as God, both in His unmanifest and manifest aspects. They know themselves both as the unchangeable divine essence (*zat*) and as the infinitely varied manifestations (*sifat*). They experience themselves as God apart from Creation; as God the Creator, Preserver

and Destroyer; and as God Who has accepted and transcended the limitations of Creation. This means that such a one is conscious of every one of the ten states of God shown on the chart facing page 158.

The *Param Mukta* constantly experiences and uses the absolute peace and perfection of the trio-nature of God—*sat-chit-anand*. He fully enjoys and suffers the divine sport of Creation. He knows himself as God in everything and is therefore able to help everyone spiritually, and can make other souls realize God as any of the four types of *Mukta*. He is indeed the helper of humanity in particular and of Creation in general.

25 A Summary of the Four Types of **Mukti** (138)

Meher Baba summarizes these four types of *mukti* in the following way:

Type of Mukti	Consciousness	Duty in Duality
Ordinary <i>Mukti</i>	<i>Anand</i> (bliss) only; no consciousness of “I am God” or of duality.	No
<i>Videh Mukti</i>	“I am God” (<i>sat-chit-anand</i> or Knowledge, Power and Bliss) without consciousness of duality.	No
<i>Jivanmukti</i>	“I am God” (<i>sat-chit-anand</i>) with consciousness of duality.	No
<i>Param Mukti</i>	Simultaneously “I am God” (<i>sat-chit-anand</i>) with duality and divinity in action.	Yes

[See also Summary, pp. 278–279. Ed.]

26 Signs of Perfection (141)

In answer to a question by a disciple requesting some infallible method of recognizing a Perfect Master, Meher Baba explained: “An ordinary man may not be able to discriminate satisfactorily between the different stages of spiritual attainment up to the sixth plane. He may be able to know that such souls are advanced, but not the extent of their advancement. But when a sincere and patient

seeker of Truth comes into contact with one who is spiritually perfect, he will observe certain outer signs that are inseparably associated with inner spiritual perfection.

“The most important of these signs are three: firstly, Perfection is not only ‘Oneness with God,’ but the continual and uninterrupted experience of ‘Oneness in everything.’ A Perfect Master continually, without break, experiences and realizes his own Self as the Self in all. This inner experience objectively manifests itself in the spontaneity of love that such a one feels or expresses towards all Creation. To him nothing is attractive or repulsive. Good and bad, saint and sinner, beauty and ugliness, wisdom and idiocy, health and disease—all are modes of his own manifestation. When embodied Perfection loves, fondles or feeds any living creature, it feels and enjoys as if it were loving, fondling and feeding its own Self. In this stage no vestige of ‘otherness’ is left.

“The second sign is the atmosphere of bliss that Perfection radiates in its immediate vicinity, an atmosphere that a stranger in search of it cannot help feeling. A Perfect Master not only enjoys infinite bliss but also experiences universal suffering. The acuteness of suffering however is nullified or subdued by the overwhelming feeling of bliss. Hence Perfection can outwardly appear blissfully calm in the face of every kind of suffering and persecution.

“The third sign of Perfection is its power to adapt itself to any level of humanity. It can be as nonchalant on a throne as in a gutter. It can very naturally be thrifty with the poor, extravagant with the rich, regal with kings, wise with the learned and simple with the illiterate and the ignorant. Just as a Master of Letters teaches English in different ways to beginners and graduate students, so also a Perfect Master adapts himself to the level of those whom he wants to uplift spiritually.”

Once Ghaus Ali Shah Qalander, while discoursing on spiritual perfection (*faqiri*), said, “Giving perfection to a disciple is a matter of a fraction of a second. A word in the ear is enough to lift a man at once from finiteness to infinity, and such a transformation is not dependent on prayers or fasts.”

Maulana Rumi has said:

Dad-i ura qabiliyat-i sharv nist
Balkih sharv-i qabiliyat dad-i ust.

“Divine Grace is not limited by conditions of ability.
 Ability, in fact, is conditioned by Divine Grace.”

Hearing this, one of the disciples remarked, “Sire, if realization be so easy of attainment, then why is it that disciples are invariably made to undergo a long period of trials and austerities?” In reply, Ghaus Ali Shah related the following anecdote:

“A certain man, having two vessels encrusted with the rust and dirt of many years, decided to have them cleansed. He gave one vessel to a professional who promised to cleanse it in forty days, and the other to a man who undertook to do the job in a single day. The professional began to work at his vessel scientifically. He subjected it to many different processes over a period of forty days, and he made the vessel not only spick and span but also a thing fit for use.

“The second man, who had promised to finish the job in one day, adopted the very drastic procedure of burning the vessel in a huge fire. This cleansed the vessel quickly and completely, but made it brittle and worthless. It can be seen, therefore, that although both the vessels were made clean, only that which underwent the lengthy process was of any use.”

The Master went on to say that it was for this reason that a Perfect Master seldom gave realization to an aspirant instantaneously, but led him to it slowly so that he might become a robust, useful vessel for God’s work.

In this connection, Meher Baba once remarked to his disciples, “Realization can be imparted to anyone in a second. It will then be for one’s own self only with no benefit to others. The period of austerity, self-denial and hardship which one undergoes with a Master, engenders power and gives authority to use Realization, when achieved, for the spiritual awakening of others.”*

* [See also Meher Baba, “Perfection,” *Discourses*, 78–82, for the understanding of the difference between spiritual perfection and the relative perfection pertaining to the domain of duality. Ed.]

27 **Hal** and **Muqam** (141)

Here is a gist of *hal* (experience) and *muqam* (stage) in the light of Sufi gnosis. Some Sufis believe there is no appreciable difference between *hal* and *muqam*; they maintain that every *muqam* is *hal* at the beginning and develops into *muqam* at the end. This applies to all the planes included in the subtle and mental spheres. Many however distinguish *hal* from *muqam*.

According to Abdullah Haris Muhasibi of Basra:

Hal is the gift of God; it is as fleeting as lightning, and is secured by practice (*mujahida*).

Muqam is the result of repentance, and is secured by the constant overshadowing of *hal*.

The author of *Awarif-ul-Maarif* has it thus:

Hal signifies a hidden event that descends from the upper world upon the heart of the pilgrim, and keeps going and coming until the divine attraction draws him from the lowest to the highest level.

Muqam is the station on the Path at which the pilgrim arrives. It becomes the place of his stay until he advances further.

Hal is not under the control of the pilgrim; the pilgrim is controlled by it.

Muqam is in the traveller's sway.

Hal is a gift (*maohib*).

Muqam is an acquisition (*kasb*).

Hal can never be without being related to *muqam*.

Muqam can never be without being related to *hal*.

Sheikh Mohammed Ibrahim, also known as Ghazur-e-Ilahi, in his *Irshadat* says:

When *hal* continues, it becomes *muqam*. Whoever gets *hal* once is a beginner, and whosoever continues in it becomes an adept.

Meher Baba explains that:

In the general sense of the word, *hal* is the inner experience (which includes ecstasy, both controlled and uncontrolled) of relative existences on the first through the sixth planes (stages) of the Path. In the particular sense, *hal* is the state of divine ecstasy and is always experienced in degrees of potency according to its relative *muqam*. *Hal* in Vedanta is called *bhav* and *muqam* is called *sthan*.

