

PART 9

The Ten States of God

THE PAGES of this chapter are built around the diagram depicting The Ten States of God. This diagram has been given by Meher Baba himself; it is a gem from the fathomless treasure of his supreme gnosis. The spiritual terms of this diagram have been linked up with the most generally accepted Sufi, Vedantic and Christian mystical equivalents.

If we were to take a bird's-eye view of this diagram we should find that it depicts what is really the downward journey of the Over-Soul to the lowest point of devolution as man (*insan, jiv-atma*), and its upward journey again through the unfolding planes of consciousness, back to the original source, first as the divinely absorbed *Majzoob-e-Kamil* and culminating finally in the Perfect Man (*Insan-e-Kamil, Shiv-Atma*). The ten different states of God are principal stages on this journey, a journey in which unconscious God becomes conscious man, in order to become conscious God.

Although these states of God are depicted as apparently distinct from one another, they are in effect ten aspects of the One God Who is, and will always remain, One. The descent and ascent of the Over-Soul is in imagination only, and with the cessation of imagination comes the realization with full consciousness for the individual soul that God alone exists and that anything and everything else which appears to exist is but His shadow.

Meher Baba's gnosis upholds without equivocation both the theory of Identityism (*wahdat-ul-wujud*)³⁴ and the theory of Advaitism. In the chart "The Ten States of God" by Meher Baba, it is made clear that it is God alone who plays the different roles, real and imaginary. The beginning is God and the end is God; the

intermediary stages cannot but be God. The spiritual dictum of Islamic theology is “*Huwal awwal, Huwal akher, Huwal zaher, Huwal batin*” (He is the first, He is the last, He is the external, He is the internal).

Maulana Shabistari, in *Gulshan-e-Raz*, says:

*Gar andar amad avval ham bidar shud
Agar cih dar ma'ad az dar bidar shud.*

“He returns to the door from which he first came out, although in his journey he went from door to door.”

We shall now try to describe concisely each one of these ten states of God as explained by Meher Baba.

State I

God in the Beyond-Beyond State

This state of God is so transcendent that nothing can really be conceived of it. It is utterly pure and immaculate and has no tinge of “otherness.” It is the hidden of all hidden knowledge and the internal of all internal realities. It is beyond all words and so it cannot be adequately described. It is neither finite nor infinite, neither attributeless nor with attributes. In this domain the wings of thought, inference, discrimination and understanding are limp and useless.

*Bi Kiyal dar nagunjad, tu Kiyal-i Kvud maranjan
Zi jahat buvad mubarra mavalab bihic suyash.*

—Hafiz

“He cannot be grasped by the mind, therefore do not exert yourself to understand Him; He is free of all directions, therefore do not try to seek Him anywhere.”

Meher Baba says that when one who has realized this state of God tries to describe it to others, this act results in a description not of the first, but of the second state of God—God in the Beyond state.

It is the Eternity of all eternities (*Azl-ul-Azal*) because no eternity can be conceived of to precede or to follow it. Here all indications

are blotted out (*Munqata-ul-Izharat*), since no other thing exists that can be pointed out or referred to. This pure essence (*Zat-al-Baht*) is not aware of anything, even of itself.

This state has been referred to by the Sufis as *Wara-ul-Wara*—The Beyond-Beyond state of God. Vedanta calls it *Paratpar Parabrahma*.

This is the state in which God is neither *nirguna* (attributeless) nor *saguna* (with attributes), neither *nirakar* (formless) nor *sakar* (with forms).

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

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

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

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

State II God in the Beyond State

We have already stated that the Beyond-Beyond state of God can never be adequately described. God-realized beings, when they try to describe the Beyond-Beyond state, succeed only in describing the Beyond state of God, which is the *Allah* of Sufis, the *Ahuramazda* of Zoroastrians, the *Paramatma* of Vedantists, God the Father of Christians, and the Over-Soul of some philosophers. God

in the Beyond state is absolute, unlimited and infinite—the One without a second.

Meher Baba, while explaining this second state of God, stressed that fundamentally State II is in no way different from State I of God; the sub-states A, B and C of State II of God are what create the difference.

How, when and where the difference came into being is described as follows from the explanations of Meher Baba:

At the instant when the latent original infinite whim of the infinite God to know Himself (“Who am I?”) is about to surge in the unbounded uniformity of the unbounded, absolute, infinite Divine Vacuum of the **most-original** Beyond-Beyond state of God, the very prospect of this infinite urge-to-know, prompting the eternally tranquil poise of God in the unbounded, absolute, infinite Divine Vacuum, becomes inconceivable.

But the **fact** of the insurge of the infinite whim and its very inconceivability, spontaneously brings into being another aspect of God's state other than the most-original Beyond-Beyond state of unbounded, absolute, infinite Divine Vacuum, where there is neither prospect of aspect nor attribute; neither the infinite or finite consciousness nor the infinite or finite unconsciousness; and where, except for the infinity of God which is eternally manifest, every other thing is latent including the infinite whim and the consequent infinite urge-to-know.

Thus it is that the very inconceivability of the prospect of the infinite whim surging in the Beyond-Beyond state automatically unfolds the prospectiveness, which is also latent in the infinite state; and this manifestation (of prospectiveness) bestows upon the most-original Beyond-Beyond state of God the prospect of an infinite aspect different from that of the most-original and eternal state.

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

It is to be heeded well that this original second state of God, denoted in the chart as “II” and termed “God in Beyond State,” is in

no way to be taken as a state of God altogether other than the most-original first state of God, denoted in the chart as “I” and termed “God in Beyond-Beyond State.”

The only difference between State I and State II of God is that State I is of unbounded, absolute, infinite Divine Vacuum, where even the remotest prospect of the insurge of the infinite whim is inconceivable. Therefore, only at the instant when the original infinite whim insurges in the infinitude of the God-Is state could infinite God conceive the infinite original urge-to-know, as “Who am I?”—that is, only when the aspectless State I of God in Beyond-Beyond gets the aspect of State II of God in Beyond. *Paratpar Parabrahma* thus gets the infinite aspect of *Paramatma*.

