

Meher Baba (Mihṛ Bābā)

Thirty Wikipedia Articles

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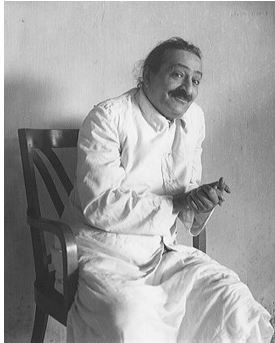

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Meher Baba

Meher Baba

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|  | |
| Full name | Meher Baba |
| Born | February 25, 1894Poona (now Pune), India |
| Died | January 31, 1969 (aged 74)Meherazad, India |
| Era | 20th century |
| Region | India |
| School | Sufism, Vedanta, Mysticism |
| Main interests | Religion, Metaphysics, Aesthetics, Ethics |
| Signature |  |

Meher Baba (Devanagari: मेहेर बाबा, Urdu: مہر بابا), (February 25, 1894 – January 31, 1969), born **Merwan Sheriar Irani**, was an Indian mystic and spiritual master who declared publicly in 1954 that he was the Avatar of the age.

Merwan Sheriar Irani was born in 1894 and led a normal childhood, showing no particularly strong inclination toward spiritual matters. At the age of 19, a brief contact with the Muslim holy woman Hazrat Babajan began his seven-year process of spiritual transformation.^[1] ^[2] Over the next months, he contacted four additional spiritual figures whom, along with Babajan, he called "the five Perfect Masters." He spent seven years with Upasni Maharaj, one of the masters, before beginning his public work.^[3] The name Meher Baba means "Compassionate Father" in Persian and was given to him by his first followers.^[4]

From July 10, 1925 to the end of his life, Meher Baba maintained silence, and communicated by means of an alphabet board or by unique hand gestures.^[5] ^[6] ^[7] ^[8] With his *mandali* (circle of disciples), he spent long periods in seclusion, in which he often fasted. He also conducted wide-ranging travels, public gatherings, and works of charity, including working with lepers, the poor, and the mentally ill.

In 1931, Meher Baba made the first of many visits to the West, where he attracted many followers.^[9] Throughout most of the 1940s, Meher Baba worked with a category of spiritual aspirant, called *masts*,^[10] whom he said are entranced or spellbound by internal spiritual experiences. Starting in 1949, along with selected mandali, he traveled incognito about India in what he called "The New Life". On February 10, 1954, Meher Baba declared that he was the Avatar (an incarnation of God).^[11] On July 10, 1958 he released his *Universal Message* ^[12].

After being injured as a passenger in two automobile accidents, one in the United States in 1952 and one in India in 1956, his capacity to walk became seriously limited.^[13] ^[14] In 1962, he invited his Western followers to India for a mass *darshan* called "The East-West Gathering."^[15] Concerned by an increasing use of LSD and other psychedelic drugs,^[16] in 1966 Meher Baba stated that they did not convey real benefits.^[17] Despite deteriorating health, he

continued what he called his "Universal Work," which included fasting, and seclusion until his death on January 31, 1969. His *samadhi* (tomb-shrine) in Meherabad, India has become a place of international pilgrimage.^[18]

Early life

Meher Baba was an Irani^[19] born in Pune, India to a Zoroastrian family.^[20] His given name was Merwan Sheriar Irani. He was the second son of Sheriar Mundegar Irani, a Persian Zoroastrian who had spent years wandering in search of spiritual experience before settling in Poona (now Pune), and Sheriar's young wife, Shireen.^[21]

His schoolmates nicknamed him "Electricity." As a boy he formed "The Cosmopolitan Club," dedicated to remaining informed in world affairs and giving money to charity. Money was raised by donations and sometimes by gambling, e.g. betting at the horse races.^[22] He had an excellent singing voice and was a multi-instrumentalist and poet. Fluent in several languages, he was especially fond of Hafez's Persian poetry, but also of Shakespeare and Shelley.^[23]

In his youth, he had no mystical inclinations or experiences, and was "[u]ntroubled as yet by a sense of his own destiny..."^[24] He was more interested in sports, especially cricket, and was co-captain of his High School cricket team. Baba later explained that a veil is always placed on the Avatar until the time is right for him to begin his work.^[25] At the age of 19, however, during his second year at Deccan College in Poona (now Pune), he met a very old Muslim woman, a spiritual master named Hazrat Babajan, who kissed him on the forehead. The event affected him profoundly; he experienced visions and mystical feelings so powerful that he gave up his normal activities.^[26] He began to beat his head against a stone to maintain, as he later put it, contact with the physical world. He also contacted other spiritual figures, who (along with Babajan) he later said were the five "Perfect Masters" of the age: Hazrat Tajuddin Baba of Nagpur, Narayan Maharaj of Kedgaon, Sai Baba of Shirdi, and Upasni Maharaj of Sakori.^[27]

Upasni helped him, he later said, to integrate his mystical experiences with normal consciousness, thus enabling him to function in the world without diminishing his experience of God-realization.^[28] In 1921, at the age of 27, after living for seven years with Upasni, Merwan started to attract a following of his own. His early followers gave him the name "Meher Baba," meaning Compassionate Father.^[29]

In 1922, Meher Baba and his followers established "Manzil-e-Meem" (House of the Master) in Bombay (now Mumbai). There Baba began his practice of demanding strict discipline and obedience from his disciples.^[30] A year later, Baba and his *mandali* ("circle" of disciples) moved to an area a few miles outside Ahmednagar, which he called "Meherabad" (Meher flourishing).^[31] This ashram would become the center for his work. In 1924, Meher Baba created a resident school at Meherabad, which he called the "Prem Ashram" (in several languages "prem" means "love"). The school was free and open to all castes and faiths. The school drew multi-denominational students from around India and Iran.^[32]



Meher Baba at 16 years old in 1910

Silence

From July 10, 1925 until his death in 1969, Meher Baba was silent.^{[6] [33]} He communicated first by using an alphabet board, and later by unique hand gestures which were interpreted and spoken out by one of his mandali, usually by his disciple Eruch Jessawala.^[5] Meher Baba said that his silence was not undertaken as a spiritual exercise but solely in connection with his universal work.

Man's inability to live God's words makes the Avatar's teaching a mockery. Instead of practicing the compassion he taught, man has waged wars in his name. Instead of living the humility, purity, and truth of his words, man has given way to hatred, greed, and violence. Because man has been deaf to the principles and precepts laid down by God in the past, in this present Avataric form, I observe silence.^[34]



From 1925 until 1954 Meher Baba communicated by pointing to letters on an alphabet board.

Meher Baba often spoke of the moment "that he would 'break' his silence by speaking the 'Word' in every heart, thereby giving a spiritual push forward to all living things."^[35]

When I break My Silence, the impact of My Love will be universal and all life in creation will know, feel and receive of it. It will help every individual to break himself free from his own bondage in his own way. I am the Divine Beloved who loves you more than you can ever love yourself. The breaking of My Silence will help you to help yourself in knowing your real Self.^[36]

Meher Baba said that the breaking of his silence would be a defining event in the spiritual evolution of the world.

When I speak that Word, I shall lay the foundation for that which is to take place during the next seven hundred

years.^[37]

On many occasions Meher Baba promised to break his silence with an audible word^[38] before he died, often stating a specific time and place when this would occur.^[39] His failure to fulfill these promises disappointed some of his followers, while others regarded these broken promises as a test of their faith.^[40] Some followers speculate that "the Word" will yet be "spoken," or that Meher Baba did break his silence but in a spiritual rather than a physical way.^[37]

According to all contemporary accounts, Meher Baba remained silent until his death, but more than thirty years later one close disciple recalled that Meher Baba had spoken to him a few hours before he died,^[41] although this recollection contradicted his own earlier accounts.^[42]

Each July 10, many of Baba's followers celebrate Silence Day to honor him.

1930s

First contacts with the West

In the 1930s, Meher Baba began a period of extensive world travel, with several trips to Europe and the United States. It was during this period that he established contact with his first close group of Western disciples.^[9] He traveled on a Persian passport, because he had given up writing as well as speaking, and would not sign the forms required by the British Government of India.^[43]

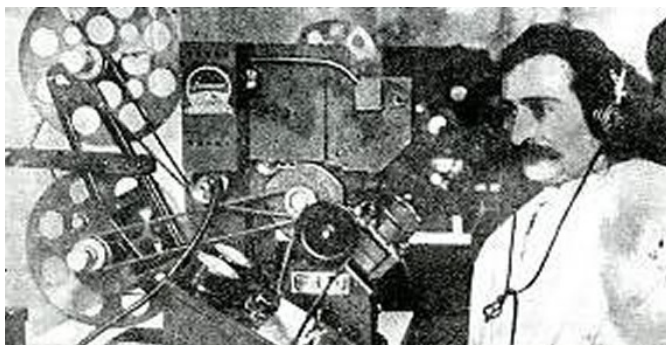
On his first trip to England in 1931 he traveled on the *Rajputana*, the same ship that was carrying Mahatma Gandhi who was sailing to the second Round Table Conference in London. Meher Baba and Gandhi had three meetings onboard including one that lasted for three hours.^[44] The British press emphasized these meetings^[45] but an aide to Gandhi said, "You may say emphatically that Gandhi never asked Meher Baba for help or for spiritual or other

advice."^[46]

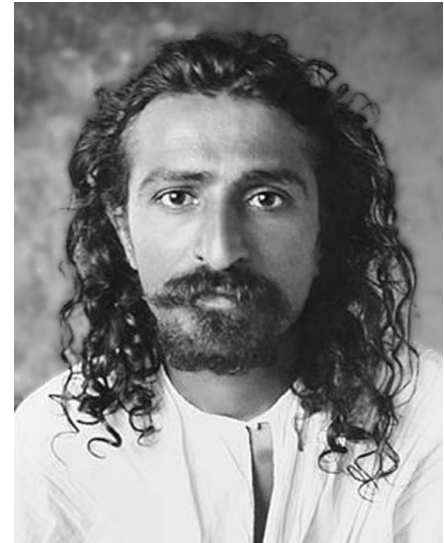
On the journey he was interviewed on behalf of the Associated Press, which quoted him describing his trip as a "new crusade . . . to break down all religious barriers and destroy America's materialism and amalgamate all creeds into a common element of love".^[47] His intention, according to the resulting article, was to convert thousands of Americans from sin. Describing Baba as "The Messiah," the article also claims he listed miracles he had performed, and said that a person who becomes one with the truth can accomplish anything, but that it is a weakness to perform miracles only to show spiritual power. However, another description of the interview states that when Baba was asked about the miracles attributed to him, he replied "The only miracle for the Perfect Man to perform is to make others perfect too. I want to make the Americans realize the infinite state which I myself enjoy."^[48]

Baba was invited to the "Meherashram" retreat in Harmon, New York by Malcolm and Jean Schloss. The *Time* article on the visit states that Schloss referred to him in uppercase as "He, Him, His, Himself" and that Baba was described by his followers variously as the "God Man", "Messiah" or "Perfect Master".^[49]

On May 20, 1932 Baba arrived in New York and provided the press with a 1,000-word written statement, which was described by devotee Quentin Tod as his *Message to America*. In the statement Baba proclaimed himself "one with the infinite source of everything," and declared his intention to break his silence: "When I speak, my original message will be delivered to the world and it will have to be accepted". When asked about the Indo-British political situation, he had no comment, but his followers explained that he had told Gandhi to abandon politics.^[50]



Meher Baba at Paramount Film Studio, London, April 1932



Meher Baba in 1925, the year he began his lifelong silence

In the West, Meher Baba met with a number of celebrities and artists, including Hollywood notables Gary Cooper, Charles Laughton, Tallulah Bankhead, Boris Karloff, Tom Mix, Maurice Chevalier, Ernst Lubitsch and others.^[51] On June 1, 1932 Mary Pickford and Douglas Fairbanks, Jr. held a reception for Baba at Pickfair where he delivered a message to Hollywood.^[52] ^[53] As a result, Meher Baba emerged as "one of the enthusiasms of the '30s."^[54]

In 1934, after announcing that he would break his self-imposed silence in the Hollywood Bowl, Baba suddenly changed his plans and boarded the *Empress of Canada* and sailed to Hong Kong without explanation. The Associated Press reported that "Baba had decided to postpone the word-fast breaking until next February because 'conditions are not yet ripe'."^[55] He returned to England in 1936,^[56] but did not return to the United States again until the early 1950s.^[57]

In the late 1930s, Meher Baba invited a group of western women to join him in India, where he arranged a series of trips throughout India that became known as the Blue Bus Tours. When they returned home, many newspapers treated their journey as an occasion for scandal.^[58] *Time* Magazine's 1936 review of *God is my Adventure* describes the US's fascination with the "long-haired, silky-mustached Parsee named Shri Sadgaru [sic] Meher Baba" four years earlier.^[59]

Discourses

During the course of early gatherings of his close circle and followers, Meher Baba gave discourses on various spiritual subjects. Between 1938 and 1943, at the request of Princess Norina Matchabelli, one of his earliest Western devotees, Meher Baba dictated a series of discourses on his alphabet board for her New York publication *Meher Baba Journal*.^[60] These discourses, transcribed or worked up by close disciples from points given by Baba, address many aspects of the spiritual life, and provide practical and simple direction for the aspirant. During those years, at least one discourse appeared each month in the journal. Chakradhar Dharnidhar Deshmukh, a close disciple of Meher Baba, compiled and edited the discourses.

Between 1939 and 1954 in India, a five-volume compilation titled *Discourses of Meher Baba* received several printings. In 1967 Meher Baba personally supervised the editing and publication of a new three-volume version of the *Discourses*, known as the sixth edition.^[61] The widely available seventh edition of the *Discourses* first published in 1987 (after Baba's death), contains numerous editorial changes not specifically authorized by Meher Baba.^[62]

1940s

Work with 'masts'

In the 1930s and 1940s, Meher Baba did extensive work with a category of people he termed *masts*: persons "intoxicated with God."^[63] According to Meher Baba these individuals are essentially disabled by their enchanting experience of the higher spiritual planes. Although outwardly masts may appear irrational or even insane, Meher Baba said that their spiritual status was actually quite elevated, and that by meeting with them, he helped them to move forward spiritually while enlisting their aid in his spiritual work.^[10] One of the best known of these masts, known as Mohammed Mast, lived at Meher Baba's encampment at Meherabad until his death in 2003.^[64]

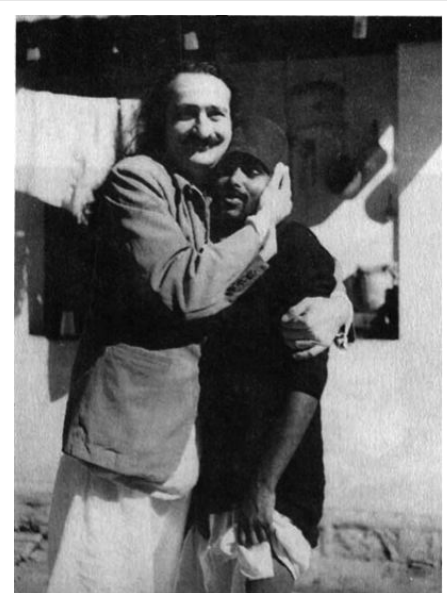
The New Life

In 1949 Meher Baba began an enigmatic period which he called "The New Life". Following a series of questions on their readiness to obey even the most difficult of his requests, Meher Baba selected twenty companions to join him in a life of complete "hopelessness, helplessness and aimlessness".^[65]

He made provisions for those dependent on him, then he and his companions otherwise gave up all property and financial responsibilities. They then traveled about India incognito, without money, with no permanent lodging, begging for food, and carrying out Baba's instructions in accordance with a strict set of "conditions of the New Life". These included absolute acceptance of any circumstance, and consistent good cheer in the face of any difficulty. Companions who failed to comply were sent away.^[66]

About the New Life Meher Baba wrote:

This New Life is endless, and even after my physical death it will be kept alive by those who live the life of complete renunciation of falsehood, lies, hatred, anger, greed and lust; and who, to accomplish all this, do no lustful actions, do no harm to anyone, do no backbiting, do not seek material possessions or power, who accept no homage, neither covet honor nor shun disgrace, and fear no one and nothing; by those who rely wholly and solely on God, and who love God purely for the sake of loving; who believe in the lovers of God and in the reality of Manifestation, and yet do not expect any spiritual or material



Meher Baba with mast Shariat Khan in
Bangalore, 1940

reward; who do not let go the hand of Truth, and who, without being upset by calamities, bravely and wholeheartedly face all hardships with one hundred percent cheerfulness, and give no importance to caste, creed and religious ceremonies. This New Life will live by itself eternally, even if there is no one to live it.^[67]

After a period of seclusion and fasting Meher Baba ended the New Life in February 1952,^[68] and once again began a round of public appearances throughout India and the West.^[69]

1950s



Meher Baba leaving a darshan program, February 26, 1954, riding on the roof of a car so that attendees can see.^[70]

Automobile accident in the U.S.A.

In the 1950s Meher Baba established two centers outside of India: Meher Spiritual Center, in Myrtle Beach, South Carolina and Avatar's Abode, near Brisbane, Australia. He inaugurated the Meher Spiritual Center in the United States in April, 1952. On May 24, 1952, en route from the Meher Spiritual Center to Meher Mount in Ojai, California, the car in which Meher Baba was a passenger was struck head-on near Prague, Oklahoma. He and his companions were thrown from the vehicle and

suffered many injuries. Meher Baba's leg was severely broken and he had facial injuries. The injured were treated in Duke Hospital in Durham, North Carolina after which they returned to Myrtle Beach to recuperate.^[13]

Declaration of Avatarhood

Meher Baba began dictating his major book about the purpose of creation, *God Speaks*, in Dehradun, August 1953.^[71] In it he explained the difference between the Avatar and the Sadgurus.^[72] In September 1953, at Dehradun, Meher Baba declared that he was "The Highest of the High."^[73] On February 10, 1954 in Meherastana U.P., India, Meher Baba publicly and explicitly declared his Avatarhood for the first time, spelling out on his alphabet board "Avatar Meher Baba Ki Jai."^[11]

In September of that year, Meher Baba gave a "men-only" sahavas at Meherabad which later became known as the "Three Incredible Weeks."^[74] During this time Baba issued a declaration, "Meher Baba's Call," wherein he affirmed his Avatarhood "irrespective of the doubts and convictions" of others.^[75] At the end of this sahavas Meher Baba gave the completed manuscript of his book *God Speaks* to two attending American Sufis, Lud Dimpfl and Don E. Stevens, for editing and publication in America.^[76] The book was published by Dodd, Mead and Company the following year. On September 30, 1954 Meher Baba gave his "Final Declaration" message, in which he spelled out various enigmatic predictions.^[77]

In October 1954, Meher Baba discarded his alphabet board and began using a unique set of hand gestures to communicate.^[78]

Automobile accident in India

On December 2, 1956, outside Satara, India, the car in which Meher Baba was being driven went out of control and a second serious automobile accident occurred. Meher Baba suffered a fractured pelvis and other severe injuries. Dr. Nilu, a close mandali, was killed.^[14] This collision seriously incapacitated Meher Baba. Despite his physicians' predictions to the contrary, after great effort Baba managed to walk again, but from that point was in constant pain and was severely limited in his ability to move. In fact, during his trip to the West in 1958 he often needed to be carried from venue to venue.^[79] Baba indicated that his automobile accidents and the suffering that attended them were, like his silence, purposeful and brought about by his will.^[80]

Final visits to the West

In 1956, during his fifth visit to the US, Baba stayed at New York's Hotel Delmonico before traveling to the Meher Center at Myrtle Beach, South Carolina. In July he traveled to Washington, D.C. and received friends and disciples at the home of Mrs. James Terry (Ivy) Duce,^[81] wife of the vice-president of the Arabian American Oil Co.^[82] He then traveled to Meher Mount at Ojai, California, before continuing on to Australia. His final visit to the US and Australia was made in 1958.^[83]

1960s

Seclusion and East-West Gathering

Meher Baba returned to India and began more periods of fasting, meditation, and seclusion. Meher Baba said that although the work was draining and exhausting, it was done on behalf of the spiritual welfare of all humanity.^[84] ^[85]

In 1962, Meher Baba gave one of his last public functions, a series of meetings he called *The East-West Gathering*. At these meetings, in which his western followers were invited to meet his Indian disciples, Baba gave darshan to many thousands of people, despite the physical strain this caused.^[86]

Addressing the drug culture

In the mid-1960s Meher Baba became concerned with the increasingly prevalent drug culture in the West, and began a correspondence with several Western academics including Timothy Leary and Richard Alpert in which he strongly discouraged the use of all hallucinogenic drugs for spiritual purposes.^[87] In 1966 Meher Baba's responses to questions on drugs were published in a pamphlet titled *God in a Pill?* Meher Baba stated that drug use was spiritually damaging and that if enlightenment were possible through drugs then "God is not worthy of being God."^[88] Meher Baba instructed some of his young Western disciples to spread this message; in doing so, they increased awareness of Meher Baba's teachings among the young during this period. In an interview with Frederick Chapman, a Harvard graduate and Fulbright scholar who met Baba during a year of study in India, Baba stated that LSD is "harmful physically, mentally and spiritually", and warned that "the continued use of LSD leads to madness or death."^[89]

On this basis, an anti-drug campaign was initiated by Baba lovers in the USA, Europe and Australia. Although the campaign was largely unsuccessful,^[90] it created a wave of new followers, and some of Baba's views found their way into academic debate on the merits and dangers of hallucinogens.^[91]



Meher Baba poster in scene from the 1970 film *Woodstock*.