Muqam is the staying of the pilgrim on a given plane, in that particular *hal*.

Hal and *muqam* go together up to and onto the sixth plane. *Hal* always dominates *muqam*.

Hal and *muqam* do not exist on the seventh plane.

Where there is *hal* there is duality. When one from the seventh plane comes down to normal consciousness and establishes himself on any plane for the sake of duty, then that particular plane becomes his *muqam*. Thus for the *Qutub* (*Sadguru*) there is no *hal*, there is only *muqam*. Ordinary men, who are by nature emotional, can enjoy ordinary *hal* while listening to music, but this is a pseudo-*hal* and is not to be compared with the spiritual *hal* of a pilgrim on the Path.

28 Advent of the **Avatar** (149)

Being questioned as to whether or not the *Avatar* is the first individual soul to have become God-realized, Meher Baba replied:

“It was God Who first became infinitely conscious (see explanation in God State II–B). All this means that God realized Himself first. Simultaneously, God in His State II–A is infinitely unconscious (see explanation in God State II–A). The other states of God and all divine statuses are the outcome of God’s State II–A eternally aspiring to gain infinite consciousness.

“As a result of all this, we find that man becomes God.

“The *Sadguru* is Man-God (*i.e.*, man becoming God) and had to pass through the process of evolution and involution, whereas the *Avatar* is God-Man; that is, God directly becomes man without passing through the process of evolution and involution.

“The five *Sadgurus* (*Qutubs*, Perfect Masters) effect the advent of the *Avatar* (*Rasool*, Christ, Buddha) on earth and therefore the advent of the first *Avatar* on earth was not possible without there first being the five *Sadgurus* to effect that coming. Consequently in the beginning the five Perfect Masters became realized first and then there took place the first advent of the *Avatar* on earth.

“Whether there have been twenty-six *Avatars* since Adam, or one *lakh* and twenty-four thousands of Prophets as is sometimes claimed, or whether Jesus Christ was the last and only Messiah or

Muhammad the last Prophet is all immaterial and insignificant when eternity and Reality are under consideration. It matters very little to dispute whether there have been ten or twenty-six or a million *Avatars*. The truth is that the *Avatar* is always one and the same, and that the five *Sadgurus* bring about the advent of the *Avatar* on earth. This has been going on cycle after cycle, and millions of such cycles must have passed by and will continue to pass by without affecting eternity in the least."

29 Gnosis of the Seventh Plane (149)

Meher Baba describes the gnosis of "I am God"* of the seventh plane, belonging to a *Majzoob*, an *Azad-e-Mutlaq*, a *Qutub* and the *Rasool* respectively as follows:

1. *Majzoob* (*Brahmi Bhoot*)
Anal Haqq — This means "I am God" (endlessly).
2. *Azad-e-Mutlaq* (*Jivanmukta*)
Anal Haqq, with
Hama ba man ast — This means "Everything is with Me."
3. *Qutub* (*Sadguru*)
Anal Haqq, simultaneously with
Hama man am — This means "Everything is Me."
Hama dar man ast — This means "Everything is in Me."
Hama az man ast — This means "Everything is from Me."
4. *Saheb-e-Zaman* (*Avatar*)†
Anal Haqq, simultaneously with
Man hama am — This means "I am everything."
Man dar hama am — This means "I am in everything."
Hama az man ast — This means "Everything is from Me."
Hama dar man ast — This means "Everything is in Me."

* After disembodiment (physical death) the gnosis of all of them continues endlessly to remain "I am God."

† [Pointing out the subtle difference between the gnosis of the *Qutub* and the *Saheb-e-Zaman* (*Avatar*), Meher Baba further explained:

Qutub's gnosis is "I am God and God is Everything," whereas gnosis of *Saheb-e-Zaman* is "I am God and I am Everything." Ed.]

30 The **Avatar** and the **Sadguru** (150)

The sense Meher Baba wishes to convey is: “When a *Sadguru* is said to be in good health or ill, all this is said and seen and felt by ordinary human beings. The underlying truth from the point of view of the *Sadguru* is that neither good health nor illness nor anything whatsoever affects (touches) his being (infinity) in the least, because he is perfectly conscious (fully aware) of Illusion as illusory and is thus fully aware that health and illness are both illusory (i.e., they are the outcome of the Nothing).

“How could the Nothing ever affect him? The *Sadguru* has overcome the impressions of Nothing through the process of evolution, reincarnation and involution, and he has realized that he is the Everything (which, of course, includes the Nothing). Even though the *Sadguru* remains within the law of Creation, the law itself does not touch him.

“*Sadguru*’ means that man has become God. Therefore, when man has **become** God he can no longer **be** man, and if he has to live as man he has to act, behave or appear like a man by spontaneously putting into action, that is, demonstrating, all the natural tendencies of man.

“Being a Perfect Master, the *Sadguru* enacts the part (or plays the role, or lives through the role) so perfectly on all levels and in all planes that, under all circumstances and in all other respects, he **appears** to ordinary human beings as if he were a man amongst men of the gross world. He also **appears** as if he were one of the men in the subtle planes for those who are in the subtle planes, and to those who are in the mental planes he appears as if he were one of them.

“The *Sadguru* is simultaneously on the level of the lowest and of the highest. On one hand he is established in infinity (Reality) and on the other hand he is the master of Illusion. Thus the *Sadguru* has under his sway the two extremes, and reconciliation between the two extremes could only be established and maintained throughout all intermediary stages and states by the *Sadguru* **acting** on all planes and on all levels simultaneously.

“In the case of the *Avatar*, the story is quite different. All the difference is contained in the fact that *Sadguru* means man becoming

God, while *Avatar* means God becoming man. It is very difficult to grasp the entire meaning of the word '*Avatar*.' For mankind it is easy and simple to declare that the *Avatar* is God and that it means that God becomes man. But this is not all that the word '*Avatar*' means or conveys.

"It would be more appropriate to say that the *Avatar* is God and that God becomes man for all mankind and simultaneously God also becomes a sparrow for all sparrows in Creation, an ant for all ants in Creation, a pig for all pigs in Creation, a particle of dust for all dusts in Creation, a particle of air for all airs in Creation, etc., for each and everything that is in Creation.

"When the five *Sadgurus* effect the presentation of the Divinity of God into Illusion, this Divinity pervades the Illusion in effect and presents Itself in innumerable varieties of forms—gross, subtle and mental. Consequently in *Avataric* periods God mingles with mankind as man and with the world of ants as an ant, etc. But the man of the world cannot perceive this and hence simply says that God has become man and remains satisfied with this understanding in his own world of mankind.

"Whatever be the understanding of man, the fact remains that the *Avatar* **becomes** and the *Sadguru* **acts**.

"The *Avatar's* illness has nothing to do with the taking on of *karma* of individuals. As the *Avatar* is God Who has become man in all respects, there is no reason why He should not be susceptible to all the natural tendencies of a human being. After all, God has become man and He is man indeed. But although the *Avatar* actually becomes ill, as a man who falls ill, it must be remembered that He also has simultaneously the background of His infinite power, knowledge and bliss.