It is also to be noted very carefully that the Beyond state marked in the chart as “II” is fundamentally the same as the Beyond-Beyond state of God marked in the chart as “I.” But in the chart these two states, State I and State II, are depicted separately, because even though State II of God in Beyond state is the same **original** state of God, yet it is not the **most-original** state of God which is the Beyond-Beyond state. This necessarily follows because God could conceive the infinite insurge of the infinite original whim and could get the infinite original impulse of the infinite original urge-to-know, as “Who am I?” **only** in State II, when God eternally in State I assumes the infinite original aspect of State II within His own eternal State I which is the most-original Beyond-Beyond state.

To be more explicit, in both these states of God (States I and II), except for the eternally manifest infinity of the eternal infinitude of God (as the unbounded, absolute, infinite Divine Vacuum), all attributes, all aspects, all states, infinite and most-finite consciousness and unconsciousness of God, including God’s own infinite trio-nature of power, knowledge and bliss and all other things, are all latent in the unbounded, absolute, infinite Divine Vacuum.

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

Consequently, the infinite original whim of God, when it once surged, had the feasibility of surging only in State II of God; and when it surged, it did so uniformly in the infinitude of God. But when the whim surged, the insurge of this whim could never be experienced by God in His infinitely most independent Beyond-Beyond State I; it was experienced by God, eternally in the most-original Beyond-Beyond state, only through the infinite aspect of His State II as "God in the Beyond State."

Hence, the infinite insurge of the infinite original whim and its consequent infinite repercussions are in reality effected in the State II of God in the Beyond state.

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

This spontaneous manifestation of the latent infinite consciousness and infinite unconsciousness **simultaneously**, is beyond the grasp of human intellect to understand and digest. It is indeed a paradox of the realm of Reality, and it defeats all human understanding. How could God gain spontaneously His own infinite consciousness and His infinite unconsciousness simultaneously? Meher Baba, while explaining this, declared that this is a fact, and it is of the realm of Reality, but it can never be understood or grasped by the mind; it is only to be realized on realizing the Reality. At the same time, in order that we may get at least some concept of this fact effected in Reality, and that we may not take it as a mere paradoxical mystery, Meher Baba made us understand this apparent paradox through the example of a child in a mother's womb.

When the mother conceives, the child is under development in the mother's womb; and as soon as the development reaches a stage when, along with other developments, the eyes of the child are fully moulded, the child gains the faculties of "seeing" and "not-seeing" simultaneously. Irrespective of whether the child, after

birth, sees or does not see, the very fact that the eyes have been moulded in the womb of his mother gives to the child the dual aspect of his own eyes. In the eyes, as soon as they are developed, the faculties of seeing and not-seeing are simultaneously contained. When the child opens his eyes he will see and when he closes his eyes he will not-see; but the fact still holds good that no sooner were the eyes developed than there was contained in them the dual faculty of seeing and not-seeing simultaneously.

Similarly, with the insurge of the original infinite whim in God, both the infinite consciousness and unconsciousness, latent in God, were manifested simultaneously, which to the limited mind appears paradoxical.

Thus God in His most-original State I of the Beyond-Beyond gained spontaneously, through His original State II of the Beyond, His own infinitely unconscious state and His own infinitely conscious state simultaneously, depicted in the chart as states A and B, respectively.

Consequently, on the one hand, with the spontaneous manifestation of infinite unconsciousness, God in His infinite, **unconscious** Beyond state, shown as "A" in the chart, eternally remains not only infinitely unconscious of His own eternal, infinite existence, as in the most-original Beyond-Beyond state of Infinitude-Absolute, but He also eternally remains infinitely unconscious of His own begotten infinite original Beyond state, shown in the chart as "II."

On the other hand, simultaneously with the spontaneous manifestation of infinite consciousness, God in His infinite, **conscious** Beyond state, marked in the chart as "B," eternally becomes not only infinitely conscious of His own eternal infinite existence, as in the most-original Beyond-Beyond state of Infinitude-Absolute, but He also becomes, most obviously, infinitely conscious of His own begotten infinite original Beyond state, shown in the chart as "II."

In other words, only in the Beyond state of God, marked in the chart as State II, God spontaneously, with the insurge of the infinite original whim, simultaneously begets His eternal, infinite unconscious state, marked as sub-state A, and His eternal, infinite conscious state, marked as sub-state B.

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

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

In Vedantic terminology, it is thus that the State I of *Paratpar Parabrahma* begets the State II of *Paramatma*; and in this State II, God as *Paramatma* is eternally unconscious and simultaneously eternally conscious of His own most-original state of *Paratpar Parabrahma*. This infinite dual aspect of the *Paramatma* state is pointed out in the chart as state A and state B respectively.

It naturally follows, therefore, that the eternal unconscious state of *Paramatma*, marked "A," in the eternal original Beyond state, marked "II," eternally aspires to attain the eternal conscious state of *Paramatma*, marked "B," which is the second of the dual infinite aspects of the original Beyond God state (*Paramatma*) marked "II."

Consequently, the divine goal is that the unconscious state of God in "A" should attain the conscious Reality of the conscious state of God in "B."

In short, when state A consciously realizes state B, the divine goal is attained.

For state A to realize consciously state B, there is no other alternative but that state A must gradually experience transmutation into state B and eventually become state B in all respects consciously.

This gradual transmutation of the unconscious, infinite state of God into the conscious, infinite state is depicted through States III, IV, V, VI and VII as different states of God in the chart of the Ten States of God. In State VIII, state A of God becomes fully conscious of state B.

In this State VIII, the unconscious infinite state A of God not only gains the highest divine consciousness of state B, but God becomes divinely absorbed in the Reality of His own infinite conscious state and so realizes His eternal identity with the infinite conscious state B of God.

If God, divinely absorbed, as in State VIII, recovers and maintains normal consciousness of the mental, subtle and gross spheres through His mental, subtle and gross aspects as an embodiment of a perfect human being, then State IX, at the Divine Junction between States VIII and X, is attained. After this ninth state, the tenth state of God is depicted in the chart and connected with the God state C.

This tenth state of God is the state of God qualitied and manifest in the human form of a Perfect Master. In State X God consciously experiences His own trio-nature of infinite power, infinite knowledge and infinite bliss, and also uses them through the Divine Office of God, State X, marked in the chart as "C."