Final seclusion and death

From the East-West Gathering onward, Meher Baba's health steadily deteriorated. Despite the physical toll it took on his body, Meher Baba continued to undertake long periods in seclusion, fasting and meditating.^[92] In late July 1968, Meher Baba completed a particularly taxing period of seclusion and emerged saying that his work was "completed 100% to my satisfaction."^[93] By this point he was using a wheelchair. Within a few months his condition worsened and he was bed-ridden. His body was wracked by intense muscular spasms that had no clear origin. Despite the care of several doctors, the spasms grew progressively worse.^[94]

On January 31, 1969, Meher Baba died,^[95] conveying by his last gestures, "Do not forget that I am God."^[94] In time his devotees called this day *Amartithi* (deathless day). Meher Baba's body was laid out for public viewing at his samadhi (tomb-shrine) at Meherabad. Covered with roses, and cooled by ice, his body was kept available to the public for one week before its final burial.^[96] Before his passing, Meher Baba had made extensive preparations for a public darshan program to be held in Poona (now Pune), India. His mandali decided to proceed with the arrangements despite the physical absence of the host. Several thousand attended this "Last Darshan", including many hundred people from the US, Europe, and Australia.^[97] ^[98]

Metaphysics

Source: Baba, Meher, Dodd Mead, *God Speaks, The Theme of Creation and Its Purpose*^[99]

Meher Baba's metaphysical views are most notably described in *God Speaks*. His cosmology incorporates concepts and terms from Vedanta, Sufism, and Christianity.^[100] ^[101] Meher Baba upheld the concept of nonduality, the view that diverse creation, or duality, is an illusion and that the goal of life is conscious realization of the absolute Oneness of God inherent in all animate and inanimate beings and things. Meher Baba compares God's original state to an infinite, shoreless ocean which has only *unconscious divinity* — unaware of itself because this original unconscious state has no means for any self-knowledge. From this state, God had the "whim" to know Himself,^[102] and asked "Who am I?"^[103] In response to this question, creation came into existence. In this analogy, what was previously a still, shoreless Ocean now stirred,^[104] forming innumerable "drops" of itself or souls. Meher Baba often remarked "You will find all the answers to your questions in *God Speaks*. Study the book thoroughly and absorb it."^[105]

Evolution and Involution

According to Baba, each soul pursues *conscious divinity* by evolving; that is, experiencing form in seven "kingdoms" — stone/metal, vegetable, worm, fish, bird, animal, and human. The soul gathers *sanskaras* (impressions) in each form; these impressions lead to further evolution expressed by taking new, more complex forms. With each new form, increasing consciousness is gained, until the soul experiences and discards forms from all the evolutionary kingdoms. The final form of the soul's evolution is the human form. Only in the human form can the soul experience its own divinity, by entering into *involution*, through which it gradually eliminates all impressions which cause the appearance of separateness from God.^[106]

Reincarnation and God-realization

Baba asserts that in the human form, the soul becomes subject to reincarnation, the "involuntary process of association and disassociation of consciousness".^[107] The purpose of reincarnation is to provide the opportunity for liberation from illusion. The soul reincarnates innumerable times in all conditions of life encompassing the whole range of human experience (e.g. man/woman, rich/poor, powerful/weak, etc.).^[108] Through the experience of opposites, *sanskaras* gradually grow fainter and scarcer.^[109] Meher Baba describes the process of God-realization this way:

From out of the depth of unbroken Infinity arose the Question, "Who am I?" And to that Question there is the answer, "I am God!"^[103]

Meher Baba described heaven and hell as transitory and illusory states between incarnations:^[110]

The states of heaven and hell are nothing but states of intensive experiences of the consciousness of the soul, experiencing either of the predominant counterparts of the opposite impressions while the soul is dissociated from the gross human body or form.^[111]

Perfect Masters and the Avatar

Meher Baba says that at all times on Earth there are fifty-six incarnate God-realized souls, and that of these souls there are always five who constitute the *five Perfect Masters* of their era.^[112] When one of the five perfect masters dies, Baba says, another God-realized soul among the fifty-six immediately replaces him or her by taking up that office.^[113]

The *Avatar*, according to Meher Baba, is a special Perfect Master, the first soul to achieve God-realization. This soul, the *original* Perfect Master, or the "Ancient One", never ceases to incarnate. Baba says that this particular soul personifies the state of God which in Hinduism is named *Vishnu* and in Sufism is named *Parvardigar*, i.e. the sustainer or preserver state of God. According to Meher Baba the Avatar appears on Earth every 700–1400 years, and is 'brought down' into human form by the five perfect masters of the time to aid in the process of moving creation in its never-ending journey toward Godhood. Baba said that in other ages this role was fulfilled by Zoroaster, Rama, Krishna, Gautama Buddha, Jesus, and lastly by Muhammad.^[114]

Meher Baba describes the Avatar as "a gauge against which man can measure what he is and what he may become. He trues the standard of human values by interpreting them in terms of divinely human life."^[115]

Most of Meher Baba's followers accept his claim of avatarhood^[100] and he is said to be "revered by millions around the world as the Avatar of the age and a God realized being."^[89]

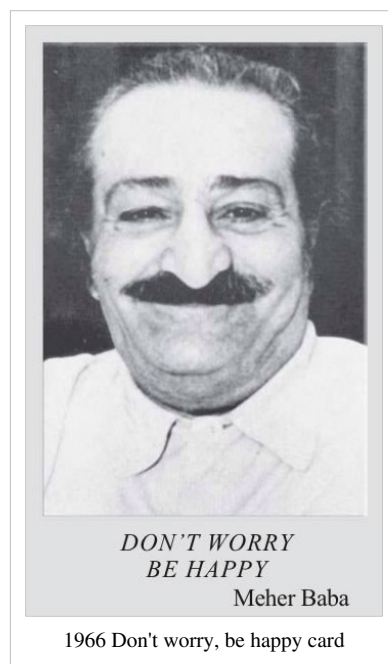
Legacy

Meher Baba's travels and teachings left a legacy of followers and devotees worldwide. Although he participated in large public gatherings, he stated, "I need no propaganda or publicity."^[116] Although he said "My message always has been and always will be of Love Divine — let the world know it,"^[117] he discouraged evangelizing, telling his followers instead to "let your life itself be my message of love and truth to others."^[118]

The Avatar Meher Baba Trust, established by Meher Baba, maintains his tomb and pilgrimage facilities, provides support for aging mandali, and other activities. The Trust, however, does not act as a central spiritual authority.^[119]

Followers of Meher Baba have no obligatory rites, rituals or duties, as in most religions. Many followers do undertake certain rituals and prayers, but the choice is personal.^[120] The primary focus for followers is living a life Meher Baba would approve of, for example refraining from the use of psychedelic drugs including marijuana.^[121]

Gatherings of Baba followers are highly informal and social in nature. Special effort will be made to gather together on Amartithi, the anniversary of Meher Baba's death, and on his birthday. Most Baba followers keep silent each July 10 (Silence Day), observing the request Meher Baba often made of his followers during his lifetime.^[122]



Three prayers written by Meher Baba, "O Parvardigar", the "Prayer of Repentance" and the "Beloved God Prayer",^{[123] [124]} are recited morning and evening at his samadhi in India, and are often recited at gatherings. Many followers personally repeat these prayers daily. At Meherabad, his followers maintain Meher Baba's practice of lighting a dhuni fire in a fire-ring on the 12th of each month. After dhuni prayers, participants throw sandalwood twigs dipped in ghee into the flame as physical representations of limitations and desires they wish to relinquish.

Although Meher Baba had initially begun gaining public attention in the West as early as 1932 as the result of contacts with some celebrities of the time (such as Charles Laughton, Tallulah Bankhead, Boris Karloff and others), and from the rather disillusioned account of Paul Brunton (*A Search in Secret India*, 1934), he achieved additional attention over three decades later through the work of Pete Townshend of The Who.^[125] Parts of the rock-opera *Tommy* (May 1969) were inspired by Townshend's study of Meher Baba, to whom the album was dedicated.^[126] The Who's 1971 song "Baba O'Riley" was named in part after Meher Baba, and on his first solo album, *Who Came First*, Townshend recorded the Jim Reeves song "There's A Heartache Following Me", saying that it was Meher Baba's favorite song.

Concepts of Meher Baba's philosophy, often including characters resembling Meher Baba, have frequently appeared in works of comic book writer J. M. DeMatteis, including *Dr. Fate*, *Seekers Into The Mystery*, *The Last One* and *Batman: Absolution*.

Bobby McFerrin's 1988 Grammy Award winning song "Don't Worry, Be Happy" was inspired by a popular quote of Baba's seen in numerous Baba posters and inspirational cards.^[127]

Notes

- [1] Hopkinson, Tom & Dorothy: *Much Silence*, Meher Baba Foundation Australia, 1974, p. 24
- [2] Purdom (1964) p. 20
- [3] Haynes (1989) pp. 38–39
- [4] Haynes (1989) p. 40
- [5] Purdom (1964) p. 52
- [6] Haynes (1989) p. 2
- [7] Kalchuri (1986) p.738 "Meher Baba had observed silence three times before, but the silence beginning July 10th, 1925, was to last until the end of his life."
- [8] Baba (2007) p. 3
- [9] Kalchuri (1986) pp. 1405ff
- [10] Donkin (2001)
- [11] Kalchuri (1986) p. 4283
- [12] <http://www.ambppct.org/meherbaba/universal-message.php>
- [13] Kalchuri (1986) p.3834-3840
- [14] Kalchuri (1986) p. 5130
- [15] Kalchuri (1986) p. 5942ff
- [16] Brecher, Edward M; et al. (1972). "How LSD was popularized" (<http://www.druglibrary.org/schaffer/Library/studies/cu/CU50.html>). Consumer Reports/Drug Library. . Retrieved 2008-07-14.
- [17] Kalchuri (1986) p. 6399ff
- [18] Haynes (1989) p. 62
- [19] In an Indian context, an Irani is a member of one of two groups of Zoroastrians of that subcontinent, the other being the Parsis. They are called "Iranis" by other Indians because they spoke an Iranian language. "Those who left Iran soon after the advent of Islam to escape persecution, reached the shores of Gujarat 1,373 years ago. Their descendants are the Parsis. While the Zoroastrians who migrated to India from Iran relatively recently — 19th century onwards — are called Irani Zoroastrians." (quote from Padmaja Shastri,TNN, *What sets Zoroastrian Iranis apart* (<http://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/articleshow/572604.cms>), The Times of India, March 21, 2004, retrieved 11 July 2008).
- [20] Sutcliffe (2002); p. 38.
- [21] "I am called Meher Baba, but that is not my real name. I will tell you my family name but please don't disclose it as I travel under that name and I wish to remain incognito. I am a Persian, born in Poona on February 25, 1894. My father was a spiritually minded man and from boyhood until he was a grown man spent his life wandering in the jungle in search of spiritual experience. At the age of 35 he was told that he should resume a normal existence. This he did. He married and had six children. I am the second son. I was brought up as a Zoroastrian, the religion of my ancestors." <http://www.avatarmeherbaba.org/erics/ceylon.html>
- [22] Kalchuri (1986) p. 186-188

- [23] Kalchuri (1986) p. 190-192
- [24] Hopkinson, Tom & Dorothy: *Much Silence*, Meher Baba Foundation Australia, 1974, p.24
- [25] Haynes (1989) p. 36
- [26] Kalchuri (1986) p. 198-201
- [27] Kalchuri (1986) p. 944
- [28] *Listen Humanity*, ed. D. E. Stevens, 1982. pp. 247–250
- [29] Kalchuri (1986) p. 328-330ff
- [30] Kalchuri (1986) p.380ff
- [31] Kalchuri (1986) p. 501
- [32] Abdulla, Ramjoo: "Ramjoo's Diaries, 1922–1929: A Personal Account of Meher Baba's Early Work", *Sufism Reoriented*, 1979
- [33] Kalchuri (1986) p.738
- [34] Meher Baba: "Meher Baba's Universal Message", World's Fair Pamphlet, 1964
- [35] Haynes (1989) p. 66
- [36] Ullman, Robert; Judyth Reichenberg-Ullman (2001). *Mystics, Masters, Saints, and Sages*. RedWheel / Weiser. ISBN 1573245070. page 125.
- [37] Haynes (1989) p.67
- [38] Khauchuri (1989), p. 4586
- [39] See for example: (<http://www.lordmeher.org/index.jsp?pageBase=page.jsp&nextPage=915>) (<http://www.lordmeher.org/index.jsp?pageBase=page.jsp&nextPage=900>) (<http://www.lordmeher.org/index.jsp?pageBase=page.jsp&nextPage=5655>) (<http://www.lordmeher.org/index.jsp?pageBase=page.jsp&nextPage=5648>) (<http://www.lordmeher.org/index.jsp?pageBase=page.jsp&nextPage=5787>) (<http://www.lordmeher.org/index.jsp?pageBase=page.jsp&nextPage=5807>) (<http://www.lordmeher.org/index.jsp?pageBase=page.jsp&nextPage=6015>) (<http://www.lordmeher.org/index.jsp?pageBase=page.jsp&nextPage=6024>) (<http://www.lordmeher.org/index.jsp?pageBase=page.jsp&nextPage=6027>) (<http://www.lordmeher.org/index.jsp?pageBase=page.jsp&nextPage=6037>) (<http://www.lordmeher.org/index.jsp?pageBase=page.jsp&nextPage=6105>) (<http://www.lordmeher.org/index.jsp?pageBase=page.jsp&nextPage=6061>) (<http://www.lordmeher.org/index.jsp?pageBase=page.jsp&nextPage=6090>) (<http://www.lordmeher.org/index.jsp?pageBase=page.jsp&nextPage=6151>) (<http://www.lordmeher.org/index.jsp?pageBase=page.jsp&nextPage=6166>) (<http://www.lordmeher.org/index.jsp?pageBase=page.jsp&nextPage=6170>) (<http://www.lordmeher.org/index.jsp?pageBase=page.jsp&nextPage=6172>) (<http://www.lordmeher.org/index.jsp?pageBase=page.jsp&nextPage=6206>) (<http://www.lordmeher.org/index.jsp?pageBase=page.jsp&nextPage=6164>) (<http://www.lordmeher.org/index.jsp?pageBase=page.jsp&nextPage=6318>) (<http://www.lordmeher.org/index.jsp?pageBase=page.jsp&nextPage=6341>) (<http://www.lordmeher.org/index.jsp?pageBase=page.jsp&nextPage=6370>) (<http://www.lordmeher.org/index.jsp?pageBase=page.jsp&nextPage=6319>) (<http://www.lordmeher.org/index.jsp?pageBase=page.jsp&nextPage=6425>) (<http://www.lordmeher.org/index.jsp?pageBase=page.jsp&nextPage=6532>) (<http://www.lordmeher.org/index.jsp?pageBase=page.jsp&nextPage=6548>) (<http://www.lordmeher.org/index.jsp?pageBase=page.jsp&nextPage=6579>)
- [40] Kalchuri (1986) p.1668
- [41] "Baba actually spoke two words to Bhau [Kalchuri]: 'Yad rakh [remember this]!' and then gestured, 'I am not this body!'...'Although Baba's voice was feeble,' Bhau recalled, 'the sound was audible and clear, and its intensity and impact very, very forceful. It conveyed so great an impression, that my mind itself neither registered nor questioned the fact that Baba was speaking.'" Kalchuri, Bhau (2005). *Lord Meher. Volume 8* (Second (India) ed.). Meher Mownavani Publications. pp. 4765.
- [42] Kalchuri (1986) p. 6710
- [43] Kalchuri (1986), 1249
- [44] Purdom (1964) p. 95.
- [45] See articles from the Daily Herald, April 4, 1932 (quoted in Kalchuri (1986), p.1573) and from Sunday Express, April 1932 (quoted in Purdom (1964), p.99)
- [46] Landau, Rom: "God Is My Adventure", *Faber & Faber*, London, 1936. p. 111.
- [47] Mills, James A. (AP), *Indian Spiritual Leader to Tour the Nation*, Jefferson City Post Tribune, March 25, 1932. p.5
- [48] Kalchuri(1986), p.1541
- [49] "God on the Hudson" (<http://www.time.com/time/magazine/article/0,9171,753275-2,00.html>). Time Magazine. 1932-05-02. . Retrieved 2008-06-26.
- [50] *Indian Mystic in New York*, Associated Press, May 20, 1932, The Lowell Sun
- [51] Landau, Rom: "God Is My Adventure", *Faber & Faber*, London, 1936. p. 108 Available as a Google book (http://books.google.com/books?id=_9DxiBTKdJsC&printsec=frontcover&dq=God+Is+My+Adventure+by+Rom+Landau)
- [52] Purdom (1964) p. 103-105
- [53] Kalchuri (1986) p. 1654
- [54] Ellwood 1973 p.281
- [55] Associated Press, July 13, 1932 , as cited Kalchuri (1986), p.1670
- [56] Kalchuri (1986) pp. 2040ff
- [57] Kalchuri (1986) pp. 1661–1668
- [58] Kalchuri (1986) pp. 2338–2421