"The *Avatar* never takes on the *karma* of individuals but His Godhood functions universally."

31 Action and Inaction (150)

1. In the Beyond-Beyond state of God there is unconscious inaction.
2. In the state of God-realization there is conscious inaction. This is the state of perfection but **not** of the Perfect Master.

3. In the intermediate state (between 1 and 2) there is conscious action.

Actions promote *sanskaras* (impressions). *Sanskaras* in turn breed more actions and create bindings. In this state there is bondage.

4. In the state of the *Majzoob* of the seventh plane there is unconscious action.
5. In the state of Perfect Masters there is conscious **active** inaction.

Perfect Masters are free of *sanskaras*. They have no impressions. As such, there cannot be room for actions of their own. Their lives are of inaction, but made active because of the prevailing environmental circumstances. Actions of Perfect Masters are prompted by the environment—by whatever atmosphere prevails then.

Examples:

1. The Beyond-Beyond state of God may be compared with a child fast asleep in a cradle. It is an example of unconscious inaction.
2. The state of the God-realized person (not a Perfect Master) may be compared with a child wide awake but still in the cradle. This is an example of conscious inaction.
3. The state in between 1 and 2 may be compared with a child awake and out of the cradle. It is an example of conscious action.
4. The state of the *Majzoob* of the seventh plane may be compared with a somnambulist. The somnambulist walks about or performs other actions in sleep and is not aware of what he does in this state. Similarly the *Majzoob* of the seventh plane does actions and is not conscious of them. His is unconscious action: he eats, drinks, speaks, etc. But all this is his unconscious action.
5. The state of a Perfect Master may be compared with a child wide awake but inside the cradle that is continuously rocked by mankind. It is conscious **active** inaction. Inaction is being inside the cradle and active inaction is the rocking of the cradle by others.

32 Meher Baba on the Hierarchy (150)

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. Besides the 55 Perfect Masters and the *Avatar* there are also 56 *Majzoobs-e-Kamil* in each cycle. These *Majzoobs*, who experience the state of *fana-fillah*, are the ‘sleeping’ or ‘inactive’ partners in the conduct of the divine sport (*lila*) of Creation.”

	Perfect Masters (<i>Sadgurus</i>)	Perfect Ones (<i>Majzoobs-e-Kamil</i>)	
1st age	5	7	of which 4 leave the body immediately after Realization
2nd age	5	3	
3rd age	5	7	of which 4 leave the body immediately after Realization
4th age	5	3	
5th age	5	7	of which 4 leave the body immediately after Realization
6th age	5	3	
7th age	5	7	of which 4 leave the body immediately after Realization
8th age	5	3	
9th age	5	7	of which 4 leave the body immediately after Realization
10th age	5	3	
11th age	5	6	of which 3 leave the body immediately after Realization
<i>Avatar</i>	<u>1</u>	—	
	56	56	

* In Vedanta a cycle of time is called *yuga*, and an age is called *kal*; the Sufis call a cycle *daor* or *zaman* and an age *waqt*.

In studying this table we should remember that:

1. One cycle lasts for about 700 to about 1400 years and is made up of 11 ages. Each age lasts for about 65 to 125 years, its length, like the length of a cycle, depending on material, spiritual and universal circumstances.
2. In each age the functioning hierarchy consists of 7,000 spiritual beings (either advanced or perfect). The advanced beings are on or between the first through sixth planes and the Perfect Ones are either *Sadgurus* or *Majzoobs*. In each of the ages one to ten inclusive there are five *Sadgurus* (*Qutubs*), one of whom is the *Qutub-e-Irshad*.
3. In the eleventh and last age of a cycle the *Qutub-e-Irshad* ceases to function as such as soon as the *Avatar* (*Saheb-e-Zaman* or *Saviour*) in person assumes His own office of Christhood (*muqam-e-Muhammadi*). Thus the number of five *Sadgurus* in each age remains constant.
4. The Perfect *Majzoobs* alternate in number in each successive age, there being seven in the first age, three in the second, seven in the third, and so on. In the eleventh age, however, there are six *Majzoobs-e-Kamil*.

In those ages where there are more than three *Majzoobs*, i.e., the first, third, fifth, seventh, ninth and eleventh ages, the extra ones leave the body **immediately** after becoming realized (*Majzoob-e-Kamil*). This means that in the first, third, fifth, seventh and ninth ages, four out of the seven *Majzoobs* die at once after Realization, and that in the eleventh and final age, in which there are six perfect *Majzoobs*, three die at once after Realization.

The result is that in any given age **only** three *Majzoobs* remain in the body. Thus from the point of view of the **functioning** hierarchy there are really only three *Majzoobs* in each age.

Meher Baba distributes the 7,000 members of the **functioning** hierarchy for a particular age in and between the seven spiritual planes as follows:

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	5,600
In the second plane	666
In the third plane	558
In the fourth plane	56
In the fifth plane	56
In the sixth plane	56
In the seventh plane (i.e., <i>Majzoobs</i> in the body)	3
Perfect Masters (<i>Sadgurus</i>)	<u>5</u>
	7,000
The <i>Avatar</i> , in the eleventh age of each cycle, brings the number to	7,001

There are always, at all times and in all ages, fifty-six God-realized souls or *Shiv-Atmas* in human form on earth; and out of these fifty-six only eight have public recognition and function as active members of the **functioning** spiritual hierarchy, consisting of 7,000 members, who do the assigned spiritual duties on various planes of consciousness according to their spiritual advancement or perfection.

The remaining forty-eight God-realized ones are not amongst the functioning spiritual hierarchy of 7,000 members. They remain aloof and people are not cognizant of their divinity, though all forty-eight have the same experience and enjoy the same divine state of "I am God" as the other eight. These forty-eight are, as it were, on the waiting list ready to help in any spiritual contingency cropping up through one or more of the functioning members dropping the body.

Out of the eight God-realized souls who are at the head of the functioning spiritual hierarchy of 7,000 members, five are Perfect Masters who, besides having a wide public recognition, have a duty to perform in the rendering of spiritual service and benefit to the whole of mankind. The remaining three are *Majzoobs* who, in spite of having achieved Godhood and remaining in the physical body, have no spiritual duty to perform towards mankind. Yet they are the source of spiritual benefit to all who come into contact with them.

So it could be said that whereas the five Perfect Masters render spiritual service to humanity as a whole, the **few** who come into contact with and serve the three *Majzoobs* draw spiritual benefit from them, while the forty-eight God-realized ones keep aloof from recognition and function, until a gap is created in the functioning hierarchy by one or more of the eight God-realized ones dropping the physical body.

33 Advent of God as **Avatar** (151)

The universe has come out of God. God has not come out of the universe. Illusion has come out of Reality. Reality has not come out of Illusion. God alone is real; the universe by itself is illusion.

God's life lived in Illusion, as the *Avatar* and as Perfect Masters, is not illusory; whereas God's life lived in Creation as all animate and inanimate beings is both real and illusory. Illusion, illusory life and God's life in Illusion are not and cannot be one and the same. Illusion has no life and can have no life. Illusion is illusion and is nothing by itself. Illusory life means life in Illusion, with Illusion, surrounded by Illusion, and though it is life (as experienced by the soul in Creation) it is illusory life. But God's life lived in Illusion is not illusory, because in spite of living the illusory life God remains conscious of His own Reality.