It is also to be well noted that God in the infinite, unconscious state A is neither *nirguna* (attributeless)-*nirakar* (formless), nor *saguna* (with attributes)-*sakar* (with form). But state B is of *nirguna-nirakar* (attributeless and formless), and state C (which is also of the original Beyond God state) is of *saguna-sakar* (with attributes and form). It is that highest state of Man-God where God is infinitely conscious of both Reality and Illusion.

State III

God as Emanator, Sustainer and Dissolver

In this state God brings into play His three principal attributes (*sifat*) of emanating, sustaining and dissolving. This three-in-one state corresponds to the trinity of Vedanta: *Brahma* (Creator), *Vishnu* (Preserver) and *Mahesh* (Destroyer)—the Sufi synonyms of which are the terms *Afridgar*, *Parvardigar* and *Fanakar*.

The three attributes of God are expressed through the three Archangels, *Israfeel* (the angel who creates life), *Mikael* (the angel who sustains life) and *Izraeel* (the angel who destroys life).

The triple attributes of State III of God were latent in the most-original State I of God; these, simultaneously, unfolded themselves spontaneously at that instant when the original infinite whim surged in God and when He conceived in His State II the infinite urge-to-know Himself, as "Who am I?" At that instant of the insurge of the infinite whim, God in His State II gained simultaneously the infinite, dual aspects of being infinitely unconscious as in His state A and at the same time, of being infinitely conscious as in His state B.

Nevertheless the infinite original urge-to-know Himself obviously persists still in God state A which is yet infinitely unconscious of Himself. The infinite urge-to-know Himself persisting in this infinitely unconscious state A of God made possible the **manifestations of all the qualities and aspects of God latent as the Nothing in the infinitude of the most-original State I of God as the Everything**. But all that is latent as the Nothing in the Everything could be possibly conceived as latent in the Beyond State II of God only.

Wherefore, all that is latent in the Beyond state of God is gradually unfolded, propelled by the infinite urge, and is spontaneously made to manifest as all that is of the Nothing. Hence the Nothingness of the Nothing that is manifested is the Creation; and this Creation springs forth out of the infinite urge-to-know in the infinite, unconscious state A of God. Consequently, it is only natural that the infinite, unconscious state A of God gains the first attribute as Emanator, of the three infinite attributes: God the Creator, God the Preserver and God the Dissolver or Destroyer.

For God to have gained the attribute of Emanator, He obviously becomes the Creator of Creation, as in His State III.

It then follows most naturally that when God creates, He must spontaneously also sustain what He creates. He then obviously becomes also the Preserver of Creation, as in His State III.

And in the very act of preserving what is created, God also simultaneously establishes the inevitable dissolution or destruction of Creation. Preservation would be meaningless if dissolution or destruction were not anticipated. Accordingly God obviously becomes also the Dissolver or Destroyer of Creation, as in His State III.

State III of God is that state in which God becomes the Creator and simultaneously remains the Sustainer or Preserver and Dissolver or Destroyer of His own Creation. At one and the same time, God thus becomes the Creator, Preserver and Destroyer in State III.

The infinite original whim that surged in God and the consequent infinite urge-to-know Himself made manifest in God the infinite triple attributes of Creator, Preserver and Dissolver, with all the paraphernalia of the Nothingness of the latent Nothing. This Nothingness literally is nothing, although it appears to exist through Illusion (sometimes called *Maya*³⁵) as the Creation.

Meher Baba has told us that there is no Creation in the literal sense of the word. What we call Creation is a manifestation of countless forms of the Nothing. This Nothing is really “no-thing”—but it exists in its own field of Illusion. It cannot be denied, but it is not beyond the Everything, that is, God. Although the Everything includes this Nothing, the Nothing never does and never can include or mean the Everything. The Almighty alone is the Everything, including the Nothing; and before Creation manifested itself, there was literally and absolutely “no-thing” but the Almighty as the Everything.

*Zat thi Allah ki aur jalve sab ruposh the
Ik saut-i sarmadi tha naGme sab Kamosh the
Tha faqav maiK anah saqi tha nah vaj mainosh the
Ka-yi nate dahar kya ruh ul-aminbihosh the
Zindagi jab muskura'i hai qaxa ke sâmne.*

—Munsiff-AsGar

“The existence of *Allah* alone was and all manifestations were latent therein;
One Eternal Sound prevailed, and all musical notes were dormant therein;
Only the tavern was there—no cup-bearers and wine-drinkers;
The gross universe was out of the question—even the angelic world was not in existence,
When, with the divine command ‘Be,’ life smilingly sprang up.”

The Almighty alone existed, but He was only latently conscious, and hence He did not know Himself, and in the same way that consciousness was latent in Him, so also Creation was latent in Him.

The difference between the latent and the manifest Creation may be compared to that between a seed and a tree. But, whether seed or tree, latent or manifest, Creation is always “no-thing,” because it is the latent Nothing that is manifested as the Nothingness.

All that is latent as the Nothing in the Beyond State II of the infinitude of God as the Everything is expressed and manifested through a most finite point in the infinitude of God. This point is called the “creation point” or the “Om point.”* Through this point Creation has been precipitated. This creation point was also latent in the most original State I of God, in the Beyond-Beyond state.

The process of emanating, sustaining and dissolving, which is constantly and uniformly going on, may be illustrated by an analogy. Let us imagine that a human body is God. The human body sleeping with eyes shut may then be compared to the Beyond state of God, as State II-A. The very first moment of opening the eyes may be compared to the state of God as Creator. The subsequent condition of remaining awake may be compared to the state of God as Sustainer, and going back to sleep again with eyes shut may be compared to the state of God as Dissolver. Thus God is the Creator, Sustainer and Dissolver, all three in One, at one and the same time.

State IV God as Embodied Soul

*Did apni thi use Kvahish
Ap ko har tarah bana dekha.*
—Niyaz

“He desired to see Himself; hence He assumed to Himself varied aspects involving names and forms.”

In order to understand how the infinitely unconscious state A of God becomes gradually transmuted into the infinitely conscious

* [See also Francis Brabazon, *Stay with God* (Woombye, Queensland, Australia: Edwards and Shaw for Garuda Books, 1959), 65–66. Ed.]

state B of God and attains full and infinite consciousness, Meher Baba gave the following analogy:

Imagine the infinitely unconscious God state A, before the Creation came into being, as motionless infinite ocean. A puff of wind then stirred the tranquil uniformity of this ocean, and immense waves, countless drops of water, and innumerable bubbles appeared from out of the uniformity of the limitless, infinite ocean. The puff of wind that set the ocean into commotion may be compared to the impulse of the infinite, original urge-to-know originating with the infinite, original whim of God, surging in God to know Himself through His infinite God State II.