- [59] "Men, Masters & Messiahs" (<http://www.time.com/time/magazine/article/0,9171,848514-4,00.html>). Time Magazine. 1936-04-20. . Retrieved 2008-06-26.
- [60] Kalchuri (1986) pp. 2337
- [61] 1967 Edition of Discourses online (<http://discoursesbymeherbaba.org/>)
- [62] *Discourses*, by Meher Baba, Sheriar Press, 1987
- [63] Donkin (2001) p. v ff
- [64] A Tribute to Mohammed Mast (<http://www.trustmeher.com/message/mohd02.htm>)
- [65] Kalchuri (1986) pp. 3481
- [66] Purdom (1964) pp. 163–176
- [67] Purdom (1964) p. 187
- [68] Purdom, (1964), p.194
- [69] Kalchuri (1986) pp. 3762
- [70] Kalchuri (1986) p.4328
- [71] Kalchuri (1986) p. 4208
- [72] Kalchuri (1986) p. 4789
- [73] Meher Baba: "Highest of the High", Pamphlet, September 1954
- [74] Kalchuri (1986) p. 4451
- [75] Meher Baba: "Meher Baba's Call", Pamphlet, September 12, 1954
- [76] Kalchuri (1986) p. 4551
- [77] AMBT (<http://www.ambppct.org/meherbaba/the-final-declaration.php>)
- [78] Kalchuri (1986) p. 4457,4464
- [79] Kalchuri (1986) p. 5450
- [80] Kalchuri (1986) p. 5241
- [81] Filis Fredrick, *THE AWAKENER*, Vol. XX, No. 2, pp. 38–39 "Heroines of the Path, Part 7C" (<http://www.avatarmeherbaba.org/erics/heroines7c.html>). . Retrieved 2008-06-25.
- [82] *Man hasn't spoken in 31 years*, Big Spring Daily Herald, June 30, 1957 *Note: this article identifies the visit as Meher Baba's 10th US visit, and places the planned date as July 1957, not 1956 as generally accepted.*
- [83] Kalchuri (1986) p. 5457
- [84] Kalchuri (1986) p. 5596
- [85] Haynes (1989) p. 60
- [86] Kalchuri (1986) p. 6000
- [87] Kalchuri (1986) pp. 6412ff
- [88] *God in a Pill? Meher Baba on L.S.D. and The High Roads*, Sufism Reoriented, Inc. 1966
- [89] *Spiritual Leader Warning on LSDUPI*, July 27, 1967
- [90] Bruce Hoffman, 'Something on an Inner Level,' *Glow International* Feb 1990, p.17
- [91] Albert Moraczewski, 'Psychadelic Agents and Mysticism,' *Psychosomatics* Vol. 12:2 (1971), 95–96
- [92] Haynes (1989) p. 61
- [93] Kalchuri (1986) p. 6641
- [94] Kalchuri (1986) p. 6713
- [95] Kalchuri (1986) p. 6650-6714
- [96] Kalchuri (1986) p. 6735
- [97] Kalchuri (1986) p. 6739
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- [101] Purdom (1964) p. 418
- [102] Baba (1955), p. 182
- [103] Purdom (1964) p. 415
- [104] Kalchuri (1982) pp.5ff
- [105] Kalchuri (1986) p. 6233
- [106] Purdom(1964) p.418
- [107] Purdom (1964) p. 421.
- [108] Purdom (1964) p. 422
- [109] Baba (1955); p. 107
- [110] Kalchuri(1986) p. 1076
- [111] Baba (1955) p.34
- [112] Kalchuri (1986) p.944
- [113] Adriel, Jean. *Avatar: The Life Story of the Perfect Master, Meher Baba* (1947), p.49 , J. F. Rowny press

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- [115] Meher Baba: "Discourses", *Sufism Reoriented*, 6th ed., 1967. Vol III, p. 15
- [116] Baba, Meher (1954): "What Baba Means by Real Work," (<http://www.avatarmeherbaba.org/erics/realwork.html>) Universal Spiritual League in America, Inc.
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- [118] Luck, Irwin: "The Silent Master Meher Baba", 1967.p. 17
- [119] The Trust does not, accordingly, work to promote creeds or dogmas, nor does it seek "converts". "<http://ambppct.org/trust/index.php>".
- [120] Cohen(1977) pp. 152–154
- [121] *Eastern Mysticism and the Resocialization of Drug Users: The Meher Baba Cult*, Thomas Robbins, Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion, Vol. 8, No. 2 (Autumn, 1969), pp. 308–317
- [122] Kalchuri (1986) p. 5476, 4933, 5609,6465,2294,3179,3864 etc.
- [123] Kalchuri (1986) p. 4209, 5633
- [124] Purdom(1964) p. 238
- [125] *Rolling Stone*, No. 71 (November 26, 1970)
- [126] "Tommy", The Who, Gatefold cover acknowledgements, May 23, 1969
- [127] Bruce Fessier, *USA Weekend Magazine*, October 21–23, 1988

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External links

Website directory

- Directory # 1 of websites associated with Meher Baba (<http://trustmeher.org/meher-baba-websites/>)
- Directory # 2 of websites associated with Meher Baba (<http://www.avatarmeherbaba.org/>)
- Directory # 3 of websites associated with Meher Baba (<https://sites.google.com/site/babawebsites/>)

Biography and teachings

- The Trust Online Library (<http://www.ambppct.org/meherbaba/online.php>) Books by and about Meher Baba available to download as PDF files
- Lord Meher (<http://lordmeher.org>) Complete biography, searchable online
- Discourses by Meher Baba (<http://discoursesbymeherbaba.org>) Searchable online
- The Awakener Magazine Archive (<http://www.theawakenermagazine.org/>) 67 issues of *The Awakener Magazine* from 1953–1986. Searchable online
- Life Eternal (http://www.meherbabadnyana.net/life_eternal/Life_Eternal.html) Anthology of quotes by Meher Baba organized by subject matter
- Glossary of Meher Baba's terminology (<http://www.avatarmeherbaba.org/erics/glossary.html>)
- Meher Spiritual University (<http://www.meherspiritualuniversity.org/>) Free Online Courses based on teachings of Meher Baba

Media online

- Meher Baba Highlights of His Life, Work and Message (<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=o8hfYK3nB6U>)
 - God in Human Form, film (http://www.meherfilmworks.org/videos/ghf_english.html)
 - Written message spoken by Charles Purdom (<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rt4xVI2odKw>)
 - MP3 files of Meher Baba's Disciples going back to 1969 (<http://www.mandalihall.org/>)
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Hazrat Babajan

Hazrat Babajan



Pune, India

| | |
|------------------|-------------------------------|
| Full name | Hazrat Babajan |
| Born | Balochistan, Afghanistan |
| Died | September 21, 1931Pune, India |
| Era | 20th century |
| Region | India |
| School | Sufism |

Hazrat Babajan (c. 1806 - September 21, 1931) was a Baloch Muslim saint considered by her followers to be a sadguru or qutub. Born in Balochistan, Afghanistan, she lived the final 25 years of her life in Pune, India.

Early life & realization

The earliest recorded account of Hazrat Babajan,^[1] who was named at birth *Gulrukh*, “Face like a Rose”, states that she “is the daughter of one of the ministers of the Amir of Afghanistan”.^[2] Later accounts report that Babajan “hails from Afghanistan ... and was the daughter of a well-to-do Afghan of noble lineage”;^[3] “Her father was one of the chieftains of the Afghan empire”;^[4] and more recently, “born to a royal Muslim family of Baluchistan”.^[5] ^[6] The precise date of Babajan’s birth is unclear. Biography variants range from 1790^[7] to c. 1820.^[8] Her education was in keeping with her family’s social status of that time, and well-educated, she was fluent in Arabic, Persian and Urdu, in addition to her native Pashtu, becoming a *hāfiẓah*, one who learns the Qur’an by heart. An introspective child, and spiritually inclined, from “early life she developed mystical tendencies, and unlike girls of her age, she used to pass a good deal of her time in prayers, meditation and solitude”.^[9]

Following the conventions of Afghan nobility, Babajan was reared under the strict purdah tradition, in which women were secluded from the outside world, and also subservient to a custom of arranged marriages. She opposed an unwelcome marriage planned for her, and ran away from home on her wedding day at the age of eighteen. Disguised in her burqa, she journeyed to Peshawar, the frontier city at the foot of the Khyber Pass; nothing definite is known about her life until her subsequent move to Rawalpindi many years later. It was in or near that city she “lead an ascetic life for some years”^[10] and eventually came into contact with a Hindu sadguru. Following instruction from the guru, “she went into seclusion in a nearby mountain outside Rawalpindi and underwent very severe [*riyazat*] (spiritual austerities) for nearly seventeen months.^[11] Thereafter she came down to [the] Punjab and stayed a few months in Multan. It was in Multan, while [Babajan] was 37 years of age, she contacted a Muslim saint ... who put end to her spiritual struggle by giving her God-realisation”.^[12] After that experience she returned to Rawalpindi to reconnect with the Hindu guru who, after several years, helped her return to normal consciousness.^[13]

Travels and pilgrimages

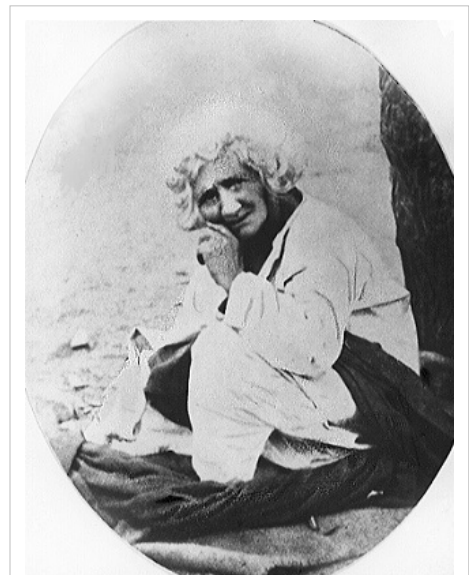
After a second stay in Rawalpindi with her earlier Hindu master, Babajan embarked on several long journeys through the Middle Eastern countries Syria, Lebanon, Iraq and Mecca, often disguised as a man. Apparently to avoid detection, she traveled by way of Afghanistan, Iran, Turkey and then doubled back into Arabia. At the Ka'bah, she offered prayers five times a day, always sitting at one selected spot. While in Mecca, Babajan often gathered food for the poor and personally nursed pilgrims who had fallen ill.^[14]

From Mecca, Babajan made pilgrimage to the tomb of the Islamic prophet Muhammad in Medina, where she adopted the same routine of offering prayers and caring for fellow pilgrims. Leaving Arabia, she passed through Baghdad, Iraq and back to the Punjab. She then traveled south to Nashik and established herself in Panchavati. From Nasik, Babajan traveled on to Mumbai, where she stayed for some time and her fame grew.

In April 1903, she made a second pilgrimage to Mecca, this time sailing from Bombay on the SS *Hyderi*. About 1904, Babajan returned to Bombay and soon afterward proceeded to Ajmer in northern India to pay homage at the tomb of the Sufi saint Moinuddin Chishti who established the Chishti Order of Islam in India. From Ajmer she returned to Bombay and then soon after traveled west to Pune.

Residence in Pune

By 1905 Babajan arrived in Pune, where she established her final residence. Now an old woman, her back slightly bent, shoulders rounded, white matted hair, and shabbily dressed, she “was seen sitting or resting at odd places, in different parts of the City”.^[15] These included a neem tree near Bukhari Shah’s mosque in Rasta Peth, and a deserted tomb in the Swar Gate locality. She was seldom seen moving about alone or sitting by herself; there were always people who sought her company.^[16] Babajan finally located to a slum area called Char Bawdi (Four Wells) on Malcolm Tank Road, part of a British Army cantonment.^[17] It was under a large neem tree, by a dusty dirt road, that Babajan remained until she died. This spot became known as her “seat”, a term commonly applied to the permanent residence of a saint or teacher.^[18]



Babajan in Pune under her neem tree

The Char Bawdi area at that time has been described as “a picture of dirt, desolation and ugliness, a breeding spot of plague and pestilence and a regular haunt of dangerous riff-raffs by night”.^[19] After several months’ exposure to the natural elements, Babajan grudgingly allowed her devotees to build a basic shelter of gunny sacks above her. She was liable to make startling statements to the effect that she was the Truth ((*Haqq*), which offended some of the Muslims living in Pune, and who interpreted her words as blasphemy.^[20] Children were in the habit of throwing stones at her.^[21] Yet Babajan’s presence soon began to make an impact on the desolate area. “The local roughnecks, drunkards, and hemp-smokers expressed great reverence for her, deeming it an honour that she should have chosen to associate with them”.^[22] She was a homeless *faqir* living on the street; she knew how they lived. The gifts from her devotees were shared among the poor and destitute, and in some instances stolen from her by thieves.^[23] She remained indifferent to the material offerings or the loss. Gradually, out of devotion, or mere curiosity, increasing numbers of people from Pune and elsewhere sought her out. Several alleged miracles have been attributed to Babajan.

According to one observer, within a decade of Babajan taking residence “the [Char Bawdi] locality underwent a metamorphosis surpassing all expectations. What with the featural changes in the buildings all around, electrified tea-shops ringing with the clatter of cups and saucers, a concourse of peoples consisting of all ranks and creeds waiting for Babajan’s *darshana*, a street bard entertaining the crowd with his music, the beggars clamouring for

alms, easy-going idlers standing indiscriminately hampering vehicular traffic and the whole atmosphere heavily laden with sweet burning incense perpetually kept burning near Babajan, presented a scene typically Eastern, leaving an indelible impression on one's memory".^[24]

Master to Meher Baba

In May 1913, Merwan Sheriar Irani, then nineteen years old, was riding his bicycle on the way to class at Deccan College, when he looked up and saw an old woman sitting under a neem tree surrounded by a crowd. He had cycled past on previous occasions but had never paid much attention to her, though he was aware that she was regarded by some as a Muslim saint; yet others thought her "a mad woman or a witch or sorceress".^[25] His father, Sheriar Irani (Shahr-yar Moondegar Irani), held Babajan in high regard. Born into a Zoroastrian family, Sheriar Irani had been an itinerant *dervish* for a number of years^[26] before finally settling in Pune and marrying. Babajan beckoned the boy, who in turn was drawn towards her. For several months thereafter Merwan Irani would visit the saint; they would sit together yet seldom spoke. One night during January 1914, he was about to leave, and before doing so kissed Babajan's hands, and she in turn held his face in her hands. She then kissed him on the forehead,^[27] during which he received her spiritual grace (*barakah*).^[28] The event subsequently left Merwan Irani in an enraptured state in which he remained abstracted from his normal surroundings for nearly nine months.^[29] The young man would later become known as, Meher Baba.

Final years

Around 1921 Babajan predicted that a severe weather storm would arise in Pune (the city often receives heavy thundershowers in May) and cause much damage. This did actually occur. "Trees were uprooted and houses blown down by the gale, but Babajan remained under her tree".^[30] Following the storm her devotees wished to build a proper shelter for her in place of the makeshift awning of gunny sacks. But first, permission needed to be obtained from the Pune Cantonment Board. Babajan presented the Board with a problem, as the gatherings of devotees and onlookers caused a serious blockage of traffic, which included the new motorised transportation. The Board would have liked to remove Babajan to an area less frequented by vehicles, but she refused to move from the neem tree. Due to public pressure, and fear of demonstration, reluctantly the Board finally allowed a basic shelter to be built of masonry and wood, with a roof of metal sheeting. This comprised a single room and a veranda.^[31]

Several months before she died, in 1930 then journalist Paul Brunton (Raphael Hurst) visited Babajan. He wrote: "She lies, in full view of passers-by, upon a low divan.... Her head is propped by pillows. The lustrous whiteness of her silky hair offers sad contrast to the heavily wrinkled face and seamed brow".^[32] The meeting was brief. Yet Brunton was clearly emotionally affected, and afterwards, in his hotel room, he reflected: "That some deep psychological attainment really resides in the depths of her being, I am certain".^[33]

On September 18, 1931, one of Babajan's fingers was operated on at Sassoon Hospital, but afterwards she did not appear to be recovering.^[34] ^[35] According to one version, a few days before she dropped her body, Babajan muttered, "It is time ... time for me to leave now. The work is over ... I must close the shop". One of the devotees pleaded, "Do not say such things Babajan, we need you with us". But she cryptically replied:^[36]

"Nobody, nobody wants my wares. Nobody can afford the price. I have turned my goods over to the Proprietor".^[37]

Shrine in Pune

Hazrat Babajan died in the Char Bawdi section of Pune on September 21, 1931. On Wednesday, September 23, *The Evening News of India* reported her death. The newspaper article informed that the "Muslim community in [Pune] has been greatly moved by the death of the famous saint.... Her funeral yesterday ... was very largely attended with thousands of people both Muslims and Hindus taking part in the procession".^[38] The white marble *dargah* (shrine) of Babajan was built alongside the neem tree under which she had sat for so many years, by the roadside which is now

a busy thoroughfare. “It is a small one roomed *dargah* with the *turbat* [grave] placed under a tree. The trunk of the tree emerges through the rooftop”.^[39] Her *dargah* is frequented by people of all religions.

Biographical discrepancies

There are a few discrepancies to be found in the current biographies of Hazrat Babajan which require due mention.

Firstly, it should be noted that much of the accepted information about Babajan appears to have been established solely on the authority of Meher Baba, a fact acknowledged by Dr Abdul Ghani Munsiff, who in 1939 wrote the first life-sketch of Babajan. According to Ghani, “the information gleaned from different sources is meagre, since Babajan herself was never communicative to anyone with regard to her life history. The facts of her early life and those relating to her spiritual career have all been confirmed by Hazrat Meher Baba, her chief disciple and spiritual Chargeman (*Khalifa*)”.^[40] Yet Meher Baba appears to have provided/endorsed two different versions of Babajan’s life.

Earliest records

Over a decade before Dr Ghani’s life-sketch of Babajan appeared, in 1927 Meher Baba gave a public talk on Babajan, which a devotee had recorded in a diary at that time. This is currently the earliest account of Babajan’s life. The people being addressed were predominately women, and the story was told to provide a moral. To summarize the essentials of that brief talk:

Hazrat Babajan is the daughter of one of the then responsible and chief ministers of the Amir of Afghanistan at Kabul. From early childhood she had a natural inclination toward spirituality and the realization of Truth. When Babajan was fifteen years of age her guardians began to arrange for her marriage ... at this juncture she made bold to leave the family home. For fifty years thereafter she led a life of complete resignation and renunciation. After wandering from place to place for fifty long years she at last came across her Master, and became God-Realized at the age of about sixty-five. After being God-Realized Babajan lived for some time ... in the Punjab. During this stay many people began to respect her as a saint. Her occasional remarks, declaring herself to be God [*Ana'l-Haqq*, I am the Truth] upset the Muslim population, and fanatical Muslim Baluchi soldiers (*sepoys*) of a local military regiment buried Babajan alive. After a lapse of many years, during the First World War the Baluchi regiment was transferred to Pune, and in that city the same soldiers came face-to-face with Babajan sitting under her neem tree at Char Bawdi. Fanaticism was transformed into devotion, and as long as the regiment remained stationed at Pune, the soldiers came to pay their respects to Babajan.^[41]

Ghani’s later, and extended, version of Babajan’s life, published in 1939, provides a different account: She left home at the age of eighteen on her wedding day. Eventually came into contact with a Hindu *sadguru* at Rawalpindi. Later went down to the Punjab, and when she was thirty-seven met a Muslim saint in Multan who gave her God-Realization. After the Baluchi soldiers encountered her again in Pune, “her saintly fame spread far and wide, and she came to be universally known as Hazrat Babajan”.^[42]

Babajan’s age

Babajan’s alleged age when she died continues to be a controversial issue. Biography variants for her date of birth range from 1790 to c. 1820. The earliest birth dates are provided by Charles B Purdom and Bhau Kalchuri. Purdom was merely reporting the opinion of devotees, and so he qualified what he wrote: “her actual date of birth is not known; it is supposed to have been about 1790”.^[43] Kalchuri is more dogmatic, and states Babajan was born “between 1790 and 1800”, and her “physical presence on earth lasted between 130 to 141 years”.^[44] At the other end of the scale, in his colourful spiritual travel book, *A Search in Secret India* (1934), the then freelance journalist, Paul Brunton, recounts that he learnt “from former Judge Khandalawalla, who had known [Hazrat Babajan] for fifty years, that her age is really about ninety-five”.^[45] Brunton had arrived in India, November 1930, and had left several months before Babajan’s death in September 1931.^[46]

Regarding Brunton's report, Kevin R D Shepherd observed: "That Khandalawalla had known Babajan for as long as fifty years is questionable; though it need not be doubted that he had encountered her by the time of her second visit to Bombay c. 1900".^[47] Shepherd concluded, "The general computation of her age was about 120 years, though some maintained that it was in excess of this. Purdom cited an approximate date of 1790 for her birth, though Ghani was of the view that she was born later than this. Ghani's estimate of her age was 125, based on general reminiscences and his own contact with her. In deference to critical tendencies which find the higher estimates indigestible, there seems every ground to believe that the subject was over a hundred by the time of her death".^[48]

The fact is Babajan's actual date of birth is not known, so perhaps it is sufficient to concede that the subject may well have been over a hundred by the time of her death. Longevity is not a spiritual accomplishment, but unfortunately can easily become a superficial hagiographic embellishment.