God is absolutely independent, and the universe is entirely dependent upon God. Yet when the Perfect Masters effect the descent of God on earth as the *Avatar*, they make Reality and Illusion interdependent, each upon the other. And thus it is that His infinite mercy and unbounded love are eternally drawn upon by those who are immersed in Illusion.

Between God and the universe, infinite mercy and unbounded love act as a prominent link which is eternally made use of by men who become God (*Sadgurus*, Perfect Masters or *Qutubs*), and by God who becomes man (*Avatar*, Christ or *Rasool*), and so the universe becomes the eternal playmate of God. Through this prominent link the *Avatar* not only established life in his divine play, but also established law in Illusion. And this law, being established by the God-Man or *Avatar*, is the law of the lawless Infinite and it

is eternally real and at the same time illusory. It is this law that governs the universe—all its ups and downs. Construction and devastation are guided by this law.

At the cyclic period, God's independent Absoluteness is made to work upon this law by the God-Man as God's will, and this means that anything and everything that the *Avatar* wills is ordained by God.

34 ***Tauhid*** or the Unitary State of God (159)

The principle involving *tauhid*, or the unitary state of God, is indisputable. It is the basic foundation of all known religions and the goal of spiritual discipline in both Sufism and Vedanta. To accept *tauhid* in theory is the privilege of the masses, but to indulge in research thereof is the specialty of the select few. It is both easy and difficult. *Tauhid* is seemingly so easy that it is talked about universally on pulpit and platform and yet it is so difficult of achievement that the best of efforts therein yield nothing but stupefaction and bewilderment.

The unity of God, in its transcendent aspect, is the *tauhid-e-tanzihi* (Absolute Oneness) of Sufism, and the *advaita* of Vedanta. The problem of *tauhid* presents multifarious aspects, as is exemplified by the old story of several blind people examining an elephant. Each touched a different part of the creature and formed a different opinion. Individual approach to the subject is relatively quite true and unchallengeable, and yet the elephant as a whole is something quite different and understandable for the blind. The following are a few utterances of eminent Sufis concerning *tauhid* and the aspects thereof which appeal to them:*

* The apparent contradictions in the words of Sufis are merely due to limitations of the means to express the experienced truths and to describe the realized Truth in different contexts, under different circumstances and from different points of view that always go together in a single experience or realization as a whole. Meher Baba says that such wordy differences do not contradict but complement the expressions of experienced and realized truths which underlie such contradictions. Explanations in this respect such as have already been given in preceding pages should therefore be always borne in mind, viz.:

Tauhid is that reality in which the impressions (*nuqush*) are wiped out, and knowledge appears and God remains as immaculate and pure as He was before.

—Junayd of Baghdad

Tauhid is the knowledge of God and this knowledge enables the gnostic to differentiate between the original (*qadim*) and the contingent (*hadas*) being. The transcendent state of *tauhid* involves the denial of *tauhid*.

—Junayd of Baghdad

Tauhid is the effacement of the lover in the attributes of the beloved.

—Jehangir Samnani

Tauhid has two aspects: one is the state and the other is the description of it. The descriptive aspect of *tauhid* belongs to the worldly mission of the Prophets, and the state thereof involves the infinite and boundless ocean. The descriptive aspect depends on the instrumentality of speech, sight, hearing and cognition, and all of these require separate confirmation. To confirm on the basis of extraneous proofs is to suggest duality, and *tauhid* is free of all tinge of duality. Faith in a man walks through the crowded thoroughfare of duality, and this stage cannot altogether be dispensed with.

Descriptive *tauhid* is like a lamp, while *tauhid* in itself and by itself is the sun. When the sun appears, the light of the lamp vanishes into nothingness. Descriptive *tauhid* is changeable, while the state

Page 193: The approach to Truth is individual, and so in the matter of details much depends upon one's spiritual tendency, physical aptitude and external circumstances.

Page 198: A thousand seekers may be enjoying as many experiences, yet the Path of Gnosis is only one.

Page 207: In spite of the different aspects of the experiences of the Experience, all the aspects are experienced together at the same time.

Page 228: On the one hand, more details confuse one more, and less details explain things less. This gives rise to a variety of terms and expressions for use from different viewpoints and in different contexts. In the absence of actual experience, descriptions of the same one thing often sound contradictory. But in the light of relative experiences or the final realization of Truth, these very contradictions prove to be really complementary expressions about the same one truth.

of *tauhid* is immutable and eternal. The words uttered by the tongue are overruled by the heart. When one on the spiritual journey occupies the station of the heart the tongue becomes defunct and mute. Later on the heart, too, is overridden by the spirit (*jan*), and at this stage the wayfarer talks to Him. This talk is not in relation to the essence, but in relation to its attribute. The attribute changes and not the essence (*ayn*). The sun warms up the water, whereby the attribute is changed but not the water. Thus, “the very attempt to affirm *tauhid* is to deteriorate the pristine purity of *tauhid*” (*‘Asbat ut-tauhid, fasidun fit-tauhid*).

Tauhid veils for the unitarian (*mawahid*) the beauty of Absolute Oneness (*jamal-e-ahadiyat*). *Tauhid* on that account is suspect, because you desire it from yourself.

One who writes about *tauhid* is a *mulhid* (rationalist); one who points towards it is a dualist; one who infers it is an idolator; one who talks about it is irresponsible; one who is silent about it is ignorant; one who thinks that he has realized it is self-deluded; one who imagines its nearness is distant from it; one who weighs it with intellect, and forms ideas thereof, is indulging in make-believe; and the one who finds it without seeking is the lost one.

—Abu Bakr Shibli

Tauhid, if spoken of in relation to absolutism (*tanzeeh*) is to qualify it, and to refer to it as qualified (*tashbeeh*) is to make it limited and finite. To equilibrate the two extremes is, however, perfect and just what is desirable.

—Muhyuddin Ibn Arabi

Tauhid is essentially forgetfulness of *tauhid*. Those returning to normal consciousness must needs have some work on the material plane. Hence *tauhid* may be likened to a creditor that can never be adequately and fully paid off in life.

—Quduntul-Kubra

Tauhid, the unitarian stage of God, therefore admits of no language, as in that transcendent state there is none to whom to address oneself.