The stir on the surface of the ocean, caused by the infinite urge, surcharged every drop of that infinite ocean with the infinite original urge-to-know itself.

Thus *Paramatma* in His infinitely unconscious state A, being urged to know Himself, simultaneously bestirs the tranquil poise of every *atma* in *Paramatma* with an urge to know itself. This could only be understood when *Paramatma* is compared to an infinite ocean and the *atmas* to the drops of that infinite ocean. But it must also be well noted that every drop of the ocean, when in the ocean, is ocean itself, until the drops inherit individuality through bubble formations over the surface of the ocean. Every bubble thus formed would then bestow a separate and a particular individuality upon every drop. And this created separateness would exist within the uniform indivisibility of the drops of the infinite ocean as long as these bubbles creating separateness exist. As soon as the bubbles burst, the drops, which are and were already in the ocean itself, come to realize that they are and were one with the infinite ocean; and they gain this consciousness of their **eternal infinity in the infinite ocean** only after they first experience separateness and then dispel the bubbles of ignorance that were instrumental in bestowing upon them the experience of their apparent separateness from their inherent indivisibility.

As long as the infinitely innumerable drops of the ocean do not experience apparent separateness, they fail to realize their own homogeneous and indivisible eternal, infinite existence as ocean itself. It is only through the experience of apparent separateness

that *atmas* can consciously realize their indivisible Oneness as *Paramatma*.

In order to describe the God State IV of “God as Embodied Soul,” let us think of one infinitely unconscious soul (*atma*) of *Paramatma* in state A.

In the beginning, in state A, the soul (*atma*) has no consciousness and has no impressions (*sanskaras*).

Therefore, at that stage and in that state the soul (*atma*) has no gross form, gross body, subtle body nor mental body, because the existence of gross, subtle and mental impressions (***sanskaras***) only can give existence to gross, subtle and mental bodies; and only the existence of these bodies can make possible the existence of gross, subtle and mental worlds.

Hence in the beginning the soul in God state A, being infinitely unconscious and being impressionless, had no consciousness of gross, subtle and mental bodies, and was also unconscious of its infinite Self. The soul naturally then had no experience of the gross, subtle and mental worlds, and also had no experience of the Over-Soul (*Paramatma*).

Now this infinite, impressionless, unconscious, tranquil state of the soul reverberated with the first impulse, which we called The First Urge (the first urge to know Itself).

Simultaneously with reverberations of the first urge to know Itself, a most-gross first impression emerged, objectifying the soul as the absolutely opposite and most-finite counterpart of the absolutely infinite Over-Soul.

The soul, being eternally in the Over-Soul and one with the Over-Soul, has also the infinite potentialities of the Over-Soul, though latent in its unconscious state. Thus the soul is also the possessor of infinite power, knowledge and bliss.

Therefore, when the impressionless, infinite soul receives the very first impression, this impression could be nothing other than the most-gross impression, because the soul itself, which is the possessor of infinite knowledge, tries to gain knowledge of its own “Self.” This very conception on the part of the possessor of infinite knowledge is infinitely crude or gross, and this infinitely crude or

gross conception of the infinite soul imparted to the impressionless soul the most-gross first impression. Simultaneously with the most-gross first impression, the infinitely unconscious soul also gained the **most-finite** first consciousness. With the increasing gross impressions, the consciousness evolved and the evolution of gross forms gained momentum.

Consequently, the evolution of consciousness, the evolution of gross forms and the evolution of the experiences of the gross world were all effected as the result of the first urge of God to know Himself.

Because of this most-gross first impression of the first urge, the infinite, unconscious soul gained the aspects of experience for the first time. This first experience of the infinite soul was that it (soul, *atma*) experienced a contrariety (absolutely opposite by nature) in its identity with the infinite, impressionless, unconscious state A of *Paramatma*.

This experience of contrariety effected changeableness in the eternal, indivisible stability of the infinite soul; and spontaneously there occurred a sort of eruption, disrupting the indivisible poise and unconscious tranquility of the infinite soul with a recoil or tremendous shock, which impregnated the infinite unconsciousness of the infinitely unconscious soul (*atma*) with first consciousness of its apparent separateness from the indivisible state of *Paramatma*. But the soul being infinite, the first consciousness that it derived from the recoil or shock of the **absolutely opposite** and most-gross first impression of its separateness was naturally and necessarily most-finite first consciousness.

The first consciousness gained by the soul was obviously most-finite in proportion to the experience of absolute opposites of its own original, infinite state as in "A."

Consequently, it then means that in the beginning when the impressionless, infinite soul was first impressed, such first impression was an absolutely most-finite gross impression. The first consciousness it (soul, *atma*) derived was most finite. Naturally, at that instant, the unconsciousness of the infinite soul actually experienced a most-finite first consciousness of the most-gross first impression.

Now if the soul is conscious of impressions (*sanskaras*), then the soul must necessarily experience these impressions. And in order to experience the impressions, the consciousness of the soul must experience them through proper and suitable media. As the impressions are, so are the experiences of the impressions, and likewise so are the proper media to experience the impressions. That is to say, the impressions give rise to experiences, and to experience the impressions, the use of appropriate media is essential.

Therefore, as the infinite, eternal and formless soul has now gotten the most-finite first consciousness of the most-gross first impression, most obviously and necessarily this first consciousness of the soul must utilize the most-finite and the most-gross first medium to experience the most-gross first impression.

This first medium adopted by God in His State IV (God as embodied soul) is a first form which, although it is gross, yet it is so inconceivably, infinitely finite that it cannot even be considered as gross. It is so very infinitely shapeless and substanceless, matterless and formless, that it cannot lead one even to imagine that it is gross. Yet this form is the very first gross form that emerges simultaneously as if in three prongs, as the first three of the foremost seven “gas-like” forms. If a description of these first three gas-like forms could ever be attempted, they could only be described from the standpoint of density—the first having infinitely negligible density, then in the next stage negligible density, and in the third stage as having the first traces of density. These first three forms have no evolution. The next three forms may come within the scope of our imagination and may be described as “semi-gaseous and semi-material” forms. Evolution begins with the fourth gas-like form. And finally, there is the seventh gas-like form, of the series of seven foremost gas-like forms, which is hydrogen, and which may be said to include the electron.