References

- [1] Hazrat ("the Presence") *Baba* (father) *Jan* (soul). "Her name was conferred in deference to a standard reaction of hers. The common appellation for any type of holy woman in India is *Mai* or *Amma*, meaning mother. But if anyone addressed [her] in this manner, she would heatedly rejoin 'I am a man, not a woman!'" See Shepherd, Kevin R D: *A Sufi Matriarch: Hazrat Babajan*, Cambridge: Anthropographia Publications, 1986, p. 51
- [2] Purdom, Charles B: *The Perfect Master*, London: Williams & Northgate, 1937, p. 115, and referring to Meher Baba's 1927 public discourse on Babajan, which had been recorded in a diary at the time (see <http://www.ambpct.org/events/taverntalks/part130intrott.html>)
- [3] Munsiff, Dr Abdul Ghani: "Hazrat Babajan of Poona", *Meher Baba Journal*, Vol. 1, February 1939, No. 4, p. 31
- [4] Shepherd, *A Sufi Matriarch*, p. 27
- [5] Kalchuri, Bhau: *Meher Prabhu: Lord Meher, The Biography of the Avatar of the Age Volume One*, Myrtle Beach, South Carolina: Manifestation, Inc., 1986, p. 5
- [6] Regarding Babajan's early life, Ghani informs, "the information gleaned from different sources is meagre, since Babajan herself was never communicative to anyone with regard to her early life" (Ghani, *Meher Baba Journal*, Vol. 1, No. 4, p. 31). Another version of Babajan's early life states: "According to some people [her] original name is Razia Sultana. She is said to be the daughter of one Bahadur Shah Zaffar and had come from Afghanistan" (J J Roy Burman, *Hindu-Muslim Syncretic Shrines and Communities*, New Delhi: Mittal Publications, 2002, p. 237)
- [7] Purdom, Charles B: *The God-Man: The Life, Journeys & Work of Meher Baba with an Interpretation of His Silence & Spiritual Teaching*, London: George Allen & Unwin, 1962, p. 18, who wrote, "her actual date of birth is not known; it is supposed to have been about 1790". Kalchuri states Babajan to have been born "between 1790 and 1800" (*Meher Prabhu: Vol One*, p. 5), and Ghani considered the date to have been 1806, estimating she was "125 years" when she died (*Meher Baba Journal*, Vol. 1, No. 4, p. 38)
- [8] Shepherd thinks it is "possible that she may have been born c. 1820 or even earlier" (*A Sufi Matriarch*, n. 16 p. 72), and Paul Brunton (Raphael Hirsch, or Hurst), quoting "former Judge Khandalawalla" in 1930, wrote: "her age is really about ninety-five", providing a later birth date of around 1835 (*A Search in Secret India*, London: Rider & Co., 1934, p. 62)
- [9] Ghani, *Meher Baba Journal*, Vol. 1, No. 4, p. 31; see also Kalchuri, *Meher Prabhu: Vol. One*, p. 5, who writes: "Spiritually inclined from childhood, Gool Rukh spent much of her time in solitude reciting prayers she learned from the Koran, or in silent meditation".
- [10] Shepherd, *A Sufi Matriarch*, p. 38
- [11] Kalchuri confirms, "Under this Sadguru's guidance she climbed a mountain in the wilderness and lived in a secluded cave. For a year and a half she remained in the mountainous regions of what is now Pakistan, undergoing rigorous spiritual austerity" (*Meher Prabhu: Vol One*, p. 7)
- [12] Ghani, *Meher Baba Journal*, Vo. 1, No. 4, p. 32. "This type of consciousness expansion is sometimes referred to in sufi literature as *fana*..." (Shepherd, *A Sufi Matriarch*, p.38). Ghani does not name the Muslim saint, but Kalchuri states he was known as Maula Shah. This intense spiritual experience does not appear to have been an ultimate achievement. According to Meher Baba, she "became God Realized at the age of about sixty-five" at the hands of another (unnamed) Master. (See <http://www.ambpct.org/events/taverntalks/part130intrott.html>). Purdom confirms this earliest version: "After years in search of God she found a Master, who many years afterwards (at the age of sixty-five, it is said) made her perfect" (*The God-Man*, p. 18); see also Shepherd, *A Sufi Matriarch*, p. 39, "The Pathan sufi [Babajan] is said to have been perfected in the (*fana-baqa*) process of realization at the age of sixty-five. This would mean that twenty-eight years had lapsed since her achievement of *fana* at Multan".
- [13] "In sufi terminology this amounts to *baqa*... Briefly, *baqa* can be said to amount to a stabilization of the expansion [of consciousness] achieved through *fana*" (Shepherd, *A Sufi Matriarch*, p. 38). Tradition attributes Shaykh Abu Sa'id Ahamd al-Kharraz of Baghdad (d. 899) as "the first Sufi to explain and elaborate the theories of '*fana*', or the soul's annihilation in God, and '*baqa*', or the soul's subsistence in God. According to this school of thought, soul's annihilation means the mystic's obliteration from every kind of knowledge of his phenomenal existence and individual qualities. Subsistence of the soul denotes knowledge of eternal existence and the seeker's abiding in God" (see R S Bhatnagar, *Dimensions of Classical Sufi Thought*, Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass Pvt. Ltd., 1992, pp. 186–187); see also Meher Baba, *God Speaks: The Theme of Creation and Its Purpose*, Walnut Creek, CA: Sufism Reoriented, 1973, pp. 131ff., pp. 240–241, who clearly recognized that there are various stages in the *fana-baqa* process, and who provided a comprehensive description of the stages involved, not to be found in more traditional accounts.

- [14] Kalchuri, Bhau: *Meher Prabhu: Lord Meher, The Biography of the Avatar of the Age, Meher Baba*, Manifestation, Inc. 1986. p. 10
- [15] Ghani, *Meher Baba Journal*, Vol. 1, No. 4, p. 33
- [16] Shepherd, *A Sufi Matriarch*, p. 46
- [17] Kalchuri, *Meher Prabhu: Vol. One*, p. 12
- [18] Shepherd, *A Sufi Matriarch*, pp. 46–48
- [19] Ghani, *Meher Baba Journal*, Vol. 1, No. 4, p. 33; see also Kalchuri, *Meher Prabhu: Vol. One*, p. 12, who states "... there was just a dirt road infested with hordes of mosquitoes; plague germs were even suspected there. During the day the area was desolate and deserted, but at night it sprang to life with thieves and the city's most dangerous criminals who met there".
- [20] Shepherd, *A Sufi Matriarch*, p. 48
- [21] Purdom, *The God-Man*, p. 19, who relates: "I have met people who in their childhood used to throw stones at her, thinking her to be mad".
- [22] Shepherd, *A Sufi Matriarch*, p. 48
- [23] "She maintained a habit of sharing her meals with the needy. Devotees would frequently gift her with clothing and other items, but these she would share with the poor ... not content with this charity, however, some would even dare to steal gifts from her" (See Camille Adams Helminski, *Women of Sufism: A Hidden Treasure*, Boston: Shambhala Publications, Inc., 2003, p. 81)
- [24] Ghani, *Meher Baba Journal*, Vol. 1, No. 4, p. 34
- [25] Kalchuri, *Meher Prabhu: Vol. One*, p. 195
- [26] See Kalchuri, *Meher Prabhu: Vol. One*, pp. 117–131; see also Shepherd, *From Oppression to Freedom: A Study of the Kaivani Gnostics*, Cambridge: Anthropographia Publications, 1988, Part One
- [27] Kalchuri, *Meher Prabhu: Vol. One*, p. 197
- [28] "Many have testified that the love emanating from Babajan was so intense that visitors felt pained at leaving her presence, departure involving the sensation of a powerful ... current being suddenly switched off" (Helminski, *Women of Sufism*, p. 81)
- [29] According to Purdom, when Merwan Irani left Babajan he returned home and went to bed. "In ten minutes he began to experience extraordinary thrills, as though he were receiving electric shocks; joy mingled with pain, and he lost his body consciousness". On the fourth day he "was slightly conscious of his body. So he remained for nearly nine months ... totally unconscious of the world" (*The God-Man*, p. 20). Kalchuri's version adds: Merwan Irani experienced a "total loss of his personal identity ... He found himself to be the Infinite Self – the Ocean of God" (*Meher Prabhu: Vol. One*, p. 199)
- [30] Shepherd, *A Sufi Matriarch*, p. 56
- [31] Shepherd, *A Sufi Matriarch*, p. 56
- [32] Brunton, *A Search in Secret India*, p. 63
- [33] Brunton, *A Search in Secret India*, p. 64
- [34] Kalchuri, *Meher Prabhu: Vol. One*, p. 19
- [35] "An ill-fitting ring caused a finger to become badly swollen and infected, but she would neither dispense with the ring nor have the wound treated.... For days she suffered what must have been not inconsiderable pain, the infected finger draining pus and blood" (Shepherd, *A Sufi Matriarch*, p. 67)
- [36] "Babajan's speech was largely cryptic. In no way did she conform to logical expectancy in most verbal exchanges, instead representing the developed (as distinct from undeveloped) intuition which operates in a much wider context and demands a much higher degree of response ... She did not give any set 'teaching'; any verbal instruction came in asides or what seemed to be chance utterances" (Helminski, *Women of Sufism*, p. 81, and quoting from Shepherd, *A Sufi Matriarch*, p. 55)
- [37] Kalchuri, *Meher Prabhu: Vol. One*, p. 19
- [38] Reproduced in Kalchuri, *Meher Prabhu: Vol. Four*, pp. 1426–7; see also Ghani, *Meher Baba Journal*, Vol. 1, No. 4, p. 38, who observed: "Her funeral procession was a tremendous affair, never accorded to any dignitary or royalty in the annals of [Pune]".
- [39] See Burman, *Hindu-Muslim Syncretic Shrines and Communities*, p. 237. Only the stump of the tree now remains.
- [40] Ghani, *Meher Baba Journal*, Vol. 1, No. 4, p. 31
- [41] see <http://www.ambppct.org/events/taverntalks/part130intrott.html>
- [42] Ghani, *Meher Baba Journal*, Vol. 1, No. 4, pp. 31–33
- [43] Purdom, *The God-Man*, p. 18
- [44] Kalchuri, *Meher Prabhu: Vol. One*, pp. 5, 19
- [45] Brunton, *A Search in Secret India*, p. 62
- [46] For a revealing analysis of Brunton's short stay in India, see Shepherd, Kevin R D: *Meher Baba, an Iranian Liberal*, Cambridge: Anthropographia Publications, 1988, pp. 146–176
- [47] Shepherd, *A Sufi Matriarch*, n. 51, p. 77
- [48] Shepherd, *A Sufi Matriarch*, n. 54, pp. 77–78

Further reading

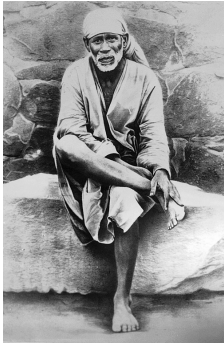
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External links

- Shree Swami (<http://www.shreeswami.org/hazrat-babajan.htm>)
 - Photo of Babajan's samadhi shrine in Pune (<http://www.trustmeher.com/files/five/babajan.htm>)
 - Babajan's samadhi (<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=R39x-0MiyGA>) on YouTube
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Sai Baba of Shirdi

Sai Baba of Shirdi

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| Sai Baba of Shirdi | |
| Full name | Sai Baba of Shirdi |
| Died | October 15, 1918 (c. age 81) |
| Era | 19th to 20th Century |
| Region | India |
| School | Hinduism (Advaita Vedanta) and Islam (Sufism) |

Sai Baba of Shirdi (Unknown – October 15, 1918), also known as **Shirdi Sai Baba** (Hindi: शरिडी के श्री साई बाबा, Marathi: शरिडीचे श्री साईबाबा, Urdu: (اباب ٱی‌ئاس یدرش), was an Indian guru, yogi, and fakir who is regarded by his Hindu and Muslim devotees as a saint. Hindu devotees consider him an incarnation of Lord Dattatreya. Many devotees believe that he was a Satguru, an enlightened Sufi Pir, or a Qutub. He is a well-known figure in many parts of the world, but especially in India, where he is much revered.

Sai Baba's real name is unknown. The name "Sai" was given to him upon his arrival at Shirdi, a town in the west-Indian state of Maharashtra. No information is available regarding his birth and place of birth. Sai baba never spoke about his past life.

Sāi is of Sanskrit origin, meaning "Sakshat Eshwar" or the *divine*. The honorific "Baba" means "father; grandfather; old man; sir" in Indo-Aryan languages. Thus Sai Baba denotes "holy father" or "saintly father".^[1]

Sai Baba remains a very popular saint,^[2] and is worshiped by people around the world. He had no love for perishable things and his sole concern was self-realization. He taught a moral code of love, forgiveness, helping others, charity, contentment, inner peace, and devotion to God and guru. Sai Baba's teaching combined elements of Hinduism and Islam: he gave the Hindu name *Dwarakamayi* to the mosque he lived in,^[3] practiced Hindu and Muslim rituals, taught using words and figures that drew from both traditions, and was buried in Shirdi. One of his well known epigrams, "*Sabka Malik Ek* " ("One God governs all"), is associated with Islam and Sufism. He always uttered "*Allah Malik*" ("God is King").

Sai Baba is revered by several notable Hindu religious leaders. Some of his disciples became famous as spiritual figures and saints, such as Mhalsapati, a priest of Kandoba temple in Shridi, Upasni Maharaj, Saint Bidkar Maharaj, Saint Gangagir, Saint Jankidas Maharaj, and Sati Godavari Mataji.^[4] ^[5]

Early years

Little has been documented on the early life of Shirdi Sai Baba.

Baba reportedly arrived at the village of Shirdi in the Ahmednagar district of Maharashtra, British India, when he was about 16 years old. It is generally accepted that Sai Baba stayed in Shirdi for three years, disappeared for a year, and returned permanently around 1858.^[6]

Return to Shirdi

In 1858 Sai Baba returned to Shirdi. Around this time he adopted his famous style of dress consisting of a knee-length one-piece robe (kafni) and a cloth cap. Ramgir Bua, a devotee, testified that Sai Baba was dressed like an athlete and sported 'long hair flowing down to the end of his spine' when he arrived in Shirdi, and that he never had his head shaved. It was only after Baba forfeited a wrestling match with one Mohdin Tamboli that he took up the kafni and cloth cap, articles of typical Sufi clothing.^[7] This attire contributed to Baba's identification as a Muslim fakir, and was a reason for initial indifference and hostility against him in a predominantly Hindu village.^[8] According to B.V. Narasimhaswami, a posthumous follower who was widely praised as Sai Baba's "apostle", this attitude was prevalent up to 1854 even among some of his devotees in Shirdi.^[9]

For four to five years Baba lived under a neem tree, and often wandered for long periods in the jungle around Shirdi. His manner was said to be withdrawn and uncommunicative as he undertook long periods of meditation.^[10] The *Shri Sai Satcharita* recounts the reaction of the villagers:

The people of the village were wonder-struck to see such a young lad practicing hard penance, not minding heat or cold. By day he associated with no one, by night he was afraid of nobody.^[11]

He was eventually persuaded to take up residence in an old and dilapidated mosque and lived a solitary life there, surviving by begging for alms, and receiving itinerant Hindu or Muslim visitors. In the mosque he maintained a sacred fire which is referred to as a dhuni, from which he gave sacred ashes ('Udhi') to his guests before they left. The ash was believed to have healing and apotropaic powers. He performed the function of a local hakim, and treated the sick by application of ashes. Sai Baba also delivered spiritual teachings to his visitors, recommending the reading of sacred Hindu texts along with the Qur'an. He insisted on the indispensability of the unbroken remembrance of God's name (dhikr, japa), and often expressed himself in a cryptic manner with the use of parables, symbols and allegories.^[12]

Sai Baba participated in religious festivals and was also in the habit of preparing food for his visitors, which he distributed to them as prasad. Sai Baba's entertainment was dancing and singing religious songs.

After 1910 Sai Baba's fame began to spread in Mumbai. Numerous people started visiting him, because they regarded him as a saint with the power of performing miracles, or even as an Avatar.^[13] They built his first temple at Bhivpuri, Karjat.^[14]

Teachings and practices

Sai Baba opposed all persecution based on religion or caste. He was an opponent of religious orthodoxy – Christian, Hindu and Muslim.^[15] Although Sai Baba himself led the life of an ascetic, he advised his followers to lead an ordinary family life.

Sai Baba encouraged his devotees to pray, chant God's name, and read holy scriptures. He told Muslims to study the Qur'an, and Hindus to study texts such as the Ramayana, Bhagavad Gita, and Yoga Vasistha.^[16] He advised his devotees and followers to lead a moral life, help others, love every living being without any discrimination, and develop two important features of character: faith (*Shraddha*) and patience (*Saburi*). He criticized atheism.^[17] In his teachings, Sai Baba emphasized the importance of performing one's duties without attachment to earthly matters, and of being content regardless of the situation.

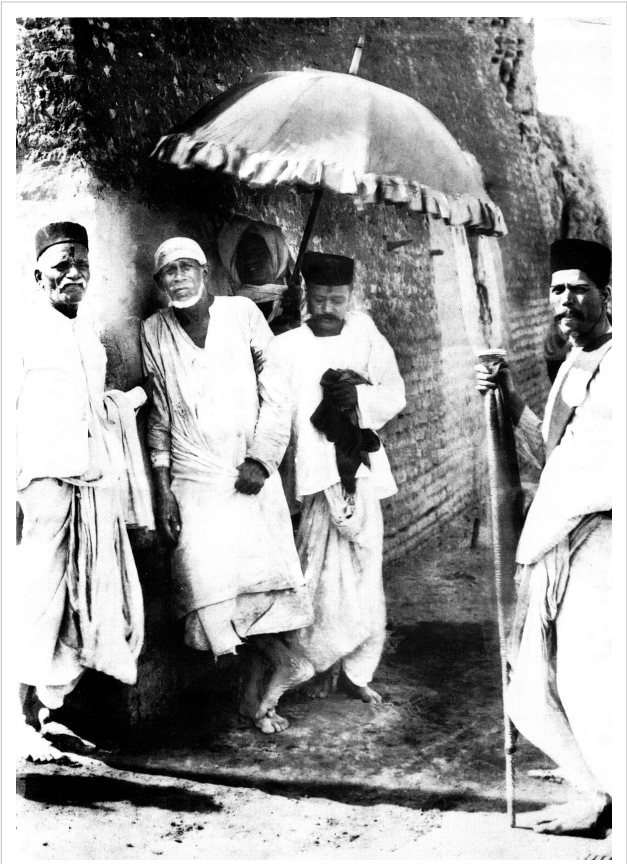
Sai Baba interpreted the religious texts of both Islam and Hinduism. He explained the meaning of the Hindu scriptures in the spirit of Advaita Vedanta. His philosophy also had numerous elements of bhakti. The three main Hindu spiritual paths – Bhakti Yoga, Jnana Yoga, and Karma Yoga – influenced his teachings.^[18]

Sai Baba said that God penetrates every thing and every being. He emphasized the complete oneness of God which was very close to the Islamic tawhid and the Hindu doctrine of the Upanishads. Sai Baba said that the world is transient, and that only God and his gifts are eternal. He emphasized the importance of devotion to God – bhakti – and surrender to his will. He also talked about the need of faith and devotion to one's spiritual guru. He said that everyone was the soul and not the body. He advised his followers to develop a virtuous character, and taught them that all fate was determined by karma.