The Sufis have classified *tauhid* into five main categories, in keeping with or connoting the different stages of man's spiritual unfoldment. They are known as:

1. *Tauhid-e-aqwali*—the verbal unity of God.
 2. *Tauhid-e-afa'ali*—the active unity of God.
 3. *Tauhid-e-ahwali*—the feeling unity of God.
 4. *Tauhid-e-sifati*—unity of God in attributes.
 5. *Tauhid-e-zati*—unity of God in essence.
1. ***Tauhid-e-aqwali*** belongs to the majority of mankind who believe in any one Prophet (*Avatar*) and have faith in His message. At this stage mere verbal acceptance of God or the unity of God, and the performance of duties pertaining thereto enjoined by the lawgiver, are considered enough as a preparation for the forthcoming stages of spiritual life. This is also known as *tauhid-e-shariat*.
 2. ***Tauhid-e-afa'ali*** concerns those who have actually been initiated into the Path. The expression of the unity of God with such initiates of the subtle sphere (*alam-e-malakut*) simulates intrinsically the life of the pure souls, the angels. At this stage the spiritual conviction engendered within is that behind everything, good or bad, is the motivating power of God.
 3. ***Tauhid-e-ahwali*** dawns on those advanced souls of the fifth plane in the mental sphere. At this stage the soul finds itself invested with direct radiation of Divinity and consciously or unconsciously gives immense help to others in the subtle and gross spheres.
 4. ***Tauhid-e-sifati*** belongs to the sixth plane in the same sphere (mental). All the aspects of materiality from the gross and subtlety from the subtle planes, still clinging to the soul, are completely removed and dissolved, like the lustre of stars getting dissipated before the sun. Both (3) and (4) *tauhid* belong to the same mental sphere (*alam-e-jabrut*) and all the three (2), (3) and (4) are also collectively known as *tauhid-e-tariqat*.
 5. ***Tauhid-e-zati*** is God-realization in the fifth Real sphere of *haqiqat*, which includes the different stages or aspects of the

marefat-e-haqiqat, viz., *halat-e-Muhammadi* in the stage of *lahut*, and *haqiqat-e-Muhammadi* in the stage of *hahut* of the sphere of Reality.

The Sufis are unanimous on the point that amongst the various aspects inherent in the realization or *tauhid-e-zati*, the most perfect one is the accentuation of the difference of *ubudiyat* (servantship) between man and God. This spiritual fact the church has misconstrued and misapplied, in adducing that man is man and God is God, and that man can never become God nor can God ever devolve into man. The truth underlying the situation, however, is that after the realization of *tauhid-e-zati* the emphasis on *ubudiyat* (servantship) connotes the third journey of the *Saliks* called *seyr-e-ma Allah*, the return to normal consciousness **with** God.

The varying stages and aspects of *tauhid* as discussed above are given below in tabular form:

Stages	Aspects	Spheres
<i>Tauhid-e-Aqwali</i>	Waqif (gross-conscious)	<i>Alam-e-Nasut</i> (First Sphere)
<i>Tauhid-e-Afa'ali</i>	Wasif (praiser)	<i>Alam-e-Malakut</i> (Second Sphere)
<i>Tauhid-e-Ahwali</i>	Arif (knower)	<i>Alam-e-Jabrut</i> (Third Sphere)
<i>Tauhid-e-Sifati</i>	Ashiq (lover)	
<i>Tauhid-e-Zati</i>	1. <i>Ashiq-o-Mashuq</i> (lover and beloved in one)	1. <i>Alam-e-Lahut</i>
	2. <i>Ashiq</i> (lover) and <i>Mashuq</i> (beloved) simultaneously	2. <i>Alam-e-Hahut</i> (Fifth Sphere)

Wujuddiyyah and Shuhudiyyah

Amongst the various types of unitarians (*ahl-e-tauhid*), the most important and controversial are the two schools of thought known as *Wujuddiyyah* and *Shuhudiyyah*.

Muhyuddin Ibn Arabi is the greatest advocate of the *Wujuddiyyah* school, upholding *wahdat-ul-wujud* (unity of existence), which in Vedanta is Advaitism, upheld by its greatest exponent Sankaracharya. According to Ghazur-e-Ilahi, Ibn Arabi held that existence

(*wujud*) is not more than one, and is the very same, is manifest to itself by itself, like water which is manifest to itself in the form of ice by way of limitation. When in the state of *fana*, the limitation (the form) disappears, the Absolute remains and becomes *Hu Hu* (He, He).

Sheikh Shahabuddin Suhrawardi, one of the chief sponsors of the *Shuhudiyyah* school, characterizing its philosophy as *wahdat-ul-shuhud* (apparentism), the *Vishistadvaita* of Vedanta, maintains that in *fana*, *bandah* (the limited) becomes *kaanahu Hu* (like Him) and not *Hu Hu* (He, He), as iron in the fire, which becomes like fire but not fire itself—the reality of iron being quite different from that of fire. The *Shuhudiyyahs* define two different existences (*zat*) and two distinct things in view—iron and fire. The iron becomes fire temporarily and then iron is iron and fire is fire.

Mirza Jan Janan says that the relationship between the unmanifest aspect of God and the manifest aspect of God is that which exists between the ocean, the waves and the bubbles. And this multiplicity does not in any way affect or interfere with the Oneness of Reality. This is *wahdat-ul-wujud* (identityism). In contrast with this, the other position determining the relationship between God and the created, as that of the original and its shadow or the sun and its rays, is *wahdat-ul-shuhud* (apparentism).

Wahdat-ul-wujud of Muhyuddin Ibn Arabi is from the heights of *ahadiyat* (conscious unity), and the gnosis pertaining to this stage is, therefore, “*Hama ust*” (Everything is He).

Wahdat-ul-shuhud of Sheikh Shahabuddin Suhrawardi, also known as *Mujaddid*, is from the same heights of Reality (*haqiqat*), but the gnosis expressed is “*Hama az ust*” (Everything is from Him).

The two doctrines and the resultant controversies are a later development at the beginning of the present *daor-e-qalandari* (cycle of mastery), and so did not arise during the lifetime of the Arabian Prophet. The doctrine of the *Wujudiyyahs* is based on experience plus reason and the *Shuhudiyyahs* base it on experience and the Quranic aspects of common interest.

Ibn Arabi denies transcendence and immanence, which imply duality. He maintains that God is one and it is He alone Who exists. All else that appear to exist are His manifestations or *tajalliyat*.

Hence God is identical with *sifat* (attributes), and all divine names are identical with the named, which is *Allah*. The saints who belong to the *Wujudiyyah* school of thought have their eyes on the oneness of existence (*wahid-ul-wujud*), the first *tajalli* (manifestation) of God, from the stage of *ahadiyat*; and therefore the later devolutions (viz., mental, subtle and gross worlds) are like a shadow (*zil*) which is nothing and as such constitutes an adumbration on *zat* (divine essence). The shadow (*zil*), however, owes its existence to and is dependent upon God, Who is infinite and eternal. Thus the shadow also is in the sense that the *Wujudiyyahs* look upon everything as God, even the shadows (mental, subtle and gross worlds) which have no independent existence.

The *Shuhudiyyahs*, as said before, hold two *zats*, the one of reality and the other of non-reality, the one of God and the other of *bandah*. The *zat* of *bandah* is zero (*adum*) and this *adum* (nothingness) is relational (*izafi*), and is not real (*haqiqi*). If nothing (*adum*) is to be considered as an essence (Reality), then there will be two *zats*, which results in dualism. The *adum-e-izafi* is only relatively an *adum* (nothing). It is mere zero. If any number of zeroes are added to a zero the value of the number does not change. Thus *adum* is therefore a symbol in the knowledge of God. Since perfection appertains to *zat*, God is Perfection itself. Imperfection relates to *adum* and hence “evil” is the manifestation of *adum* (non-existent existence). The *Mujaddid* only reaffirmed and reemphasized the doctrine of *wahdat-ul-shuhud* (apparentism), originally founded by Abdul Karim al-Jili, the author of *Al-Insan-ul-Kamil*.