It should be noted well that the first six gas-like gross forms bear no resemblance to the various gases such as hydrogen, nitrogen, and so forth. They are much, much finer (not subtler)* than those with which the scientists of the age are well conversant.

* This is in no way to be connected with any form or object of the subtle world, because these forms are solely of the gross world.

State V

God as Soul in the State of Evolution

God as embodied soul now begins to become conscious and begins to “know” the Creation (the Nothingness), although His “knowing” of the Creation at this stage is infinitely negligible. Even this most finite consciousness and this minutest “knowing,” however, creates more impressions (*sanskaras*) that cause the “drop” (soul, *atma*, self) to leave or dissociate from the original first bubble (form). Leaving the bubble is equivalent to a dropping off of, or dissociating from, the first form.

Even after the form is dropped, the impressions gathered by the evolving consciousness of the soul do not vanish. These impressions remain associated with the evolved consciousness and cause the evolving consciousness of the soul to associate with another appropriate and superior bubble (form). The soul is thus able to know or experience more of the Creation through the second form. The “angle of vision” widens and the consciousness of “knowing” increases in proportion to the simultaneous evolution of form. With the evolution or growth in gross consciousness the impressions (*sanskaras*) also increase and cause the soul to assume or associate with a still more complex gross form in accordance with the impressions retained by the consciousness when the second gross form is abandoned.

In this way the evolution of consciousness progresses for ages, concurrently with the evolution of forms which help to experience, and concurrently exhaust, the impressions gathered, until after countless changes of forms, through more concrete and successive stages of stones, metals, plants, worms, fishes, birds and animals, the soul takes on the human form.

In other words, the cycle of evolution of consciousness of soul continues evolving further and greater consciousness with the evolution of forms of higher and higher types, while experiencing and exhausting the impressions of the dissociated forms of the next lower type.

Consequently the evolution of consciousness of souls apparently tends the souls to identify themselves with, and gather varied innumerable impressions of, higher and higher gross species of

forms, unlimited in number, in the gross world. The clean-cut major forms with which the souls associate, with every leap of greater and greater consciousness, are in accordance with the leaps from stone to metal, from metal to plant, from plant to worm, from worm to fish, from fish to bird, from bird to animal, and ultimately the last and seventh leap is from animal to human form.

It is very important to understand that the process of evolution of consciousness concerns the evolution of bubbles or forms only, and not the "drops" or the souls. The souls remain as indivisible and infinite as the unlimited ocean (*Paramatma*) from the beginning until the end of evolution of consciousness, which terminates with the completion of evolution of form.

Only through this evolution of form does the consciousness of ignorance, or the "knowing" of Creation, increase step by step due to varied impressions; and only in the human form can the individualized soul (*atma*) eventually realize the Over-Soul or *Paramatma*. As the soul is infinite, the consciousness of the soul must also become infinite; and because consciousness can become infinite only in human form, the human form is therefore the final stage of evolution of form.

The soul has to pass through eight million, four hundred thousand (eighty-four *lakhs*) human forms after it has once commenced to reincarnate in the human form until it has attained God-realization. The prehuman forms through which it has to pass before it can incarnate in the human form are innumerable.

Strictly speaking there is only one form—the human form—which is latent in all of the previous forms. The mineral, the plant and the animal forms actually contain the human form in its latent state, and this is gradually and increasingly manifested until it is at last completely expressed as a human being in a human body.

Before the human form becomes completely manifested in a human body, such as a man or a woman, the latent human form makes a series of partial turns. In the crystalline rock state (such as granite) the latent human form is completely upside down, and is almost so in the plant state as well. As the forms progress or evolve, the axis of the body rotates slowly, so that it becomes more and

more horizontal; and when we reach the higher vertebrates, we find the head rising up more and more, as the axis of the body approaches the vertical. In men and women we find the human form completely expressed and completely vertical.

The details of this evolution of form are extremely complex. There are, for example, certain species of stone, metal, plant and animal that have what Meher Baba described as a special "seat" in evolution. These key species of forms are mostly those that are milestones on the evolutionary road, and they mark the first and the last of a certain general class of species of forms. For example, the first species of bird-form to follow the last species of fish-form and the first species of the animal-form to follow the last species of the bird-form have a special "seat" significance in evolution.

Meher Baba tells us that this whole theme has been explained down to the last detail in his own book* that is still to be handed over to the world.

Just as there is evolution of consciousness and evolution of forms, so also there is evolution of the worlds.

The evolved consciousness of the soul, identifying the soul with evolved forms, gets more and more impressioned; and in order to exhaust these impressions, it consistently finds its field of expression; and it experiences these impressions on the earth, which is also evolving concurrently with other worlds in accordance with the progressive evolution of the entire cosmic Creation.

During the course of evolution of consciousness of the soul, the soul, while **consciously** identifying itself with varied, finite gross forms, was also simultaneously, though **unconsciously**, identifying itself with its finite subtle form and its finite mental form, which associated with the soul (*atma*) in compact, homogeneous, unconscious association throughout the course of evolution of consciousness, right from the first urge.

During the whole course of the evolution of consciousness while the soul frequently and **consciously** dissociates itself from

* [The book referred to should not be confused with this publication. Meher Baba has authored an additional work, which might be published later. Ed.]

the finite gross forms, which act as media to experience and exhaust the impressions while evolving greater and greater consciousness, the soul never dissociates itself, consciously or unconsciously, from its finite subtle form and its finite mental form.

On the contrary, when the soul dissociates its identification with any one medium of finite gross form, it is the unconscious association of the soul with its subtle form that fortifies the soul, then without any gross medium, with finite energy—the driving force—to tend the consciousness of the soul towards identifying itself with yet another form, *i.e.*, the next medium of the next finite gross form, to experience the impressions of the last dissociated finite gross form, retained and reflected by the finite mental form of the soul, which is also in unconscious association with the soul.

It is only natural that together with the evolution of greater and greater consciousness of the soul, the evolution of the finite subtle form of the soul also takes place to fortify the soul with greater finite energy to tend the consciousness of the more and more gross-conscious soul to identify itself with higher and higher types of finite gross forms evolved by the impressions of the last lower and finite gross form.