Sai Baba left no written works. His teachings were typically short, pithy sayings rather than elaborate discourses. Sai Baba would ask his followers for money (dakshina), some of which he would give to the poor and other devotees the same day, and the rest was used to buy wood to maintain Dhuni. According to his followers, this was done to rid them of greed and material attachment.

Sai Baba encouraged charity, and stressed the importance of sharing. He said: "Unless there is some relationship or connection, nobody goes anywhere. If any men or creatures come to you, do not discourteously drive them away, but receive them well and treat them with due respect. Shri Hari (God) will certainly be pleased if you give water to the thirsty, bread to the hungry, clothes to the naked, and your verandah to strangers for sitting and resting. If anybody wants any money from you and you are not inclined to give, do not give, but do not bark at him like a dog."^[19] Other favorite sayings of his were: "Why do you fear when I am here", and "He has no beginning... He has no end."^[20]

Sai Baba made twelve assurances to his devotees:



Shirdi Sai Baba, leaning against the wall of his masjid, with devotees

1. Whosoever puts their feet on Shirdi soil, their sufferings will come to an end.
2. The wretched and miserable will rise to joy and happiness as soon as they climb the steps of the mosque Dwarakamayi.
3. I shall be ever active and vigorous even after leaving this earthly body.
4. My tomb shall bless and speak to the needs of my devotees.
5. I shall be active and vigorous even from my tomb.
6. My mortal remains will speak from my tomb.
7. I am ever living to help and guide all who come to me, who surrender to me, and who seek refuge in me.
8. If you look at me, I look at you.
9. If you cast your burden on me, I shall surely bear it.
10. If you seek my advice and help, it shall be given to you at once.
11. There shall be no want in the house of my devotee.
12. If you take a step towards me, I will take 100 steps towards you



Sai Baba (1918)

Worship and devotees

The Shirdi Sai Baba movement began in the 19th century, while he was living in Shirdi. A local Khandoba priest - Mhalsapati Nagre - is believed to have been his first devotee. In the 19th century Sai Baba's followers were only a small group of Shirdi inhabitants and a few people from other parts of India. The movement started developing in the 20th century, with Sai Baba's message reaching the whole of India.^[2] During his life, Hindus worshiped him with Hindu rituals and Muslims considered him to be a saint. In the last years of Sai Baba's life, Christians and Zoroastrians started joining the Shirdi Sai Baba movement.^[2]

Shirdi is among the major Hindu places of pilgrimage.^[21] The first Sai Baba temple is situated at Bhivpuri, Karjat. The Sai Baba Mandir (Hindu temple) in Shirdi is visited by around twenty thousand pilgrims a day and during religious festivals this number can reach up to a hundred thousand.^[22] Shirdi Sai Baba is especially revered and worshiped in the states of Maharashtra, Andhra Pradesh, and Gujarat.

The Shirdi Sai movement has spread to the Caribbean and to countries such as the United States, Australia, Malaysia, and Singapore. The Shirdi Sai Baba movement is one of the main Hindu religious movements in English-speaking countries.^[23]

Sai Baba had many disciples and devotees:

1. Nana Saheb Chandorkar: Deputy Collector – legend has it that Sai Baba saved this man's daughter from labor complications.
2. Ganapath Rao: police constable who resigned to become an ascetic, and also known as DasGanu, He was an itinerant who spread Sai Baba's message.
3. Tatya Patil: had immense faith in Sai Baba and served him until Sai Baba took samadhi. He is also known to be Sai Baba's younger brother.
4. Baija Mai kote patil: Sai Baba treated her as his mother. She was Tatya Patil's mother.
5. Haji Abdul baba: He served Sai Baba until Sai Baba died in 1918.
6. Madhav Rao Deshpande: Later known as Shama, one of the staunch devotees of Sai Baba.
7. Govindrao Raghunath Dabholkar (Hemadpant): Sai Baba allowed him to write the *Shri Sai Satcharita*.

8. Mahalsapati Chimanji Nagare : A priest of Khandoba Temple.

108 Shirdi Sai Baba Slogans (mantras) are sung by devotees in praise of him as worship.

Reported miracles

Sai Baba's millions of disciples and devotees believe that he performed many miracles such as bilocation, levitation, mindreading, materialization, exorcisms, making the river Yamuna, entering a state of Samādhi at will, and lightning lamps with water, removing his limbs or intestines and sticking them back to his body (*Khanda Yoga*), curing the incurably sick, appearing beaten when another was beaten, after death rising on third day like Jesus Christ, preventing a mosque from falling down on people, and helping his devotees in a miraculous way.^[24]

According to his followers he appeared to them in dreams after his death, and gave them advice. His devotees have documented many stories.^[25]

Historical sources

Biographers of Sai Baba (e.g. Govindrao Raghunath Dabholkar, Acharya Ekkirala Bharadwaja, Smriti Srinivas, Antonio Rigopolous) have based their writing on primary sources. One such source is the *Shirdi Diary* by Ganesh Shrikrishna Khaparde, which describes every day of the author's stay at Shirdi.

Speculation about the unknown episodes of Sai Baba's life are primarily based on his own words.

The most important source about Sai's life is the *Shri Sai Satcharita*, written in Marathi in 1916 by Govindrao Raghunath Dabholkar, whom Sai Baba nicknamed *Hemadpant*. Consisting of 53 chapters, it describes Sai Baba's life, teachings, and miracles. The book compares Sai Baba's love to a mother's love: caring and loving, but reprimanding when needed. It describes Baba's lifestyle, his selfless attitude, and his love for his devotees. The book describes how one should surrender one's egoism at God's feet and trust one's guru. It explains how God is supreme and His devotees should trust Him and love Him. It teaches that God is omnipresent in all living things, so that everything on Earth must be treated with love and respect.

Sri Sai Baba and His Teachings by Acharya Ekkirala Bharadwaja is an in-depth study of Sai Baba's life routine and activities. B.V. Narasimhaswamiji has written important books such as *Sri Sai Baba's Charters and Sayings* and *Devotee's Experiences of Sai Baba*.

In various religions

Hinduism

During Sai Baba's life, the Hindu saint Anandanath of Yewala declared Sai Baba a spiritual "diamond".^[26] Another saint, Gangagir, called him a "jewel".^[26] Sri Beedkar Maharaj greatly revered Sai Baba, and in 1873, when he met him he bestowed the title Jagad guru upon him.^[27] ^[28] Sai Baba was also greatly respected by Vasudevananda Saraswati (known as Tembye Swami).^[29] He was also revered by a group of Shaivic yogis, to which he belonged, known as the *Nath-Panchayat*.^[30]

Other religions

In Islam, Sai Baba mainly appears in Sufism as a Pir. Meher Baba declared Baba to be a *Qutub-e-Irshad* - the highest of the five Qutubs, a "Master of the Universe" in the spiritual hierarchy.^[31] Sai Baba is also worshipped by prominent Zoroastrians such as Nanabhoy Palkhivala and Homi Bhabha, and has been cited as the Zoroastrians' most popular non-Zoroastrian religious figure.^[32]



Sai Baba depicted on a tapestry

Meher Baba met Sai Baba only once in his lifetime, during World War I, in December 1915. Meher Baba was still a youngster named Merwan Sheriar Irani when he met Sai Baba for a few minutes during one of Sai Baba's processions in Shirdi. This event is considered as the most significant in Meher Baba's life. *Shri Sai Satcharita* (Sai Baba's life story), makes no mention of Meher Baba. But in *Lord Meher*, the life story of Meher Baba, there are innumerable references to Sai Baba.^[33] Meher Baba credited his Avataric advent to Upasni, Sai Baba, and three other Perfect Masters – Hazrat Babajan, Hazrat Tajuddin Baba, and Narayan Maharaj.

Notable disciples

Sai Baba left behind no spiritual heirs and appointed no disciples, and did not even provide formal initiation (diksha), despite requests. Some disciples of Sai Baba achieved fame as spiritual figures, such as Upasni Maharaj of Sakori. After Sai Baba took Mahasamadhi, his devotees offered the daily Aarti to Upasni Maharaj when he paid a visit to Shirdi, two times within 10 years.^[33]

Sathya Sai Baba (1926 - 2011) claimed to be a reincarnation of Sai Baba; he had a considerable number of followers in the 20th century.

In culture

Sacred art and architecture

In India, it's a common sight to find a Sai Baba temple in any city or town, in every large city or town there is at least one temple dedicated to Sai Baba.^[2] There are even some in towns and cities outside India. In the mosque in Shirdi in which Sai Baba lived, there is a life-size portrait of him by Shama Rao Jaykar, an artist from Mumbai. Numerous monuments and statues depicting Sai Baba, which serve a religious function, have also been made. One of them, made of marble by a sculptor named Balaji Vasant Talim, is in the Samadhi Mandir in Shirdi where Sai Baba was buried.^[34] In Sai Baba temples, his devotees play various kinds of devotional religious music, such as aarti.^[35]

Stamp

Indian Postal Service released a Sai Baba commemorative stamp in May 2008.^[36]

On July 30, 2009, the New and Renewable Energy Minister Farooq Abdullah inaugurated what has been acclaimed as the largest solar steam system in the world, at the Shirdi shrine. The Shri Sai Baba Sansthan Trust paid an estimated Rs.1.33 crore for the system, Rs.58.4 lakh of which was paid as a subsidy by the renewable energy ministry. It is said the system can cook 20,000 meals per day for pilgrims visiting the temple.^{[37] [38] [39]}

Film and television

Sai Baba has been the subject of several feature films in many languages produced by India's film industry.

| Year | Film | Title role | Director | Language | Notes |
|------|-------------------------------------|---------------|-----------------------|----------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 1977 | <i>Shirdi ke Sai Baba</i> | Sudhir Dalvi | Ashok V. Bhushan | Hindi | Also featuring Manoj Kumar, Rajendra Kumar, Hema Malini, Shatrughan Sinha, Sachin, Prem Nath |
| 1986 | <i>Sri Shirdi Saibaba Mahathyam</i> | Vijayachander | K. Vasu | Telugu | Dubbed into Hindi as <i>Shirdi Sai Baba Ki Kahani</i> , into Tamil as <i>Sri Shirdi Saibaba</i> |
| 1989 | <i>Bhagavan Shri Sai Baba</i> | Sai prakash | Sai prakash | Kannada | |
| 1993 | <i>Sai Baba</i> | Yashwant Dutt | Babasaheb S. Fattelal | Marathi | Also featuring Lalita Pawar |
| 2001 | <i>Shirdi Sai Baba</i> | Sudhir Dalvi | Deepak Balraj Vij | Hindi | Also featuring Dharmendra, Rohini Hattangadi, Suresh Oberoi |
| 2005 | <i>Ishwarya Avatar Sai Baba</i> | Mukul Nag | Ramanand Sagar | Hindi | Composite movie drawn from Sagar's <i>Sai Baba (TV series)</i> . |
| 2010 | <i>Malik Ek</i> | Jackie Shroff | Deepak Balraj Vij | Hindi | Expected release in 2008. Also featuring Manoj Kumar, Divya Dutta, Rohini Hattangadi, Zarina Wahab and Anup Jalota as Das Ganu. |

- In the popular Hindi film Amar Akbar Anthony (1977), Rishi Kapoor playing the Muslim character Akbar sings "Shirdi Wale Sai Baba" in a temple. Laxmikant Pyarelal composed the music, Anand Bakshi wrote the lyrics, and Mohammed Rafi was the singer. The song became a hit and is still played today.
- The Hindi language historical drama series *Shirdi Ka Sai Baba*, with 31-year old Mukul Nag in the title role, was produced by Sagar Films and broadcast by Star Plus in 2006.^[40]
- A TV series on Sai Baba by Prof. C.V. Vijendra is shown on Star TV network every Sunday at 8:00 P.M. to 9:00 P.M. in Hyderabad.
- A movie about Sai Baba, named *Guru Poornima*, was released in the Telugu language.

A TV series on Mahan: Shirdi Sai Baba is shown on Vijay TV from Monday to Friday at 6.30pm since Feb 2011.

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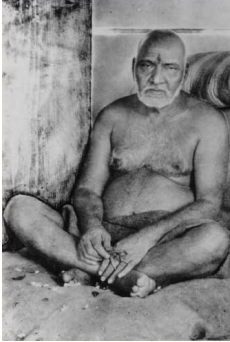
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Upasni Maharaj

Kashinath Govindrao Upasni (birth name);
Upasni Maharaj (adopted name)

| | |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------|
|  | |
| Full name | Kashinath Govindrao Upasni (birth name); Upasni Maharaj (adopted name) |
| Born | May 15, 1870Satana, India |
| Died | December 24, 1941Ahmednagar District, India |
| Era | 20th century |
| Region | India |
| School | Hinduism, Advaita Vedanta |

Upasni Maharaj, born Kashinath Govindrao Upasni,^[1] (May 5, 1870 – December 24, 1941 ^[2]) was considered by his disciples to be a satguru. He lived in Sakori, India and is said to have received God-realization from Sai Baba of Shirdi. Sakori is located in Ahmednagar District of Maharashtra, about 5 kilometres (3 mi) from Shirdi.^[3]

Early life

Upasni Maharaj was the second of five sons, born into a Hindu and Brahmin family of priests in the village of Satana, India, in the district of Nasik. His father's name was Govind Shastri and his mother's, Rukhmini.

Career

After a career as an ayurvedic doctor and three marriages where all three wives died, he began to hear a singing voice that he could not explain. This troubling sound, along with various other problems, led him on a difficult quest that finally culminated in him meeting Sai Baba of Shirdi who is said to have given him God-realization at the age of 42. Sai Baba then claimed to be the one who was calling him inwardly. He died in Sakori, India on December 24, 1941, at the age of 71.^[4]

Teachings

The principal teaching of Upasni Maharaj was that there are three rules that if observed sincerely lead to a life worth living:^[5]

1. Not to trouble anybody in the least.
2. To suffer for and be useful to others.
3. To remain contented in a state of *Be as it may*.

Master to Meher Baba

Upasni Maharaj was the principal teacher of Meher Baba. Meher Baba first met Upasni Maharaj in 1914 when Upasni was staying in Shirdi with Sai Baba.

Upasni moved to Sakori in July 1917 and Meher Baba frequently stayed there as late as October 1922. According to Meher Baba, Upasni Maharaj gave him divine knowledge after he received God-realization in January 1914 at the age of 19 from Hazrat Babajan.^[6]

Purdum recounts that, at the end of December, 1921, Upasni made several comments relating to Meher Baba. He said to his disciples: 'I have given my charge to Meherwanji. He is the holder of my key.' Some time later he said 'This boy will move the world. Humanity

at large will be benefited at his hands.' A few days later he sent for Gustadji Hansotia, one of his leading disciples, and told him 'I have made Meherwanji perfect. He is the Sadguru of this Age. Now you have to leave me and stick to him.' To Behramji he said 'Your friend is God-realized; carry out every command and every desire of his.' Finally, one night he folded his hands and said 'Meherwanji, you are *adi-shakti*: you are *Avatar*.'^[7]

After a separation of nearly 20 years, Meher Baba and Upasni Maharaj met for the last time on October 17, 1941 in Dahigaon, a small village in Niphad Taluka in the Nashik District of Maharashtra, just two months before Upasni's death.^[8]



Final meeting with Meher Baba on October 17, 1941

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- [3] According to online tourist sites, Sakori is about 5 kilometers from Shirdi. (<http://www.shirdi-sai-baba.com/sai/shirdi/excursions-around-shirdi-t17.0.html>) (<http://www.trustmeher.com/files/five/upasni.htm>) (<http://mumbai.plantravel.in/html/shirdi.html>)
- [4] *Meher Prabhu: Lord Meher, The Biography of the Avatar of the Age, Meher Baba*, Bhau Kalchuri, Manifestation, Inc. 1986.
- [5] *The Talks of Shri Sadguru Upasni Maharaj*. 1950
- [6] Purdom, op. cit., p. 24.
- [7] Purdom, op. cit., p. 26.
- [8] *Meher Prabhu: Lord Meher, The Biography of the Avatar of the Age, Meher Baba*, Bhau Kalchuri, Manifestation, Inc. 1986. p. 2724

Further reading

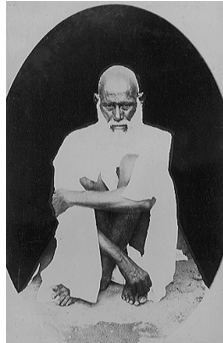
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External links

- Photos of Upasni Maharaj (http://avatarmeherbaba-israel.com/images/gallery/upasnimaharaj/gallery_upasnimaharaj.html)
- Online biography with many photos (<http://www.trustmeher.com/files/five/upasni.htm>)
- Sree Swami (<http://www.shreeswami.org/shri-upasani-baba-maharaj.htm>)
- Lord Meher (<http://www.lordmeher.org/index.jsp?pageBase=page.jsp&nextPage=84>)
- Online audio files of discourses of Upasni Maharaj set to music (<http://www.technobaba.com/upasni/baimaudio.htm>) (audio)
- Final meeting between Upasni Mahara and Meher Baba (http://www.beezone.com/MeherBaba/upasni_and_meher_october_1.htm) (Photos)
- Be As It May Upasni Maharaj (<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YsWdpQOnRFY>) on YouTube (Video)

Hazrat Tajuddin Baba

Hazrat Sayyedna Maulana Mohammad Tajuddin Aulia Rah- Kibla Baba



| | |
|-----------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------|
| Full name | Hazrat Sayyedna Maulana Mohammad Tajuddin Aulia Rah- Kibla Baba |
| Born | January 27, 1861Kamthi, India |
| Died | August 17, 1925Nagpur, India |
| Era | 20th century |
| Region | India |
| School | Sufism |
| Main interests | Tilawat-e-Qur'an |

Hazrat Syed Mohammed Tajuddin Baba (January 27, 1861 – August 17, 1925) was an Indian Muslim Sufi master considered by his followers to be a qutub. He lived in Nagpur, India.

Early life

Tajuddin Baba was orphaned at a young age and was raised by his maternal grandmother and uncle Abdul Rahman. He (Baba) attended a Madrasah in Kamthi, near Nagpur, where he met Hazrat Abdulla Shah who initiated him into the spiritual path. Hazrat Abdullah Shah gave him a dry fruit to eat, saying, "Eat less, sleep less, and speak less. Read Qur'an." With this contact Tajuddin Baba is said to have lost his material consciousness and began to experience a sense of oneness or "Adwaita." ^[1]

He openly spoke of spiritual concepts, and he was promptly committed to an insane asylum in Nagpur.

Reputation as a Sage

In the hospital he became widely regarded as a sage and word spread outside of the hospital walls. Eventually people began to come to the hospital to see Tajuddin Baba. In time he was pardoned and the warden asked Tajuddin Baba to come and live with him in his own house as his presence had become a sign of local honor. Tajuddin Baba did not stay with the warden long, but eventually moved to Lal Mahal. He was honored by both Muslims and Hindus. ^[2] In 1915, Tajuddin met with Meher Baba and helped him to start his Avataric mission. Baba later stated that Tajuddin Baba was a Qutub or Perfect Master. ^[3]

Caliphs

Tajuddin Baba had several caliphs (successors). His immediate caliph (the first one) was Hazrat Yousuf Shah Baba, whose original name was Hazrat Abdul Kareem Shah. After meeting with Tajuddin Baba, Baba named him Yousef Shah and called him His Son saying, "He is the key to my treasure".