The spiritual fact, however, is that *Wujudiyyah* philosophy is of a loftier kind and admits of no considerations of convenience or compromise. The gnosis of Meher Baba is equally applicable to both these approaches to Truth and in order to follow it as given in the “Ten States of God” some familiarity with the Sufi way of delineating the *tanazzulat*—the devolutions of the Absolute—through successive stages of manifestations known as *khamisa wujudat* (Five Existences) of the Sufi world would be of help to the seeker.

The Gnosis of all Perfect Sufis implies that God in the Beyond the Beyond state is unknowable and undefinable. In comprehending

this state of God (*Wara-ul-Wara*) which is Beyond the Beyond, the wings of thought and imagination are paralyzed. In the Beyond the Beyond state, the Absolute God (*Wujud-e-Mutlaq*) is.

The Sufis have described this transcendent state of God in many ways, such as:

Ghaib-ul-Ghaib (the Hidden of the Hidden).

Majhul-un-Nat (the Unknowable and the Undefinable). It is in this state that there is no knowledge of Itself for *zat*.

Munqata-ul-Izharat (the state in relation to which all indications are dropped).

Al Ama (the Dark Mist) which implies a state of latent potentiality of God in relation to its inward aspect of Beyond the Beyond, and in its outward aspect of *ahadiyat* (conscious Oneness) in which *zat* is aware of its transcendent Unity.

Meher Baba explains that although God from the Beyond state (conscious Oneness) cannot return to the Beyond the Beyond state, He knows that He **was** and **is** Infinite Existence, Infinite Knowledge and Infinite Bliss and from that knows that His original state was the Beyond-Beyond state (*Zat-al-Baht*).

However, with a view to making the subject intelligible to the seekers, the Sufis have treated the Divine Theme in terms of devolutions or manifestations of five different types, thus:

Khamisa Wujudat or Five Kinds of Existence

1. *Wahid-ul-wujud* (Unitary Existence) is the first manifestation or *tajalli-e-avval* in the *alam-e-lahut* of the Real Sphere and comprises the stage of *ahadiyat* (conscious Oneness).
2. *Arif-ul-wujud* (Knowing Existence) is the stage associated with *haqiqat-e-Muhammadi* (Reality of Muhammad) or *nur-e-Muhammadi* (Light of Muhammad),* the stage of *hahut* in the Sphere of Reality. This is the stage of *wahdiyat* conscious of *wahidiyat*

* *Haqiqat-e-Muhammadi*: God's original Word realized.

Nur-e-Muhammadi: God's original Word expressed.

Haqiqat-e-Muhammadi includes *nur-e-Muhammadi*, but *nur-e-Muhammadi* does not include *haqiqat-e-Muhammadi*.

(conscious Oneness conscious of Oneness-in-manyness). It is the second manifestation, the *tajalli-e-dovvom*.

3. *Mumtan-ul-wujud* (Negative Existence) is the third stage of manifestation (*tajalli-e-sevvom*). This is *alam-e-jabrut* (the mental sphere) at which point the stage of *wahidiyat* (Oneness in manyness) begins.
4. *Mumkin-ul-wujud* (Possible Existence) amongst other things comprises the world of angels and spirits, and is known as *alam-e-malakut* (the subtle sphere), which is the sphere of Energy. This represents *tajalli-e-chaharom*, the fourth stage of manifestation.
5. *Wajib-ul-wujud* (Necessary Existence) comprises everything relating to gross existence. It is known to the Sufis as *alam-e-nasut* (the gross sphere), the fifth aspect of manifestation, the *tajalli-e-panjom*.

These represent the five devolutions of God from the Beyond state, known as *tajalliyat-e-khamsa* (five manifestations) or *khamasa wujudat* (five existences).

Now we shall treat each one of them in the ascending series beginning with *wajib-ul-wujud* (Necessary Existence) and ending with *wahid-ul-wujud* (Unitary Existence).

In the domain of *shariat* (law), *wajib-ul-wujud* (Necessary Existence) means to the theologian the Absolute God from Whom all grades of existence derive their being. The Sufis on the other hand use the term to denote everything that is gross and material. Here *wujud* means body, since the evolving soul in stone, vegetable, animal and human form cannot be said to evolve without the gross mediums composed of five elements. This gross existence in the stage of *wajib-ul-wujud* is a great boon conferred by God, as without it the achievement of the stages of Perfection, sainthood and leadership would be unthinkable.

The gross body is a wonderful and unique mechanism which has in it all the other four relative and real existences, the subtle, mental and sub-supramental and God Himself. Hence the human body is called by the Sufis as *alam-e-saghir* (Microcosm) which is

the epitome of *alam-e-kabir* (Macrocosm) which comprises all the five existences, the mystery of which no one can unravel without the help of the universal mind of a Perfect Master or the Saviour.

Wajib-ul-wujud (Necessary Existence, or gross sphere) derives its existence from or is the reflection of *mumkin-ul-wujud* (subtle sphere). The relationship between God and Creation at this stage is that of the lord and the slave. The evolving consciousness or mind of this stage is called *nafs-e-ammara* (evil self) and it has the natural tendency to enjoy anything that is gross. Here the idea of God's relation to man is known as *tauhid-e-aqwali* (verbal unity of God) which acknowledges the existence of God orally.

Mumkin-ul-wujud (Possible Existence, or subtle sphere) derives its existence from *mumtan-ul-wujud* (mental sphere). Herein the relationship between God and His manifested attributes is of the sort that exists between father and children. Here God is kind, merciful and vigilant towards His children who are carefree, with no thoughts of punishment or reward, no desire for knowledge and no craving for spiritual attainments. And such entities are commonly known as angels. The consciousness of this sphere (*alam-e-malakut*) is styled as *nafs-e-lawama* (reproachful self) and the cognition of God at this stage is called *tauhid-e-afa'ali* (unity of action), which means the entities of this world are exclusively busy with their appointed task of remembering God.

Mumtan-ul-wujud (Negative Existence, or mental sphere) contains the fifth and sixth planes of the Path which at this stage reaches *wahidiyat* (Oneness in manyness). *Wahidiyat* begins from the fifth and reaches its zenith in the sixth plane and has explicit in it all the details of Creation comprising the subtle and the gross planes. This is the *alam-e-jabrut* which derives its existence from and is the reflection of *arif-ul-wujud* (the stage of *haqiqat-e-Muhammadi*). It is called *mumtan-ul-wujud*, or Negative Existence, for the simple reason that *mumtana* means that which is non-existent, and *wujud* means the form or body of existence. Thus, the word *mumtan-ul-wujud* signifies that the form is non-existent therein. This stage is akin to the seed which contains within it the potential for the roots and the branches of the tree, which, when

fully evolved and manifest, go to represent the subtle and the gross planes. The Sufis know this as *la makan* in which all ideas of time and space converge to a point.