Similarly, the evolution of the finite mental form of the soul also takes place simultaneously to accommodate, retain and reflect the increasingly innumerable, varied impressions gained and gathered by the evolution of greater and greater consciousness of the soul.

Thus it is that only in a human form are the subtle body and the mental body fully developed. Hence the soul, associating itself consciously with human form is, so to speak, fully equipped with gross body, subtle body and mental body in human form, together with the full consciousness of the gross gained in the human form.

Nevertheless, although the soul has gained full consciousness in human form and so experiences the gross world, yet the gross-conscious human soul is unconscious of the subtle body and therefore cannot experience the subtle world; the gross-conscious human soul is also unconscious of the mental body and therefore cannot experience the mental world.

State VI

God as Human Soul in the State of Reincarnation*

The most-finite first impression of the first urge gave to the infinite unconsciousness of the unconscious soul the most-finite first consciousness. Gradually, varied and innumerable impressions, experienced through varied and innumerable gross media, gained greater and greater consciousness of the finite gross world for the soul, and eventually the evolution of consciousness was complete when the consciousness of the soul identified itself with the most-first human form. Therefore the soul, having now gained full consciousness in human form, does not need any more or any other higher forms to evolve consciousness. The consciousness gradually gained in the process of evolution is full and complete in human form.

Though the soul in this state has gained full and complete consciousness, it is still not conscious of its subtle and mental bodies nor of its unlimited Self as One—indivisible, eternal and infinite; it is only fully conscious of its identity with human form and its varied aspects and experiences of the gross world.

Consequently the soul at this stage, only fully gross-conscious of the most-first human gross form, and still unconscious of the subtle and mental, experiences in the gross world all of the impressions of the most-last animal gross form dissociated or dropped by the consciousness of the soul in the latest stage of evolution of consciousness.

When all of the impressions of the most-last animal gross form are exhausted through incessant experiences by the most-first human gross form, then it is but natural that this most-first human form is dropped or dissociated from the consciousness of the soul. This experience by the fully conscious soul is universally accepted as the death of the human being. As explained previously, although the consciousness of the soul gets dissociated from the most-first human form, yet it can never get dissociated from the unconscious associations of its subtle and mental bodies.

* [See also Meher Baba, "Reincarnation and Karma," *Discourses*, 301–338. Ed.]

The consciousness of the soul retains and experiences the impressions of the dropped or dissociated most-first human form through its subtle and mental bodies. In order to exhaust these impressions the consciousness of the soul must necessarily associate with a gross form; and therefore, it associates itself with the next human form to exhaust and experience the residual impressions of the previous human form dropped. In fact this next human form is nothing but the consolidated mould of the past impressions retained of the previous body or human form that dissociated from the conscious soul. The association of consciousness of the soul with the next human form is universally accepted as the birth of a human being.

In short, in State VI of God as human soul in the state of reincarnation, the soul has developed full consciousness in human form, and therefore there is no need for any further evolution of the gross form. The evolution of gross consciousness thus comes to an end with the attainment of the human form; and to experience the impressions (*sanskaras*) cultivated in the human and the sub-human forms, the soul has to incarnate again and again into the human form.

The kind of human forms with which the consciousness of the soul has to associate is determined by the nature of previous impressions (*sanskaras*) of virtue or vice, happiness or misery, and so forth. While experiencing the gross world, the soul identifies itself with the gross body, which is destructible, although the soul itself is eternal.

In the sub-human stage the evolutionary process of form and consciousness is involuntary, yet sustained and continuous, with no possibility of slipping down to the lower forms of evolution. In the human stage, which marks the end of the evolution of form and the attainment of full consciousness, the spiritual progress of man, through the reincarnation and realization processes, is voluntary, and is also absolutely free from any danger whatsoever of slipping down to a sub-human state except in flagrant misuse of the powers of the fourth plane. Once full consciousness is gained, it is gained forever and is never lost; and the evolution of consciousness is

completed only when the consciousness of the soul associates itself with human form. Therefore retrograde incarnation is an impossibility once the consciousness of the soul identifies itself with a human form.

With the development of full consciousness of the gross world in the human gross body, the soul simultaneously is associated with the fully developed subtle and mental bodies. But as long as consciousness is confined to the gross world, the consciousness of the soul cannot make use of its subtle and mental bodies directly. The soul becomes conscious of these bodies and experiences the corresponding impressions of these bodies through the corresponding spheres of the subtle and mental worlds only when full consciousness, which is conscious only of the gross at this stage, turns inwards toward itself and the process of the involution of consciousness begins. This becomes possible only when the consciousness of the individualized soul becomes satiated with the incessant experiences of the varied and innumerable impressions of the material or gross life, and only when it has suffered oscillations between the opposites of pain and pleasure, for what may seem interminable ages, through the unfailing chain of births and deaths in the process of reincarnation. In the stage of evolution of consciousness the "winding process" of impressions (*sanskaras*) is at work with a view to evolving consciousness, developing higher and higher types of gross forms. In the human stage the fully evolved consciousness remains, but the grip of impressions (*sanskaras*) begins to loosen and thin out as a result of continuous jolts experienced by the consciousness of the soul through the seemingly unending chain of births and deaths in the reincarnation process.

State VII

God in the State of Spiritually Advanced Souls

After a long drawn out struggle with the life of the gross senses in the gross world, the consciousness of the soul **begins** to get drawn towards the Self of the soul rather than to remain focussed on the gross body and its gross environment. After a number of

births and deaths the gross-conscious human soul is at last inevitably drawn to embark upon the process which will lead the man ultimately to the goal of God-realization in human form.

The consciousness of the soul therefore begins to withdraw itself from the world of gross senses and is now ready to undergo the process of involution. The soul is thus said to advance spiritually through the subtle and mental spheres.

The subtle sphere, or the subtle world, is the domain of the first three planes of the involving consciousness of the soul; the fourth plane lies between the subtle sphere and the mental sphere; and the mental sphere contains the fifth and sixth planes.

This seventh state of God comprises the advance by the pilgrims on the spiritual path through the subtle and mental spheres. The greater the advance, the greater the involution of consciousness.