Yousef Shah Baba is buried in Karachi, Pakistan. His immediate caliphs were Hazrat Albailay Shah Yousefi and also Zaheen Shah Baba. One of their caliphs is Hazrat Dr. Syed Mohammed Rafqiue Ahmed Al-Taji. He is known as one of the Caliphs of Baba Tajuddin Auliah. ^[4]

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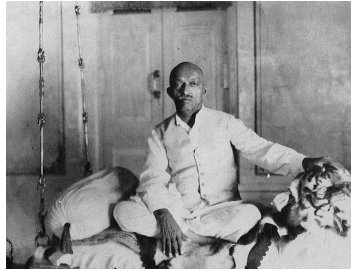
- [1] Hazrat Tajuddin Baba (<http://tajuddin.tajbaba.com/lineage.htm>)
- [2] The Holy Biography of Hajarat Baba Tajuddin Aulia (<http://www.divyajanani.org/saibharadwaja/books/htb/one.html>)
- [3] Kalchuri, Bhau: *Meher Prabhu: Lord Meher*, Volume One, Manifestation, Inc., 1986, p. 213
- [4] The Second Caliph of Baba Tajuddin Aulia (<http://tajbaba.com/Ahlay-Durbar.htm>)

External links

- Official site of Taji Sufi Order of Hazarat Baba Tajuddin Auliah (<http://www.tajbaba.com/>)
- Hazarat Tajuddin Baba (<http://www.trustmeher.com/files/five/taj.htm>)
- A biography of Hazarat Tajuddin Baba (<http://www.divyajanani.org/saibharadwaja/books/htb/one.html>)
- Shree Swami (<http://www.shreeswami.org/hazrat-tajuddin-baba-of-nagpur.htm>)
- Baba Tajuddin of Nagpur (<http://sufiblog.com/baba-tajuddin-of-nagpur.html>)
- Dubai site dedicated to Tajuddin (<http://silsila-tajia.com/>)

Narayan Maharaj

Narayan Maharaj



| | |
|------------------|-------------------------------------------|
| Full name | Narayan Maharaj |
| Born | May 20, 1885Bagalkot, India |
| Died | September 3, 1945 (aged 60)Kedgaon, India |
| Era | 20th century |
| Region | India |
| School | Hinduism |

Narayan Maharaj (May 20, 1885 – September 3, 1945) was a Hindu Indian spiritual master considered by his followers to be a sadguru. He lived in Kedgaon, India.

Early life

Narayan was born in Bagalkot in the Indian state of Karnataka. His father died when he was just 14 months old and his mother when he was four. He was then cared for by his grandmother. He soon left home due to family quarrels, eventually seeking solitude in a Shiva temple. Later, on the advice of a saint, he went to Gangapur for about 10 months, and achieved enlightenment.^[1]

As a sadguru he traveled to many religious places including Varanasi, Kedarnath, Badrinath, Nepal, Omkareshwar, Mahakaleshwar, Rameshwar, Madurai, Chidambaram, Kanchipuram, Tirupathi, Ramakrishna Ashram, Calcutta, Bangalore, Mysore, Dwarka, Somnath and Mahabaleshwar.^[2]

Views and influence

Narayan often dressed lavishly and lived in a palace; he even had a silver throne. However, it is said that he was unselfish and that his compound gave continually to the poor. His motto was "Treat every one as God." Meher Baba contacted Narayan Maharaj in his youth and later said that Narayan was one of the Five Perfect Masters of his time. Narayan's samadhi (tomb shrine) is in Bangalore, India.

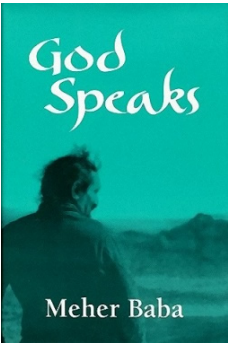

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- [1] Sadguru Shri Narayan Maharaj (<http://www.trustmeher.com/files/five/narayan.htm>)
- [2] ShreeSwami.org - Narayan Maharaj (<http://www.shreeswami.org/narayan-maharaj.htm>)

External links

- Sadguru Shri Narayan Maharaj (<http://www.trustmeher.com/files/five/narayan.htm>)
- ShreeSwami.org - Narayan Maharaj (<http://www.shreeswami.org/narayan-maharaj.htm>)
- Meher Prabhu (<http://www.lordmeher.org/index.jsp?pageBase=page.jsp&nextPage=20>)

God Speaks

| <i>God Speaks</i> | |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
|  | |
| Book cover | |
| Author(s) | Meher Baba |
| Country | United States  |
| Language | English |
| Publisher | Dodd, Mead and Company |
| Publication date | 1955 |
| Media type | Print (Hardback) |
| ISBN | 9780915828029 |
| OCLC Number | 39121011 ^[1] |

God Speaks, The Theme of Creation and Its Purpose (ISBN 978-0-915828-02-9) is the principal book by Meher Baba and the most significant religious text used by his followers. It covers Meher Baba's view of the process of Creation and its purpose and has been in print continuously since 1955.^[2]

Overview

God Speaks is Meher Baba's most significant published book. Kenneth Lux writes: "*God Speaks* is Meher Baba's major book and it is famously difficult. But not only is it Baba's major book, it is his only book. All other books by Meher Baba, such as the *Discourses* and *Listen Humanity*, are not written as books, as *God Speaks* is, but are collections of essays and messages."^[3]

While Meher Baba does not emphasize intellect alone as a path to perfection, in *God Speaks* Meher Baba goes deeper into the subject of metaphysics than most other Indian masters. In his book *Mastery of Consciousness*, Allan Y. Cohen, Ph.D. writes that Meher Baba's "explanations of the creation, purpose, and evolution of the universe may be the most explicit ever written."^[4] In a review of *God Speaks*, oriental scholar Walter Evans-Wentz, the original English translator of *The Tibetan book of the dead*, wrote: "No other Teacher in our own time or in any known past time has so minutely analyzed consciousness as Meher Baba has in *God Speaks*."^[5]

God Speaks takes a strictly nondualist approach in explaining the universe and its purpose, carefully clarifying and syncretising terms as it takes the reader through the spiritual journey of the *atma* (soul) through its imagined evolution, reincarnation, and involution, to its goal, its origin, of *Paramatma* (Over-soul). The journey winds up being one from God-unconscious ("Beyond Beyond State of God") to God-conscious ("Beyond State of God"). Cohen summarizes, "In elaborate detail he explains the universe is an arena where infinite existence, identifying with the apparently limited soul, becomes more and more conscious of its oneness with itself as the Over-Soul."^[6]

The Birth of Consciousness

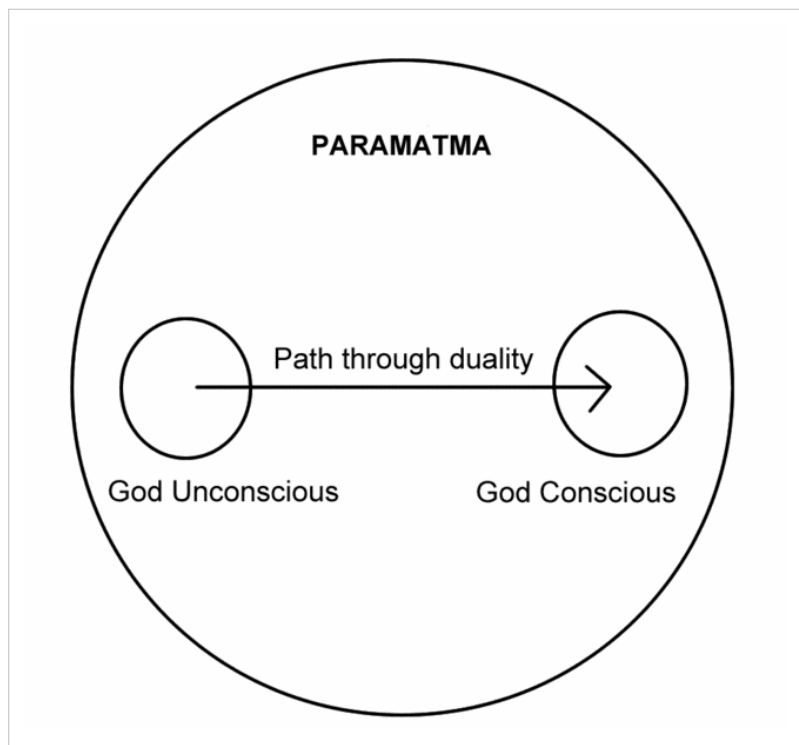
According to *God Speaks*, in the evolution of consciousness, before the Soul has any consciousness of anything or itself, there is an infinite, impressionless unconscious tranquil state. Meher Baba calls this state the *Eternal Beyond-Beyond State of God* (or *Paratpar Paramatma*), which has no experience of Self, nor of any of its Infinite latent attributes. Latent in this Infinite state is the undifferentiated and unmanifested *Everything*. Meher Baba says that the state of the man's consciousness during sound sleep is literally the same original divine sound sleep state of God. Synopsizing this concept in *God Speaks* biographer Charles Purdom writes, "In the beginningless beginning, in the beyond the beyond, God Is in absolute sound sleep."^[7]

Meher Baba writes that in *Everything* is also included the *Nothing*. Latent in *Paramatma* is the *First Urge*, which is expressed by the question "Who Am I?". This First Urge at one finite but unlimited point becomes manifest as the "Om Point" or the "Creation Point." Through this point the *Nothing* gradually appears as the shadow of the *Everything* and this appearance starts expanding ad infinitum. Simultaneously with the manifestation of the *First Urge*, the infinite Soul, in a tremendous shock, experiences its very first gross *impression* as it identifies itself with the projected *Nothingness*. In this experience, the first illusory separation (sense of separate identity) takes place in the undifferentiated. The Soul, still not conscious of its true Self, becomes identified with its projected shadow through this very first impression, thus initiating the illusion of duality.^[8] Although this first event of consciousness might be considered to correlate with what is called the "Big Bang," for Meher Baba the beginning of creation is in fact a beginning in consciousness.^[9]

To make this first event more approachable to understanding, Baba gives the metaphor of an Infinite ocean and a drop of that ocean.^[10] In this metaphor, *Paramatma* (a vedantic term, for which Meher Baba says *Over-soul* would be the closest western equivalent) is likened to an infinite and limitless ocean. Any drop of this ocean (the drop signifying the individuated soul) is the ocean itself, since no differentiation between drops has yet been conceived. If we liken the manifestation of the First Urge as the imagined separation of one drop from the ocean, then the infinite ocean comes to look upon itself through this drop as merely this most finite, most limited drop of the infinite and unlimited ocean.

It is important to keep in mind that here

Meher Baba is using metaphor and analogy to explain changes in God's imagination and the development of consciousness and that he is not describing a metaphysical ocean or literal drops in any sense. As Charles Purdom writes, "The 'ocean' is a symbol, no more."^[11]



Development of Consciousness

Evolution

The very first forms which the indivisible Soul's consciousness identifies its eternal Self with, according to Meher Baba, are seven gaseous forms (the seventh of which is Hydrogen, according to a footnote).^[12] Yet since these are very abstract forms, beyond ordinary human understanding, for the sake of convenience, the first form which consciousness associates itself with is described as the stone-form. Through the medium of this form the individualized soul, experiencing impressions related to the kingdom of stones, associates itself with the stone. When all impressions arising from this association have been experienced and exhausted, the soul dissociates itself from that form and associates with the next stone species. When the whole range of impressions through all stone species have been exhausted, the soul starts associating itself with forms of the metal kingdom, and so forth through evolution. In all, seven major leaps are mentioned in this evolutionary process in consciousness: from stone, to metal, to vegetable, to worm, to fish, to bird, to animal and finally to human.^[13]

Meher Baba describes an unfolding geometric schema of forms. In the stone and metal forms, consciousness asserts itself through a recumbent, folded-up position in the gross world, with no voluntary motion. In the vegetable forms, increased consciousness asserts itself through a vertical position and is depended on soil and rock to hold an upright position. In the worm forms (in which Meher Baba includes for his own purposes all worms, insects, reptiles and amphibians) an animate experience is reached, with voluntary movement, but in a creeping and now horizontal manner. In the fish form, consciousness asserts itself as a creature with voluntary movement in water, but still in a horizontal manner. In bird form consciousness is enriched by identifying itself with a form capable of flight and maintaining a slightly erect position. In (quadruped) animal form, an increasingly erect position is experienced, with much more developed attributes. When the human form is reached, consciousness is fully developed and asserts itself through the ideal medium in a fully upright stance.^[14]

Since in *God Speaks* there is no mention of Charles Darwin's theory of evolution, the progression must be seen as a progression in consciousness rather than in biological linearity. Meher Baba's explanations do not come to disprove any scientific discoveries of biological evolution, but rather examine a different side of the process.^[15]

Throughout this process, every time the soul associates itself with a particular form, it collects through this medium impressions of the gross world. When the impressions through association with a particular form have been exhausted, the soul dissociates from that form. Yet the collected impressions must be further experienced and for this the soul associates with the next most developed form. So when the human form is reached, although consciousness is fully developed, it has a store of impressions that still need to be experienced. While the soul is no longer in search of a better medium, it has to go through numerous human forms, until these impressions gathered through evolution are weakened and finally exhausted.^[16]

Reincarnation

Through the entire process of evolution, the soul has been consciously identifying itself with the evolving gross body (*sharir*), yet, unconsciously, it has also been identifying itself with the evolving subtle and mental body (*pran* and *mana*). The subtle sphere refers to energy, or prana, which is a higher form of what we know as nuclear energy. In the book it is also referred to as the life-giving energy, or the breath of God. The mental sphere refers to the domain of instincts, feelings, and eventually also of thoughts and desires. When the human form is reached, along with the gross body, the subtle and mental bodies also reach full development and although they remain unconscious, the soul indirectly works through them in the corresponding spheres.

When the human body dies, the soul retains and further experiences the collected impressions through its identification with the subtle and mental bodies, until it associates with the next human form and takes apparent birth in it. During the interval between death and birth, the soul experiences intensively an unfolding of the impressions collected, so depending on what quality these impressions have been of (virtue or vice, good or bad), the consciousness of soul experiences either a heaven state or a hell state. After most impressions have been exhausted, a certain temporary equilibrium is reached and the soul is ready to associate itself with the next human form. The process of the soul's successive association with human forms is called reincarnation.

Baba's use of the word "reincarnation" does not correlate with what is described as "transmigration of the soul" in Theosophy and certain other esoteric schools of thought. For Meher Baba the soul does not actually 'migrate' because it doesn't go anywhere, since it is eternally within the Over-soul and has nowhere to go. Rather, for Meher Baba, "reincarnation" refers only to identification and dis-identification with forms conceived in illusion, i.e. "the involuntary process of intermittent association and disassociation of consciousness."^[17]

During reincarnation consciousness tries to liberate itself from the burden of collected impressions. Yet, since it tries to achieve this by associating itself with impressions opposite from the previously accumulated ones, it gets further entangled in accumulating fresh impressions. Thus the soul experiences itself in a seemingly endless succession of human lives, as a man or a woman, as rich or poor, strong or weak, beautiful or ugly, black or white, in various places, religions, castes etc. It is only after numerous apparent births and deaths, that the range of human experience starts to get exhausted. In this way the soul starts dissociating itself from the gross world, enabling its consciousness to become aware of the subtle sphere.^[18]

The Perfection of Consciousness

Involution

When gross impressions become fainter, consciousness starts turning its focus from the apparent outer world inwards. This marks the beginning of its involution. Gradually the thinner gross impressions become subtle impressions, through which the soul experiences the subtle world, and as subtle impressions get exhausted, they become mental impressions, through which the soul experiences the mental world. While doing so, the soul continues to work through its gross medium, seeing, eating, drinking, walking, sleeping, but consciousness is no



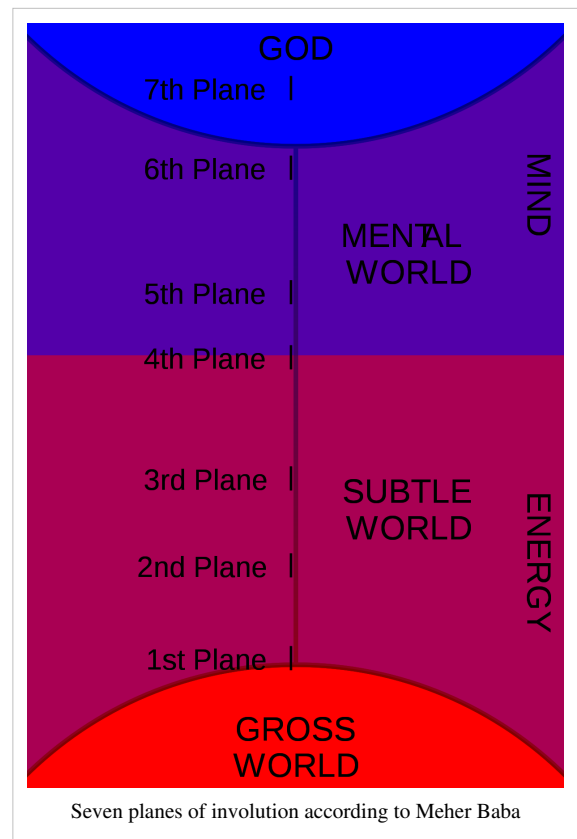
Meher Baba signing title pages for *God Speaks*, March 1955

more entangled with the gross body or world and eventually with the subtle body and world. Finally when mental impressions have been exhausted, consciousness snaps its connection with Illusion and perceives the Soul directly. This course of involution is described as the *spiritual path*. In traversing it, the soul's consciousness crosses six planes, the seventh being its final liberation from all illusion.

The first three planes belong to the subtle sphere, the fourth is on the threshold between the subtle and the mental spheres and the fifth and sixth planes are in the mental sphere. The *first plane* starts from the threshold of the gross and the subtle sphere. The soul here starts experiencing subtle phenomena simultaneously through its gross and subtle senses. It starts hearing subtle sounds and smelling subtle scents, although their nature is far different from their gross equivalents. Eventually it starts perceiving the subtle world through its subtle body and so comes to the *second plane*. Here the soul becomes aware of infinite energy and can perform minor miracles, like stopping moving objects or filling dried wells with fresh water. Being not conscious of the gross world its experience gives rise only to subtle impressions of the sights, scents and sounds of the subtle world. Further involution of consciousness makes the soul experience the *third plane*. Here the soul can use more aspects of the infinite energy by performing greater miracles, such as giving sight to the blind, or restoring maimed limbs.

When consciousness reaches the *fourth plane*, it finds itself in a very particular state. It is fully conscious of the infinite potential of energy and can make full use of it and it also becomes aware of the mental world. This new contact creates very strong desires to make use of this huge potential. At this point consciousness finds itself in the biggest danger of its long development. Not being able to control its feelings or thoughts, the soul is strongly tempted to handle infinite energy. If the infinite potential of this plane is misused, consciousness gets completely disintegrated and the soul finds itself back to the stone-form consciousness and has to start again the long course of evolution from there. If it abstains from using this energy it enters the lower mental plane and if it makes a completely selfless use of it, for the benefit of the spiritual development of others in illusion, it even moves directly to the higher mental plane.

Having abstained from tampering with the energy of the fourth plane, consciousness enters the *fifth plane*, also described as the lower mental world. This is the inquiring and reflecting state of mind and functions as thoughts mostly. Consciousness on this plane makes one capable of creating or controlling thoughts (but not minds) of gross- or subtle-conscious souls. Although a soul here cannot yet control its feelings or desires, it is safe from making any misuse of its abilities and is no longer conscious of the subtle sphere and can perform no miracles. With more involution consciousness enters the *sixth plane*, which is the higher mental world. Here the soul is beyond thoughts and is conscious only of feelings. The soul here sees God "face to face" in everything and everywhere, but it cannot yet see God in itself. A soul here can master its feelings and desires completely and governs also the feelings (but not hearts) of gross- and subtle-conscious souls. The longing for union with God, or the Divine Beloved, is here in its most intense expression. Yet the soul cannot bridge this final gap by itself. Only through the grace of a Perfect Master, or Sadguru, can this final union be accomplished. So, in the fifth and sixth planes, predominant is the soul's love for God, as lover of the divine Beloved.^[19]



States of Divine Consciousness

When the soul has gained Self-consciousness, it merges with God in one of three distinct states:

1. Either by dropping immediately all its illusory bodies or by retaining them for some time, yet remaining absolutely unconscious of them, the *atma* eternally enjoys individualized experience of the infinite power, knowledge and bliss of God, without ever using their attributes.
2. Retaining its gross, subtle and mental bodies and consciousness of them, simultaneously with Self-consciousness, the *atma* experiences the infinite power, knowledge and bliss of God, as well as God's shadow (gross, subtle and mental worlds of illusion), but does not use their attributes for other *atmas* whose consciousness is still within these illusory worlds and so it is independent.
3. This state is the same as the previous one, except that the *atma* uses its infinite power, knowledge and bliss for advancing gross-conscious *atmas* to subtle consciousness, subtle conscious *atmas* to mental consciousness and mental-conscious *atmas* to Self-consciousness. It may even bring gross-conscious *atmas* directly to Self-consciousness.