The consciousness of the mental sphere is called by the Sufis *nafs-e-mutmainna*, meaning beatified or satisfied self, in the fifth plane, and *nafs-e-mulhima*, meaning inspired self, in the sixth plane. Herein the relationship between God and Creation is that of Beloved and the lover, and the idea of God in these stages is known to the Sufis as *tauhid-e-ahwali* (unity of feeling). This is the stage known as *haqiqat-e-insani* (Reality of man) wherein man comes face to face with God, but has not yet shed his ego and is still in the domain of duality.

Wahid-ul-wujud (Unitary Existence) in the stage of *alam-e-lahut* of the Sphere of Reality is the state in which God first became conscious of His *ahadiyat* (conscious Oneness), and *arif-ul-wujud* in the stage of *alam-e-hahut* of the same sphere of Reality is the state of *wahdiyat-e-wahidiyat* (conscious Oneness of Oneness-in-manyness) also called *haqiqat-e-Muhammadi*.

In the state of *Wara-ul-Wara*, God, according to the Sufis, was a hidden treasure and wanted to be known. No sooner did “the hidden treasure” express a desire to know itself, than it became aware of itself as Light (*nur*), or *nur-e-Muhammadi*, which has implicit and latent in it the existence of all the Creation and the manifest world; and it is in relation to this that Prophet Muhammad has said, “God created my light first, and from my light the universe came into being.” This is the aspect of *jamal* (beauty) in the knowledge of God included in *tauhid-e-zati* (Unity of Essence). Here, the relationship existing between God and the Creation is that existing between the Lover and the beloved. Here the Lover is God and Muhammad is the beloved. God here possesses complete awareness of both Himself and Creation.

Wahid-ul-wujud (Unity of Existence) is the first limitation of God in the Beyond-Beyond state and is one of the stages of the fifth sphere known as *lahut*. This is the stage of conscious Absolutism which, when used by the *arif-ul-wujud* (Knowing Existence), gives him the experience of both *fana* and *baqa*. This stage, like all other stages of the Path, is beyond mind and intellect and

cannot be encompassed in words, and includes *tajalli-e-jamali* (epiphany of beauty) and *tajalli-e-jalali* (epiphany of beatitude). *Tajalli-e-jalali* is that which confers on a soul the experience of *fana* (complete annihilation), and *tajalli-e-jamali* endows him once again with the consciousness of normality, known to the Sufis as *baqa* (permanency). *Tajalli-e-jalali* is also *ashqiyyat* wherein God is the Beloved and man is the lover; and *tajalli-e-jamali* is *ma-shuqiyat* wherein God is the Lover and man is the beloved. This latter is the highest spiritual manifestation, known as *faqr* or *faqiri*.

Thus in *alam-e-lahut* and *alam-e-hahut* of the fifth, the Real Sphere, are the stages of Perfection in the respective aspects of *ashiq-o-mashuq* (Lover and the Beloved in One) and *ashiq* (Lover) and *mashuq* (Beloved) simultaneously. In *alam-e-jabrut* (mental sphere) are the stages of *ashiq* (lover) and *arif* (gnostic), in *mala-kut* (subtle sphere) is the stage of enumerator of attributes, and in *nasut* (the gross sphere) is the stage of *waqif* (gross-conscious one). Describing these stages in the ascending order, when *waqif*, the conscious one, becomes more conscious, he enters the stage of *wasif* (attributes). And from *wasif* he arrives at the stage of *irfan* (gnosis) and from *irfan* he reaches the domain of the mysteries of God (*maarif*). From the stage of *maarif* he is presented with the sight of God which confers upon him the status of a lover, and when he ultimately becomes LOVE, he finds that he himself was the end-all and be-all of everything. In this stage of *Huyat*, everything is dissolved in the “I am God” state of God.

35 **Maya*** (169)

The force that keeps a man spiritually blind, deaf, etc., is his own ignorance which is governed by the principle of cosmic ignorance generally known as *Maya*.[†]

To understand *Maya* is to understand the universe. All false values and false beliefs are due to the grip of *Maya*. Intellect in particular plays into the hands of *Maya*, for intellect is not capable of

* [Meher Baba, “Maya,” as quoted in *In Quest of Truth*, Irene Conybeare (Kakinada, A.P., India: Swami Satya Prakash Udaseen), 274–275. Ed.]

† [See also Meher Baba, “Maya,” *Discourses*, 370–387. Ed.]

that consciousness which realizes that God is Truth. Truth can only be known after one transcends the cosmic illusion which appears as real owing to *Maya*.

Maya, the principle of ignorance, can only be transcended when the spiritual aspirant is able to realize that *Maya* is God's shadow and as such is nothing. The enigma of *Maya* solves itself only after Self-realization.

36 Meher Baba Says (190)

Spiritual Paradox

"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, which we do see, we say is unreal. In experience, what exists for us does not really 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 being nothing, so as to be absorbed in the infinity of God; thus nothing means Everything."

Existence Is Substance and Life Is Shadow

"Existence is eternal, whereas life is perishable.

"Comparatively, Existence is what his body is to man, and life is as the cloth that covers the body. The same body changes clothes according to the seasons, time and circumstances, just as the one and eternal Existence is always there throughout the countless and varied aspects of life.

"Shrouded beyond recognition by the cloak of life with its multifarious folds and colours is Existence unchangeable. It is the garb of life with its veils of mind, energy and gross forms that 'shadows' and superimposes on Existence, presenting the eternal, indivisible and unchangeable Existence as transient, varied and ever-changing.

“Existence is all-pervading, and is the underlying essence of all things, whether animate or inanimate, real or unreal, varied in species or uniform in forms, collective or individual, abstract or substantial.

“In the eternity of Existence there is no time. There is no past and no future; only the everlasting present. In eternity nothing has ever happened and nothing will ever happen. Everything is happening in the unending NOW.

“Existence is God; whereas, life is illusion.

“Existence is Reality; whereas, life is imagination.

“Existence is everlasting; whereas, life is ephemeral.

“Existence is unchangeable; whereas, life is ever-changing.

“Existence is freedom; whereas, life is a binding.

“Existence is indivisible; whereas, life is multiple.

“Existence is imperceptible; whereas, life is deceptive.

“Existence is independent; whereas, life is dependent upon mind, energy and gross forms.

“Existence **is**; whereas, life appears to be.

“Existence, therefore, is not life.

“Birth and death do not mark the beginning or end of life. Whereas the numerous stages and states of life which constitute the so-called births and deaths are governed by the laws of evolution and reincarnation, life comes into being **only once**, with the advent of the first dim rays of limited consciousness, and succumbs to death **only once** on attaining the unlimited consciousness of infinite Existence.

“Existence, all-knowing, all-powerful, all-present God, is beyond cause and effect, beyond time and space, beyond all actions.

“Existence touches all, all things and all shadows. Nothing can ever touch Existence. Even the very fact of its being does not touch Existence.

“To realize Existence, life must be shed. It is life that endows limitations to the unlimited Self. Life of the limited self is sustained by the mind creating impressions; by energy supplying the impetus to accumulate and dissipate these impressions through expressions; and by gross forms and bodies functioning as the instruments

through which these impressions are spent, reinforced and eventually exhausted, through **actions**.

“Life is thickly linked with actions. Life is lived through actions. Life is valued through actions. Life’s survival depends on actions. Life cognizant is actions—actions opposite in nature, actions affirmative and negative, actions constructive and destructive.