When the soul becomes conscious of the subtle sphere through the subtle body, it identifies itself with the subtle body; and when it is conscious of the mental sphere through the mental body, it identifies itself with the mental body, just as it identified itself with the gross body when it was conscious of the gross sphere through the gross body.

The spiritual progress of the soul through these spheres is entirely in imagination. The pilgrim's progress in the involution of his consciousness consists in replacing one realm of imagination for a better and higher level of imagination, right from the first through the sixth plane of involving consciousness. In the seventh plane the involving process is complete, imagination comes to an end and Reality is realized and is no longer a concept.

Those who enter the spiritual path and tread upon it without the help of a Master to guide them very often get lost in the labyrinths of sights and illuminations, and have little or no chance of redeeming themselves from that position. They are like children who, on their way to school, get distracted by the sights and attractions of the market place.

The enchantment on the spiritual path is so great and the enticement so intense that even in the earlier stages of the journey the pilgrim has a pseudo-sense of God-realization from which he cannot

emerge unless helped by Perfect Masters. Many an advanced pilgrim in the subtle sphere thinks that he has gained complete freedom from births and deaths—although this is not so. The delusion remains up to the sixth plane of involving consciousness, but it is most conspicuous between the third and fourth planes. The fourth plane of consciousness is the most treacherous stage in the pilgrim's progress, because this is the stage when all the powers of the infinite Energy of the subtle sphere are under his direct command. The misuse of these powers means the downfall and disintegration of the consciousness of the soul. Though it is a fundamental fact that once consciousness is gained it can never be lost, yet an exception to this rule can occur, but only at the fourth plane where there is a good possibility of the consciousness gained by the soul being disintegrated. While it is never lost completely, it disintegrates as far back as the consciousness of the stone-form. The whole process of evolution of consciousness then has to be repeated to regain the full consciousness and the human form.

Thus it is that from the fourth plane the pilgrim on the spiritual path may either fall back due to the abuse or wrong use of *tajalliyat* (*siddhis*), or progress by further involution of his consciousness to fifth plane consciousness, and capture the experience of the mental sphere or the mental world. Crossing the fourth plane and stepping into the fifth would mean gaining approach to the Divine Gate!

In the sixth plane the pilgrim “sees” God face to face. This seeing is through the mental eye when the consciousness of the soul identifies the soul with the mental body. Even when the pilgrim sees God face to face in the sixth plane of his involving consciousness, the grip of duality is not overcome, because the seer and the seen are still differentiated through the seeing.

Imagination on the planes ceases as soon as the pilgrim crosses the field of Illusion and enters the realm of Reality in the seventh plane of completely involved consciousness, where he is absolutely free of all traces of impressions. The seventh plane consciousness is full, as well as mature, and is the impressionless consciousness which identifies the soul with its “Self.” The soul then feels and experiences

consciously its eternal existence as God. The “drop” (soul), devoid of any bubble (form of ignorance in Illusion), realizes its eternal existence in the infinite ocean, as the ocean itself (the *Paramatma* or the Over-Soul).

State VIII

God as the Divinely Absorbed

This state of God signifies for the soul the end of the long evolutionary struggle, the end of the reincarnation process and the end of the realization process through the planes. For the individual soul there is no higher stage toward which to aspire, because it has reached the goal by becoming one with God. The God-realized pilgrim of this stage is known to the Sufi world as a *Majzoob* and the Vedantist calls him a *Brahmi Bhoot*. The *Majzoob* has no body-consciousness and no consciousness of the three spheres, the gross, the subtle and the mental. This means that in this State VIII, God as *Majzoob* consciously experiences His own infinite trio-nature of infinite power, knowledge and bliss, but does not make use of these infinite aspects of His nature.

In this State VIII, the unconscious, infinite state A of God (the unconscious *Paramatma*) not only gains the highest divine consciousness of state B of God (the conscious *Paramatma*) but in this state God becomes divinely absorbed in the reality of His own infinite, conscious state, and thus realizes His eternal identity with the infinite, conscious state B of God.

This State VIII of God is of the highest divine consciousness, which is the *ahadiyat* (*halat-e-Muhammadi*) or the *vidnyan*. All God-realized beings—the *Majzoob-e-Kamil* (*Brahmi Bhoot*), *Majzoob-Salik* (*Paramhansa*), *Azad-e-Mutlaq* (*Jivanmukta*), *Qutub* (*Sadguru*), and *Rasool* (*Avatar*)—retire to this state B of God in the Beyond after disembodiment. Meher Baba explained that such a disembodied state of the Perfect Master is referred to by the Sufis as *halat-e-Muhammadi* (State of Muhammad), as distinguished from *muqam-e-Muhammadi* (Office of Muhammad), when in a physical body. *Haqiqat-e-Muhammadi* is the tenth state of God in a physical body, and the *muqam-e-Muhammadi* (Office of Muhammad) is the *Vidnyan Bhumika* (the office of *vidnyan*) depicted in the chart as “C.”

State IX

God as Liberated Incarnate Soul

If God, divinely absorbed as in State VIII, recovers and maintains normal consciousness of the mental, subtle and gross spheres through His mental, subtle and gross aspects as an embodiment of a perfect human being known as *Majzoob* (divinely absorbed), He then experiences State IX at the Divine Junction between God States VIII and X.

If the soul recovers the normal consciousness of the mental, subtle and gross bodies and spheres, it comes out of the *Majzoob* State VIII, crossing the *fana-fillah*, to get the experience of the *baqa-billah* state. But, before becoming established in *baqa-billah*, it may enter the state known to Sufis as “*fana-ma-al-baqa*” of the “*muqam-e-furutat*,” which the Vedantists call “*turiya avastha*.” This is State IX at the Divine Junction between the *fana-fillah* and *baqa-billah* of Divinity.

The God-realized souls in a human body at this state are either the *Paramhansa* (*Majzoob-Salik* or *Salik-Majzoob*) or the *Jivanmukta* (*Azad-e-Mutlaq*). They both enjoy infinite knowledge, power and bliss, and are conscious of the “I am God” state. They differ from the *Majzoob-e-Kamil*, however, in that they can and do become conscious of the three bodies and the three spheres (mental, subtle and gross). While the *Majzoob* state is a continual state of being divinely absorbed, the state of the *Paramhansa* is one of sometimes being divinely absorbed and sometimes recovering normal consciousness of one who experiences the *suluk* of *sulukiyat*. His conscious experience is sometimes that of “I am my own God” and sometimes “I am my own creature.” The state of the *Jivanmukta* is of one who normally experiences the *suluk* of *sulukiyat* (i.e., of one permanently established in the state of *baqa-billah*). Both the *Paramhansa* and *Jivanmukta* differ from the *Qutub* in not being able to use the infinite knowledge, power and bliss that they experience continuously.