Each of these states is an eternal state for the consciousness which has overcome all illusion. Yet from the point of view of souls still within the domain of illusion, they have a sequence in time. Therefore from its point of view, a God-realized soul first "passes away into God" or "becomes God" (as in state 1), yet outwardly it is in a *divine coma*, oblivious to the phenomenal world. Most souls in this state soon drop their body. A few souls, however, continue to be in this divine coma for quite a while, until, with the help of other Perfect Masters, they regain consciousness of illusion (as in state 2). They are said to have gone through the "second journey" ("first" being the traversing of the spiritual path, before merging with God). In this state they are "abiding in God" or "they are God". In Sufi terms this state is called *Baqa*. According to Meher Baba, at any time on Earth there are always exactly five who have arrived at the final state of "living God's life" (as in state 3) and these are the five Perfect Masters. This state is described as the *Man-God* state, or in Sufi terms, *Qutubiyat*. These five Perfect Masters can use their (God's) attributes of infinite power, knowledge and bliss to help others progress on the spiritual path and beyond. When one of the five Perfect Masters drops his body, he is said to "pass-away as God".^[20] In Avataric times, there is one additional perfect master who is the descent of God, the Avatar, or God-man, whose work is for the spiritual elevation of all of humanity and everything in creation. "The direct descent of God on Earth as Avatar is that independent status of God when God directly becomes man."^[21]

Book editions

God Speaks has had three editions (although this fact has been the cause of some confusion due to the 1997 edition mistakenly listing itself as a "third printing" of the 1973 edition). The first edition, published by Dodd, Mead and Company, received four printings, 1955, 1967, 1968, and 1970, and was 255 pages. As early as 1956^[22] Meher Baba began work on a second edition which was printed posthumously in 1973 and reprinted once in 1975. It was 334 pages. In 1990 Dodd, Mead and Company went out of business and the plates for the second edition were not preserved. For this reason, the book was retypeset and a third edition was printed in 1997 and is 313 pages. Sometimes called "the second revised and enlarged edition" or "second edition third printing"^[23] the 1997 printing is technically a third edition since it is entirely retypeset.^[24]

| God Speaks Editions and Printings | | |
|-----------------------------------|--------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| First Edition (1955) | Second Edition (1973) | 1997 Edition (Technically a Third Edition, although mistakenly labeled internally as "Third Printing 1997" of Second Edition) |
| First Printing 1955 | First Printing 1973 | First Printing 1997 |
| Second Printing 1967 | Second Printing 1975 | |
| Third Printing 1968 | | |
| Fourth Printing 1970 | | |

Book reviews

In a 1955 review of *God Speaks* anthropologist Walter Evans-Wentz, the original English translator of *The Tibetan book of the dead*, wrote:

No other Teacher in our own time or in any known past time has so minutely analyzed consciousness as Meher Baba has in *God Speaks*. Occidental psychology, especially under the illustrious leadership of Dr. [Carl] Jung, has made great advances in the study of the unconscious and of the dream-state, but because of its necessary adherence to conservative methods of scientific research it has not been able, as yet, to fathom the Deep of the Seer. So, for the science circumscribed psychologist, *God Speaks* should prove to be of paramount importance in inspiring further progress on the psychological pathway.

Correlatively, noteworthy in particular is Part VIII, on the Evolution of Consciousness, and Part IX, on the Ten States of God, to which is attached a diagram linking together "the most generally accepted Sufi, Vedantic and Christian mystical equivalents." As a whole, the book marks clear the at-one-ment of the essentials of the various historic religions in the light of the gnosis of the Sufis.

Meher Baba's enlightening treatise adds much to the sum total of learning and contributes incalculably to the enrichment of mankind for, as the sages of Asia teach, the most intrinsically valuable of all riches, and greater than all mundane wealth, is Right Knowledge.

Nowhere is Meher Baba's wisdom more succinctly set forth than in his Conclusion, on page 176: "To understand the infinite, eternal Reality is NOT the Goal of individualized beings in the Illusion of Creation, because the Reality can never be understood; it is to be realized by conscious experience."^[25] In her 1955 review of *God Speaks* in *The Awakener*, Phyllis Frederick wrote:

This is primarily a book for the mind, in the sense that it requires deep thought and study, and does not appeal so directly to our emotional or devotional side as do Baba's short messages and exhortations to His followers. It is, in essence, a divine cosmology, a Map of the Evolving Universe, in which we all play a part, to help us find the quickest and shortest route home—to our Beloved God, Who Is found, on Realization, to be our very own Self.^[26]

Notes

- [1] <http://worldcat.org/oclc/39121011>
- [2] *Time Magazine*, July 1, 1966, Allan Cohen, Ph.D., Robert Dreyfuss and Frederick Chapman — "In his most important book *God Speaks*, (published 1955, by Dodd, Mead) Meher Baba outlines the differences between real consciousness and its multicolored shadows..."
- [3] Kenneth Lux. *The Love Street Lamppost*, July/October 2005
- [4] *Mastery of Consciousness*, Allan Y. Cohen, Ph.D., Harper & Row, New York, 1977, p. 21
- [5] Evans-Wentz, Walter, *The Uniqueness and Paramount Value of God Speaks*, 1955 Book review
- [6] *Mastery of Consciousness*, Allan Y. Cohen, Ph.D., Harper & Row, New York, 1977, p. 21
- [7] Purdom, Charles, *The God-Man: The Life, Journeys & Work of Meher Baba with an Interpretation of His Silence & Spiritual Teaching*, George Allen & Unwin, London, 1964. p. 322
- [8] *God Speaks, The Theme of Creation and Its Purpose*, by Meher Baba, Dodd Mead, 2nd Ed., 1975. pp. 9-12.
- [9] *God Speaks, The Theme of Creation and Its Purpose*, by Meher Baba, Dodd Mead, 2nd Ed., 1975. pp. xxxi.
- [10] Charles Haynes, Ph.D. *Meher Baba, The Awakener*, Avatar Foundation, Inc., 1993, p. 7
- [11] Purdom, Charles, *The God-Man: The Life, Journeys & Work of Meher Baba with an Interpretation of His Silence & Spiritual Teaching*, George Allen & Unwin, London, 1964. p. 310
- [12] *God Speaks, The Theme of Creation and Its Purpose*, by Meher Baba, Dodd Mead, 1955, 2nd Ed., 1975. p. 77
- [13] *God Speaks, The Theme of Creation and Its Purpose*, by Meher Baba, Dodd Mead, 1955, 2nd Ed., 1975. Part II, Initial Urge and the Journey of Evolving Consciousness pp. 8-27
- [14] *God Speaks, The Theme of Creation and Its Purpose*, by Meher Baba, Dodd Mead, 1955, 2nd Ed., 1975. p. 28-30
- [15] Meher Baba had given several statements on the relation between the scientific method and metaphysics to this effect; for example:
- "...The so-called conflict between religion and science arises only when there is no appreciation of the relative importance of these two types of knowledge...." (emphasis added; *Discourses*, 6th ed., vol. I, p. 140 (<http://discoursesbymeherbaba.org/v1-140.php>))
- "...Scientists naturally have difficulty in accepting mystical conclusions relating to the transitory world and cosmos, since metaphysical perceptions cannot be reached by methods acceptable to the experimental rules of science...." (emphasis added; *Lord Meher*, vol. 15, p. 5, 197 (<http://www.lordmeher.org/index.jsp?pageBase=page.jsp&nextPage=5197>))
- [16] *God Speaks, The Theme of Creation and Its Purpose*, by Meher Baba, Dodd Mead, 1955, 2nd Ed., 1975. pp. 12-33.
- [17] Purdom, Charles, *The God-Man: The Life, Journeys & Work of Meher Baba with an Interpretation of His Silence & Spiritual Teaching*, George Allen & Unwin, London, 1964. p. 325
- [18] *God Speaks, The Theme of Creation and Its Purpose*, by Meher Baba, Dodd Mead, 1955, 2nd Ed., 1975. pp. 34-43.
- [19] *God Speaks, The Theme of Creation and Its Purpose*, by Meher Baba, Dodd Mead, 1955, 2nd Ed., 1975. pp. 44-58.
- [20] *God Speaks, The Theme of Creation and Its Purpose*, by Meher Baba, Dodd Mead, 1955, 2nd Ed., 1975. p. 275.
- [21] *God Speaks, The Theme of Creation and Its Purpose*, by Meher Baba, Dodd Mead, 1955, 2nd Ed., 1975. p. 148-149.
- [22] *Meher Prabhu: Lord Meher, The Biography of the Avatar of the Age, Meher Baba*, by Bhau Kalchuri, *Manifestation, Inc.* 1986. p. 5675
- [23] Alibris Books (<http://www.abebooks.com/servlet/SearchResults?an=meher+baba&sts=t&tn=god+speaks&x=0&y=0>)
- [24] The bibliographical definition of an edition includes all copies of a book printed "from substantially the same setting of type," including all minor typographical variants. The 1997 printing of *God Speaks* was an entirely new typeset (using Berkeley Oldstyle font family, vs. the second edition's Times font family).
- [25] Evans-Wentz, Walter, *The Uniqueness and Paramount Value of God Speaks*, 1955 Book review
- [26] Filis Fredrick, *The Awakener*, Vol. 3, No. 2, p. 43, Fall 1955

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- Evans-Wentz, Walter, The Uniqueness and Paramount Value of God Speaks, 1955 Book review

External links

- God Speaks at the Trust Online Library (<http://www.ambppct.org/meherbaba/BooksByMeherBaba.php>)
- God Dreams Divinely (<http://www.ambppct.org/meherbaba/divine-dreams.php>)

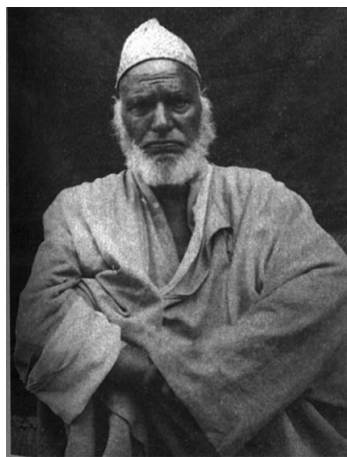
Mast (Sufism)

In Sufi philosophy, a **mast** (pronounced "must") is a person who is overcome with love for God, with concomitant external disorientation resembling intoxication. The word originates from the Sufi phrase "Mast-Allah" meaning "intoxicated with God." from Persian mast, lit. "intoxicated."^[1] Another interpretation of its origin is that it is derived from *masti*, a Persian word meaning "overpowered."^[2]

Overview

According to Meher Baba, a mast is one who is entranced or spellbound by internal spiritual experiences and ecstasies, who cannot function outwardly in an ordinary way, and may appear mad to a casual outside observer. Such experiences, according to Meher Baba, stem from the station of a mast's consciousness (his or her state of consciousness) on inner planes of involution. In the book, *The Wayfarers: Meher Baba With the God-Intoxicated*, English physician William Donkin documents in great detail Meher Baba's numerous contacts with masts throughout Southern Asia (mostly Iran, India, and what is today Pakistan). The introduction, written by Meher Baba, explains their unique state and their outward characteristics. Meher Baba carefully distinguishes the mast state from madness, saying that in the case of the mad person, the mind is sped up, while in the case of the mast it is slowed down.^[3] Meher Baba also made a Sufi analogy (reflecting the poetry of Hafez) to the drunkenness of one intoxicated with wine, but in this case the wine is the love of God. Meher Baba contacted hundreds of masts all over India, Pakistan, and Iran, saying that he was freeing them from enchantment and helping them to continue on the spiritual path and to be of inward service to humanity.

Masts can be in varying degrees of the states of *salik* or *majzoob*. *Salik* means more in touch with outward surroundings -- grounded and ordinary. *Majzoob* refers to that state of being immersed in the inner plane and divorced from the outside world.



Masts in Kashmir

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- [1] Dictionary.com (<http://dictionary.reference.com/browse/must>)
- [2] Purdom, Charles B.: "The God-Man: The Life, Journeys & Work of Meher Baba with an Interpretation of His Silence & Spiritual Teaching", George Allen & Unwin, London, 1964. p. 137
- [3] Donkin, William, M.D., "The Wayfarers: Meher Baba with the God-Intoxicated", Adi K. Irani, 1948, *Sheriar Foundation*, 2001, p. 19 (ISBN 1-880619-24-5)

External links

- Masts in Hyderabad and Secunderabad (http://members.rediff.com/ambhyd/mast_work.html)
- God-Intoxicated Pilgrims (<http://home.online.no/~solibakk/masts.html>)
- The Wayfarers by William Donkin - download (http://www.ambppct.org/meherbaba/Books_About_Meher_Baba.php#4)

Avatar

In Hinduism, an **avatar**, Hindustani: [ˈəvəɾɑːr], English: /ˈæv.ə.tɑːr/, (*avatāra*: Devanagari अवतार, Sanskrit for "descent" [viz., from heaven to earth]) is a deliberate descent of a deity from heaven to earth, or a descent of the Supreme Being (i.e., Vishnu for Vaishnavites) and is mostly translated into English as "incarnation", but more accurately as "appearance" or "manifestation".^[1] ^[2]

The term is most often associated with Vishnu, though it has also come to be associated with other deities.^[3] Varying lists of avatars of Vishnu appear in Hindu scriptures, including the ten Dashavatara of the *Garuda Purana* and the twenty-two avatars in the *Bhagavata Purana*, though the latter adds that the incarnations of Vishnu are innumerable.^[4] The avatars of Vishnu are a primary component of Vaishnavism. An early reference to avatar, and to avatar *doctrine*, is in the *Bhagavad Gita*.^[5]

Shiva and Ganesha are also described as descending in the form of avatars. The various manifestations of Devi, the Divine Mother principal in Hinduism, are also described as avatars or incarnations by some scholars and followers of Shaktism.^[5] ^[6] The avatars of Vishnu carry a greater theological prominence than those of other deities, which some scholars perceive to be imitative of the Vishnu avatar lists.



Ten avatars of Vishnu (Matsya, Kurma, Varaha, Vamana, Krishna, Kalki, Buddha, Parshurama, Rama & Narasimha. Painting from Jaipur, now at the Victoria and Albert Museum

Etymology and meaning

Further information: Incarnation

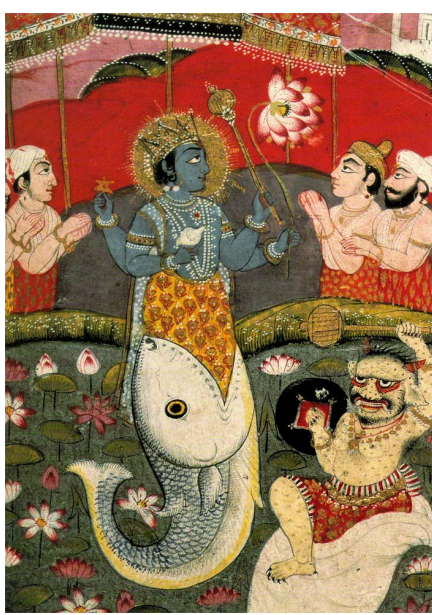
The Sanskrit noun *avatāra* is derived from the verbal root *tṛ* "to cross over", joined with the prefix *ava* "off, away, down". The word doesn't occur in the Vedas, but is recorded in Pāṇini (3.3.120). *Avatāra* was initially used to

describe different deities, then around the 6th century CE it began to be used primarily to describe the manifestations of Vishnu.^[7] While earlier texts mention deities taking on different forms, the *Bhagavad Gita* (4.5-9) is the first text to discuss the doctrine associated with the term even though the word *avatāra* itself is not mentioned.^[8]

The common translation "incarnation" due to its christological implications is somewhat misleading as the concept of avatar corresponds more closely to the view of Docetism in Christian theology, as different from the idea of God 'in the flesh' in mainstream Christology.^{[9] [10]}

Related to the idea of avatar is that of *vibhūti*, that is, the idea of manifestations of the divine in various aspects of human life and the natural world.^[11]

Avatars of Vishnu



Matsya, fish avatar of Vishnu

The concept of avatar within Hinduism is most often associated with Vishnu, the preserver or sustainer aspect of God within the Hindu Trinity or Trimurti or the one and only supreme God for followers of Vaishnavism.

Vishnu's avatars typically descend for a very specific purpose. An oft-quoted passage from the *Bhagavad Gita* describes the typical role of an avatar of Vishnu—to bring *dharma*, or righteousness, back to the social and cosmic order.^{[1] [3]}

“Whenever righteousness wanes and unrighteousness increases I send myself forth.
For the protection of the good and for the destruction of evil,
and for the establishment of righteousness,
I come into being age after age.”

(Gita:4.7–8)

The descents of Vishnu are also integral to His teaching and tradition, whereas the accounts of other deities are not so strictly dependent on their avatar stories. Although it is usual to speak of Vishnu as the source of the avatars, within the Vaishnavism branch of Hinduism Narayana, Vasudeva, and Krishna are also seen as names denoting divine aspects which descend as avatars.^[1]

The *Bhagavata Purana* describes Vishnu's avatars as innumerable, though there are ten incarnations (*Dasavatara*, Sanskrit: ten avatars) that are widely seen as his major appearances.^{[1] [4]} Krishna and Rama are the two mostly widely known and worshiped avatars of Vishnu, with their stories told in the two popular epics, the *Mahabharata* and the *Ramayana*.^[12] Different lists of Vishnu's avatars appear in different texts, including: the *dasavatara* from the *Garuda Purana*; lists of twenty-two, twenty-three, and sixteen avatars in the *Bhagavata Purana*;^[13] thirty-nine avatars in the *Ahimbudhnya samhita*;^[14] the *dasavatara* again in *Agni Purana*; the first eight of the *dasavatara* in *Padma Purana*. The commonly accepted number of ten was fixed well before the 10th century CE.^[13] In addition, various

Vaishnava saints and founders are considered to be partial avatars.^[15]

The various avatars categorized in many different ways. For example: *Purusavatara* is the first avatara; *Gunavataras* are represented by the Trimurti (Brahma, Vishnu, and Shiva) who each preside over one of the gunas (rajas, sattva, and tamas); *Lilavataras* are the well-known ones, and include *Avesavataras* (beings into whom part of God Himself has entered) and *saktyamsavesa* (into whom only parts of His power enter); *Kalpa-*, *Manvantara-*, and *Yuga-avatars* descend during different cosmic ages.^[16] Some Vaishnavism schools consider Krishna to be the source of all avatars (Krishnaism).