“Therefore, to let life succumb to its ultimate death is to let all actions end. When actions end completely, life of the limited self spontaneously experiences itself as Existence of the unlimited Self. Existence being realized, evolution and involution of consciousness is complete, illusion vanishes, and the law of reincarnation no longer binds.

“Simply to desist from committing actions will never put an end to actions. It would merely mean putting into action yet another action—that of inactivity.

“To escape from actions is not the remedy for the uprooting of actions. Rather, this would give scope to the limited self to get more involved in the very act of escaping, thus creating more actions. Actions, both good and bad, are like knots in the tangled thread of life. The more persistent the efforts to undo the knots of action, the firmer become the knots and the greater the entanglement.

“Only actions can nullify actions, in the same way that poison can counteract the effects of poison. A deeply embedded thorn may be extricated by the use of another thorn or any sharp object resembling it, such as a needle, used with skill and precaution. Similarly, actions are totally uprooted by other actions—when they are committed by some activating agent other than the ‘self.’

“*Karma yoga, dnyan yoga, raj yoga* and *bhakti yoga* serve the purpose of being prominent signposts on the path of Truth, directing the seeker toward the goal of eternal Existence. But the hold of life, fed by actions, is so tight on the aspirant that even with the help of these inspiring signposts, he fails to be guided in the right direction. As long as the Self is bound by actions, the aspirant, or even the pilgrim on the path toward Truth, is sure to go astray through self-deception.

“Throughout all ages, *sadhus* and seekers, sages and saints, *munis* and monks, *tapasavis* and *sanyasis*, yogis, Sufis and *talibs*

have struggled during their lifetimes, undergoing untold hardships in their efforts to extricate themselves from the maze of actions and to realize the eternal Existence by overcoming life.

“They fail in their attempts because the more they struggle with their ‘selves,’ the firmer the selves become gripped by life, through actions intensified by austerities and penances, by seclusions and pilgrimages, by meditation and concentration, by assertive utterances and silent contemplation, by intense activity and inactivity, by silence and verbosity, by *japas* and *tapas*, and by all types of *yogas* and *chillas*.

“Emancipation from the grip of life and freedom from the labyrinths of actions are made possible for all and attained by a few, when a Perfect Master, *Sadguru* or *Qutub* is approached and his grace and guidance are invoked. The Perfect Master’s invariable counsel is complete surrender to him. Those few who do surrender their all—mind, body, possessions—so that with their complete surrender they also surrender consciously their own ‘selves’ to the Perfect Master, still have their very being left conscious to commit actions which are now activated only by the dictates of the Master.

“Such actions, after the surrender of one’s ‘self,’ are no longer one’s own actions. Therefore, these actions are capable of uprooting all other actions which feed and sustain life. Life then becomes gradually lifeless and eventually succumbs, by the grace of the Perfect Master, to its final death. Life, which once debarred the persevering aspirant from realizing perpetual Existence, can now no longer work its own deception.

“I have emphasized in the past, I tell you now, and I shall age after age forevermore repeat that you shed your cloak of life and realize Existence which is eternally yours.

“To realize this truth of unchangeable, indivisible, all-pervading Existence, the simplest way is to surrender to me completely; so completely that you are not even conscious of your surrender, conscious only to obey me and to act as and when I order you.

“If you seek to live perpetually, then crave for the death of your deceptive self at the hands of complete surrender to me. This *yoga* is the essence of all *yogas* in one.”

The Four Journeys

“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.

“In these millions of universes are many systems with planets. Some are in gaseous states, some in states of solidification, some of stone and metal, some which also have vegetation. Some have also developed life forms such as worms, some also fish, some also birds, some also animals, and a few also have human beings.

“Thus it is that throughout the myriads of universes there are planets on which the seven kingdoms of evolution are manifested, and the evolution of consciousness and forms is completed.

“But only on the planet Earth do human beings reincarnate and begin the involutionary path to Self-realization.

“Earth is the centre of this infinite gross sphere of millions of universes inasmuch as it is the Point to which all human-conscious souls must migrate in order to begin the involutionary path.

“This involutionary path has seven stations and arrival at the seventh station completes the first journey to God.

“Although the completion of this journey is the Goal of all human souls, only a very few at any given moment embark upon it. The arrival at the end of this journey is the drowning of individuality in the Ocean of infinite consciousness, and the journey’s completion is the soul’s absorption in the state of ‘I am God’ with full consciousness, and, as God, it experiences infinite Power, Knowledge and Bliss.

“Out of all the souls who complete the first journey, a very few enter the second journey. This journey has no stations. It is an instantaneous journey—the journey of infinite consciousness being shaken from its absorption in ‘I am God’ to abiding in God as God. In this state individuality is regained, but individuality is now infinite, and this infinity includes gross consciousness, and so as man and God it experiences infinite Power, Knowledge and Bliss in the

midst of most-finiteness—the unlimited Soul knows Its unlimitedness in the midst of limitation.

“The third journey is undertaken only by those who have accomplished the second journey, and whose lot it is to bear the burden of the exercise of infinite Power, Knowledge and Bliss and so live God’s life both as man and God simultaneously.

“There are only five such masters living on the earth at any given moment, and they control the movement of the universes and the affairs of the worlds of men. Only when one of these five Perfect Masters drops his body can one of those who are abiding in God as God move onwards and complete the third journey to fill the vacant office.

“It is the duty of these five Perfect Masters to precipitate the advent of the Ancient One (*Avatar*) and to hand over to Him the charge of His own Creation.

“All those who live God’s life on earth and all those who abide in God as God on earth, when they drop their bodies, also shed forever their subtle and mental vehicles and pass away utterly as God, retaining infinite individuality and experiencing infinite Power, Knowledge and Bliss. This is the fourth journey.

“In reality these four journeys are never journeyed, for God has nowhere to journey. He is without beginning and without end. And everything, which has the appearance of being, appeared from That which has no beginning and passes back into That which has no ending.”

37 *The World of the Astral* (232)

There is no astral world as such. The astral world is not a portion of the subtle world. However, in between the gross and the subtle worlds there are seven sheaths which form the so-called world of the astral, and this serves as a link between these two worlds.

A gross-conscious soul may be said to have an astral body which links the gross with the subtle. The astral may be called the imprint of the subtle over the gross, which imprint is neither gross nor subtle.

In sleep, in the ordinary dream state, one experiences the impressions of the gross world with the subtle body subconsciously, and **not** with the astral body. All experiences in the world of the astral experienced through the medium of the astral body are as insignificant as dreams.

After disembodiment the soul experiences the world of the astral in the astral body. This may be said to be the astral journey of the soul. When the soul gets embodied, the astral body is shed and with the new gross body it gets a fresh astral body; but as long as it does not get embodied, its subtle and mental bodies undergo the experiences of the state of heaven or hell through the medium of the astral body, in accordance with the impressions that were accumulated while it was in an embodied state.

The spiritual Path begins only with the involution of consciousness when the soul begins to experience the first plane of the subtle world, and not when it just has access to the astral phenomena from the gross world. At the stage when the soul experiences fully the first plane of the subtle world, the astral sheath that linked the subtle with the gross is snapped for good.