No direct* spiritual benefit accrues to the world from a *Paramhansa* or *Jivanmukta*. However, a *Jivanmukta*, towards the end of his

* [Nevertheless, indirectly, anyone coming in contact with him automatically benefits. Ed.]

life, does make one single soul perfect like himself; although he has no duty in the three spheres, he enjoys the *baqa-billah* state.

State X

God as Man-God and God-Man

This is the state of God in a human body such as a Perfect Master (*Qutub, Sadguru*). In this state the Perfect Master or the Man-God is divinely, unattachedly and unlimitedly above the law of Illusion that governs the cosmic Creation in an infinitely systematical order; and yet He permits Himself to be bound by the limitations of time, space and causation while continually experiencing consciously His “I am God” state and His infinite power, knowledge and bliss. He not only experiences these infinite attributes, but He also uses these for the emancipation of other souls in the grip of ignorance who are still unconscious of their own eternal reality.

This is the state of absolute perfection; here God is with attributes and with form (*saguna* and *sakar*).

According to the Sufis, the *Qutub* connotes the highest point on the upward journey; he is the *summum bonum* of Creation and the fairest flower of humanity. In the *Majzoob* state, the soul enjoyed the infinite bliss of the “I am God” state; but the Perfect Master (*Qutub, Sadguru*) enjoys the infinite bliss of the “I am God” state and also the highest divine consciousness of “Everything is I” and “Everything is from Me.”

This tenth state of God in the human body is the state of *haqiqat-e-Muhammadi*. The Perfect Masters (*Qutubs* or *Sadgurus*) and the Avatar (*Rasool*) are all of this state. Whether God is in the state of Man-God, as Perfect Master, or in the state of God-Man, as Avatar, He is in this tenth state and functions as a Man-God and as a God-Man from the divine office *muqam-e-Muhammadi* or *vidnyan bhumika*, depicted in the chart as “C.” The first manifestation of God, with His infinite consciousness, assumed this divine office, and this office will ever continue to function eternally to radiate infinite power, knowledge and bliss, which the Perfect Masters and the Avatar not only eternally experience, but also use for the emancipation of all souls who are still in the grip of ignorance, trying

to gain consciousness of their eternal state of oneness with the Over-Soul.

In other words, God in a human body will everlastingly manifest Himself in all of His perfection only through this divine office marked “C” in the chart “The Ten States of God.”

It was only through this divine office that God, as God-Man, in the form of Zoroaster, Rama, Krishna, Jesus, Buddha, Muhammad and others, manifested Himself and proclaimed in every cycle, age after age, that He is the Saviour, the Prophet, the Messiah, the Son-of-God, the *Avatar*, the *Rasool*, the *Buddha* and so forth. And it is only through this divine office that the five Perfect Masters or the *Qutubs* or the *Sadgurus* function as the *summum bonum* of the whole cosmic Creation.

The Sufis call this divine office “*muqam-e-Muhammadi*,” after the name of the Prophet Muhammad, the *Rasool* of God, in His *haqiqat-e-Muhammadi*. Similarly, Jesus of Nazareth, the Son of God, is—like Muhammad, Zoroaster, Krishna, Rama, Buddha—the God-Man; whilst “Christ,” like *haqiqat-e-Muhammadi*, is the divine state of Jesus.

When we try to put together all the different stages of God in a nutshell, five distinct stages, in the travail of the unconscious *Paramatma* to gain complete consciousness, become conspicuous.

The First Stage

1. To begin with, *atma* (soul) and *Paramatma* (Over-Soul) are both one in the infinite, indivisible “Oneness of Reality.”
2. Before the beginning of the Beginning, *Paramatma* and all *atmas* were unconscious and unimpressioned.
3. In the beginning, *atma* had no consciousness of the gross body, subtle body or mental body, and therefore had no experience of the gross world, the subtle world or the mental world. *Atma* was even unconscious of its own Self and therefore had no experience of its own *Paramatma* state.

This is the stage depicted as state A in the chart of the Ten States of God.

The Second Stage

Atma gains consciousness and has impressions. At this stage *atma* is conscious either of the gross body or the subtle body or the mental body and experiences either the gross world or the subtle world or the mental world; but *atma* is still unconscious of its own Self and therefore does not experience the *Paramatma* state yet.

This is the stage as in States III, IV, V, VI and VII according to the chart.

The Third Stage

Atma becomes impressionless but retains full and complete consciousness. This complete consciousness is now no longer of the gross body, the subtle body or the mental body, and therefore *atma* no longer experiences the gross world, the subtle world or the mental world.

This consciousness that is retained is of *atma*'s own infinite Self, and therefore *atma* now experiences the *Paramatma* state consciously and experiences the infinite power, knowledge and bliss of the "I am God" state.

This is the stage noted as State VIII in the chart.

The Fourth Stage

Atma recovers the so-called normal consciousness of the gross body, the subtle body and the mental body and therefore once again experiences, at one and the same time, the gross world, the subtle world and the mental world. At this stage, *atma* is simultaneously also conscious of its own infinite Self and experiences the infinite power, infinite knowledge and infinite bliss of its own *Paramatma* state, but *atma* cannot use these infinite attributes even though, at this stage, it is conscious of its gross, subtle and mental bodies and experiences simultaneously the three worlds.

This is the stage of State IX in the chart.

The Fifth Stage

Atma is fully and completely conscious of the gross body, the subtle body and the mental body, and experiences the gross world, the subtle world and the mental world simultaneously with having the highest divine consciousness of its infinite Self, and also experiences and uses the infinite power, infinite knowledge and infinite bliss of its own *Paramatma* state.

This is the stage of State X as shown in the chart of the Ten States of God.*

* [A summary by Meher Baba of different terms for status, state, stage or aspect and gnosis in the eternal sphere of Reality appears on pages 278–279. The gnosis of “I am God” is common to each one of the four types of perfection and does not end on physical death. Ed.]