Dashavatara

The ten best known avatars of Vishnu are collectively known as the *Dasavatara* (a dvigucompound meaning "ten avatars"). This list is included in the Garuda Purana (1.86.10"11).^[17]

The first four are said to have appeared in the Satya Yuga (the first of the four Yugas or ages in the time cycle described within Hinduism). The next three avatars appeared in the Treta Yuga, the eighth descent in the Dwapara Yuga and the ninth in the Kali Yuga. The tenth, Kalki, is predicted to appear at the end of the Kali Yuga.^[18]

1. Matsya, the fish-avatar who saved Manu – the progenitor of mankind from the great deluge and rescued the Vedic scriptures by killing a demon. Story can be found in the Matsya Purana.
2. Kurma, the tortoise-avatar, who helped in the Samudra manthan – the churning of the ocean. Story can be found in the Kurma Purana.
3. Varaha, the boar-avatar, who rescued the earth from the ocean, by killing her kidnapper-demon Hiranyaksha. Story can be found in the Varaha Purana.
4. Narasimha, the half man-half lion avatar, who killed the tyrant demon-king Hiranyakashipu, to rescue the demon's son Prahlada, who was a Vishnu-devotee
5. Vamana, the dwarf-avatar, who subdued the king Maha Bali. Story can be found in the Vamana Purana.
6. Parashurama, sage with the axe who killed the thousand-armed king Kartavirya Arjuna
7. Rama, the king of Ayodhya and the hero of the Hindu epic Ramayana
8. Krishna, the king of Dwarka, a central character in the Bhagavata Purana and the Mahabharata and reciter of Bhagavad Gita. However, in the original Dasavatara stotra, Balarama, the elder brother of Krishna, is stated as the eight incarnation, while Krishna (Lord Kesava) is the source of all the incarnation.^[19]
9. Gautama Buddha^{[20] [21] [22] [23] [24] [25] [26] [27] [28] [29] [30] [31] [32]}
10. Kalki ("Eternity", or "time", or "The Destroyer of foulness"), who is expected to appear at the end of Kali Yuga. Story can be found in the Kalki Purana.



Varaha, the boar avatar of Vishnu (18th century painting, probably of Pahari provenance)

In the Bhagavata Purana

As many as forty specific avatars of Vishnu are mentioned in the Bhagavata Purana, though the book adds that the number is innumerable.^[33] Twenty-two avatars of Vishnu are listed numerically in the first book.^[34]

1. Four Kumaras [BP 1.3.6] – the four Sons of god Brahma
2. Varaha [BP 1.3.7]
3. Narada [BP 1.3.8] the divine-sage who travels the worlds as a devotee of Vishnu
4. Nara-Narayana [BP 1.3.9] – the twin-sages
5. Kapila [BP 1.3.10] – a sage and one of the founders of the Samkhya school of philosophy
6. Dattatreya [BP 1.3.11] – the combined avatar of the Hindu trinity Brahma, Vishnu and Shiva.
7. Yajna [BP 1.3.12] – the lord of fire-sacrifice, who took was the Indra – the lord of heaven
8. Rishabha [BP 1.3.13] – the father of King Bharata and Bahubali
9. Prithu [BP 1.3.14] – the sovereign-king who milked the earth as a cow to get the world's grain and vegetation and also invented agriculture
10. Matsya [BP 1.3.15]
11. Kurma [BP 1.3.16]
12. Dhanvantari [BP 1.3.17] – the father of Ayurveda medicine
13. Mohini [BP 1.3.17] – the enchantress
14. Narasimha [BP 1.3.18]
15. Vamana [BP 1.3.19]
16. Parasurama [BP 1.3.20]
17. Vyasa [BP] 1.3.21] – the compiler of the scriptures – Vedas and writer of the scriptures Puranas and the epic Mahabharata
18. Rama [BP 1.3.22]
19. Balarama [BP 1.3.23]
20. Krishna [BP 1.3.23]
21. Buddha [BP 1.3.24]
22. Kalki [BP 1.3.25]

Besides these, another four avatars are described later on in the text as follows:

1. Prshnigarbha [BP 10.3.41] – the son of Prshni
2. Hayagriva [BP 2.7.11] – the horse-faced avatar
3. Hamsa [BP 11.13.19] – the swan
4. Golden avatra [BP 11.5.32] – the avatara in Kali-yuga for propagating hari-namasankirtan.^[35]



Mohini, the only female avatar of Vishnu
(statue in a Belur temple, Karnataka.)

Avatars of Ganesha

The Linga Purana declares that Ganesha incarnates to destroy demons and to help the gods and pious people.^[36] The two upapuranas – Ganesha Purana and Mudgala Purana – detail the avatars of Ganesha. Both these upapuranas are core scriptures of the Ganapatya sect – exclusively dedicated to Ganesha worship.

Four avatars of Ganesha are listed in the Ganesha Purana: Mahotkata, Mayūreśvara, Gajanana and Dhumraketu. Each avatar corresponds to a different yuga, has a different mount and different skin complexion, but all the avatars have a common purpose – to slay demons.^[37]

The Mudgala Purana describes eight avatars of Ganesha.^[38]

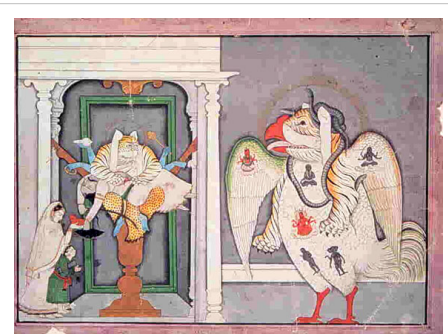
1. Vakratunda (Vakratuṇḍa) ("twisting trunk"), his mount is a lion.
2. Ekadanta ("single tusk"), his mount is a mouse.
3. Mahodara ("big belly"), his mount is a mouse.
4. Gajavaktra (or Gajānana) ("elephant face"), his mount is a mouse.
5. Lambodara ("pendulous belly"), his mount is a mouse.
6. Vikata (Vikaṭa) ("unusual form", "misshapen"), his mount is a peacock.
7. Vighnaraja (Vighnarāja) ("king of obstacles"), his mount is the celestial serpent Śeṣa.
8. Dhumravarna (Dhūmravarṇa) ("grey color") corresponds to Śiva, his mount is a horse.



(Clockwise from left top) The four of Ganesha from Ganesha Purna: Mahotkata, Mayuresvara, Dhumraketu and Gajanana (modern painting at Siddhivinayak temple, Mumbai).

Avatars of Shiva

Although Puranic scriptures contain occasional references to avatars of Shiva, the idea is not universally accepted in Saivism.^{[5] [39]} The Linga Purana speaks of twenty-eight avatars of Shiva.^[40] In the Shiva Purana there is a distinctly Shaivite version of a traditional avatar myth: Shiva brings forth Virabhadra, one of his terrifying forms, in order to calm Narasimha, an avatar of Vishnu. When that fails, Shiva manifests as the human-lion-bird Sharabha. The story concludes with Narasimha becoming a devotee of Shiva after being bound by Sharabha.^[41] However, Vaishnava followers including Dvaita scholars, such as Vijayindra Tirtha (1539–95) refute this Shaivite view of Narasimha based on their reading of Sattvika Puranas and Śruti texts.^[42]



Sharabha (right) with Narasimha (18th century painting, Pahari/Kangra School)

The monkey-god Hanuman who helped Rama – the Vishnu avatar is considered by some to be the eleventh avatar of Rudra (Shiva).^{[43] [44]} Some regional deities like Khandoba are also believed by some to be avatars of Shiva.^{[45] [46]}

Avatars of Devi

Avatars are also observed in Shaktism, the sect dedicated to the worship of the Goddess (Devi), but they do not have universal acceptance in the sect. The Devi Bhagavata Purana describes the descent of Devi avatars to punish the wicked and defend the righteous—much as the Bhagavata Purana does with the avatars of Vishnu.^[47] Like Vishnu, his consort Lakshmi incarnates as Sita and Radha – the consorts of Rama and Krishna avatars.^[48] Nilakantha, an 18th century commentator on the Devi Bhagavata Purana – which includes the Devi Gita – says that various avatars of the Goddess includes Shakambhari and even the masculine Krishna and Rama – generally thought to be Vishnu's avatars.^[49] Mahalakshmi and Mahasaraswati are also goddesses worshipped as Devi avatars.^[50]



A 17th century painting depicting Hanuman worshipping Rama and his wife Sita. Lakshmana is also seen in this painting from Smithsonian Institution collection.

Rama is considered the avatar of Vishnu, Sita of Vishnu's consort Lakshmi, Lakshmana of Shesha – the serpent on whom Vishnu sleeps, and Hanuman is believed to be an avatar of Shiva.

Other Vaishnava avatars

There are many senses and shades of meaning of the term avatar within Hinduism.

Purusha avatars

Purusha avatars are sometimes described as the original avatars of Vishnu or Krishna within the Universe:^[51] ^[52]

- Vasudeva
- Sankarshan
- Pradyumna
- Vamana

Guna avatars

The personalities of the Trimurti (Hindu trinity) are also sometimes referred to as *Guna avatars*, because of their roles of controlling the three modes (gunas) of nature,^[52] even though they have not descended upon an earthly planet in the general sense of the term 'avatar'.

- Vishnu – As controller of the mode of goodness (sattva)
- Brahma – Controller of the mode of passion and desire (rajas)
- Shiva – Controller of the mode of ignorance (tamas)

Manvantara avatars

Manvantara avatars are beings responsible for creating progeny throughout the Universe. There are said to be unlimited numbers of these avatars.^[53] ""During the hundred years of Brahmā's life, there are 504,000 *manvantara-avatāras*." (Śrī Caitanya Caritāmṛta Madhya 20.322)

Shaktyavesa and Avesa avatars

Avataric incarnations are classified as two kinds

- direct (*sakshat*)
- indirect (*avesa*)

When Vishnu himself descends, he is called *sakshat* or *shaktyavesa-avatara*, a direct incarnation of God. But when he does not incarnate directly, but indirectly empowers some living entity to represent him, that living entity is called an indirect or *avesa* avatar.^[54]

There are said to be a great number of *avesa* avatars. Examples include Narada Muni, Sugata Buddha, and Parashurama. Parashurama is the only one of the traditional ten avatars that is not a direct descent of Vishnu.

According to the Sri Vaishnavism sect of Hinduism, there are two types of primary or direct avatars, Purna avatars and Amsarupavatars:

1. Purna avatars are those in which Vishnu takes form directly and all the qualities and powers of God are expressed, (e.g. Narasimha, Rama and Krishna).^[55] [56]
2. Amsarupavatars are those in which Vishnu takes form directly but He is manifest in the person only partially. (e.g. avatars from Matsya, Kurma etc).

The *avesa* or indirect avatars are generally not worshiped as the Supreme being. Only the direct, primary avatars are worshiped in this way. In practice, the direct avatars that are worshiped today are the Purna avatars of Narasimha, Rama and Krishna. Among most Vaishnava traditions, Krishna is considered to be the highest Purna avatar. However, followers of Chaitanya (including ISKCON), Nimbarka, and Vallabha Acharya differ philosophically from other Vaishnavas, such as Ramanujacharya and Madhvacharya, and consider Krishna to be the ultimate Godhead, not simply an avatar. That said, all Hindus believe that there is no difference between worship of Vishnu and His avatars as it all leads to Him. According to Madhvacharya (chief proponent of Dvaita or school of differential monism), all avatars of Vishnu are alike in potency and every other quality. There is no gradation among them, and perceiving or claiming any differences among avatars is a cause of eternal damnation. See Madhva's commentary on Katha Upanishad.

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External links

- Avatars (Incarnations or Descents) of Vishnu (<http://www.sscnet.ucla.edu/southasia/Religions/Avatars/Vishnu.html>)
- New York Times on origin and use of word *avatar* (http://www.nytimes.com/2008/08/10/magazine/10wwln-guest-t.html?_r=1&scp=2&sq=avatar&st=cse&oref=login)

Mandali

Mandali from the Sanskrit *mandala* meaning circle, connection, community^[1], is a term that Meher Baba used for his closest disciples.

Inner circle

Mandali are considered to include those close disciples that lived permanently or for extended periods with Meher Baba at his ashrams. However, not all of Meher Baba's mandali lived with him. According to Meher Baba the Avatar always has 10 concentric circles of 12 men and/or women each. The inner circle consists of 12 men plus two women, for a total of 122 mandali.^[2] But Meher Baba also said, "Those who do my work are my *mandali*. If we were to list their names, it would fill a volume."^[3] At another time Baba said, "By *mandali* I mean those who have been with me for several years, but ask for nothing... In short, I would say that the mandali means those whose intimacy I feel."^[4]



Some of Meher Baba's men mandali. L-R: Bal, Pankhraj, Jal, Pendu, Francis Brabazon, (...), Bhau, Eruch, Aloba

Partial list of Meher Baba's mandali

Women mandali

Mehera Irani, Mani Irani, Dr. Goher Irani, Arnavaz Dadachanji, Mansari, Meheru Irani, Naja, Korshed, Katie Irani, Rano Gayley, Kitty Davy, Norina Matchabelli, Elizabeth Patterson, Countess Nadine Tolstoy, Delia DeLeon, Anita Vieillard.

Men mandali

Fareedoon Driver, Eruch Jessawala, Adi K. Irani, Aloba, Murli Kale, Pendu, Bal Natu, Jal Irani, Gustajee, Kalemama, Chanji, Dr. Ghani, Dr. C.D. Deshmukh, Francis Brabazon, Don Stevens, Harry Kenmore, Bhau Kalchuri, Quentin Tod, Charles Purdom, William Donkin, GSN Moorthy, Dr. H.P.Bharucha



Some of Meher Baba's women mandali. L-R: Katie, Mani, Mehera, Goher, Meheru, Arnavaz Photo by Win Coates

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External links

- Mandali Members (<http://www.avatarmeherbaba.org/erics/mandmem.html>)
- Photos of Meher Baba's mandali by Win Coates (<http://www.wincoates.com/Images 2/mandali album.htm>)
- mandalihall.org (<http://www.mandalihall.org>) (Audio recordings of Meher Baba's mandali members)
- List of followers, associates and acquaintances of Meher Baba (http://www.meherbabadnyana.net/page_lists.html)

New Life (Meher Baba)

The **New Life** was a period of renunciation, pilgrimage, and spiritual adventures undertaken by the Indian spiritual teacher Meher Baba on October 16, 1949.^[1] Baba selected twenty companions to join him in this self-described life of complete reliance on God, telling his companions, "Life during that period will be lived at the mercy of the world. It will be a life of complete helplessness and hopelessness."^[2]

After making provisions for those dependent on him, Meher Baba and his companions otherwise gave up all property and financial responsibilities. They then traveled about India incognito, without money, begging for their food, carrying out Baba's instructions and living in strict accordance with a set of "conditions of the New Life." These included absolute acceptance of the circumstances of their lives, and consistent good cheer in the face of any difficulty. Those companions who failed to comply were sent away. This phase of Meher Baba's life culminated in early 1952 after more than two years.

When pressed by inquisitive people for further explanation during the New Life, Meher Baba instructed his New Life companions to say this much:

"Hopelessness means renunciation of all hopes. Aimlessness means renunciation of all aims. Helplessness means renunciation of all help. No master, no disciple, means renunciation of spirituality. And the New Life I have in mind eventually means absolute renunciation. Therefore, if any one asks you what this New Life is, say, 'Absolute and perfect renunciation.' If they ask, 'Renunciation of what?' say, 'Of everything – aims, hopes, help and life itself.'"^[3]

About The New Life, Meher Baba wrote:



Meher Baba with disciples begging during his New Life period
1949-1952

“This New Life is endless, and even after my physical death it will be kept alive by those who live the life of complete renunciation of falsehood, lies, hatred, anger, greed and lust; and who, to accomplish all this, do no lustful actions, do no harm to anyone, do no backbiting, do not seek material possessions or power, who accept no homage, neither covet honor nor shun disgrace, and fear no one and nothing; by those who rely wholly and solely on God, and who love God purely for the sake of loving; who believe in the lovers of God and in the reality of Manifestation, and yet do not expect any spiritual or material reward; who do not let go the hand of Truth, and who, without being upset by calamities, bravely and wholeheartedly face all hardships with one hundred percent cheerfulness, and give no importance to caste, creed and religious ceremonies. This New Life will live by itself eternally, even if there is no one to live it.”^[4]

An account of the New Life is documented in the book *Tales From the New Life with Meher Baba* (1976).^[5] It is also described in detail in *The God-Man* by Charles Purdom (1964),^[6] and within *Meher Prabhu: Lord Meher* by Bhau Kalchuri (in volume 10 of first English edition, 1996^[7]; in volume 5 of the Hyderabad, India edition, 2005^[8]). The author Bhau Kalchuri's account has also been expanded into its own 726-page book, *Meher Baba's New Life* (2008).^[9]

Song of the New Life

In October 1949 Dr. Ghani wrote a "new life song" (or "Song of the New Life") in Hindi, including some edits by Meher Baba (the first verse from Meher Baba directly), which was then translated into English^[10]:

“Listen to the silent words of Meher Baba;
The life-story of all lovers of God is based on the practice of these words.
If you are serious about living this New Life,
Then wholeheartedly renounce this ephemeral existence.
We have taken to this life, in which we rely only on God;
In this, our will [to do or die] is strengthened by the oath taken;
We are merrily singing the song of hopelessness;
We are inviting all calamities and difficulties.
We neither wail over lost hopes, nor complain about broken promises;
We neither covet honor, nor shun disgrace;
Backbiting we know not, nor do we fear anyone;
This is now the color of our New Life.
No confusion in the mind now, nor any ties left;
Pride, anger, lust and greed we know not.
We have no religion, nor care for physical and mental fads.”

The Sheikh and the Brahmin

[typifying all castes and creeds] are now sailing in the same boat.
There is no small or great now, for us all;
The questions of disciple, Master or Godhood no longer arise.
Brotherliness or fellow-feeling is the link that exists,
And this contributes to our present enjoyment of suffering.
This world or the next, hell or heaven, we no longer bother about;
Shaktis and siddhis, occultism and miracles, we no longer think of.
All these false impressions [thoughts] for us have been purged from the mind.
What has value and importance for us now, is to live in the active present.
Dear ones, take seriously the words of Baba when he says:
"Although now I am on the same level with you all,
Yet all orders from me, good, bad, extraordinary,
You should all carry out immediately, leaving the result to God."
Even if the heavens fall,
Do not let go the Hand of Truth.
Let despair and disappointment ravage and destroy the garden [of your life];

Beautify it once again by the seedlings of contentment and self-sufficiency.
 Even if your heart is cut to bits, let there be a smile on your lips.
 Here I divulge to you a point worth noting:
 Hidden in your penniless hands is Treasure untold;
 Your beggarly life will be the envy of kings!
 God exists indeed, and true are the Prophets.
 Every cycle has an Avatar, and every moment has a wali.
 For us, however, it is only hopelessness and helplessness.
 How else should I tell you what our New Life is?^{[11] [12]}

New Life Companions

In October 1949, at the age of 55, Meher Baba embarked with twenty companions, four women and sixteen men mandali. They are listed here with their respective ages at the time.^[13]

| Women companions | Men companions |
|---------------------|----------------------------------------------------|
| 1. Mehera Irani, 42 | 1. Adi Sr., 45 |
| 2. Mani Irani, 31 | 2. Ali Akbar (Aloba), 33 |
| 3. Meheru Irani, 22 | 3. Anna 104, 60 |
| 4. Goher Irani, 33 | 4. Babadas, mid 40s |
| | 5. Baidul, 56 |
| | 6. Daulat Singh, 59 |
| | 7. Dr. William Donkin (only Western companion), 37 |
| | 8. Eruch Jessawala, 33 |
| | 9. Ghani, 58 |
| | 10. Gustadji, 59 |
| | 11. Kaka Baria, 58 |
| | 12. Murli Kale ^[14] , 30 |
| | 13. Nilu, 45 |
| | 14. Pendu, 45 |
| | 15. Sadashiv Patel, 60 |
| | 16. Vishnu, 45 |

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External links

- New Life Anthology (<http://www.avatarmeherbaba.org/erics/nl.html>)
- New Life described by Mani Irani (<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mSr04X1igMQ>)
- New Life described by Eruch Jessawala (<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mr7nU8ySHQw>)

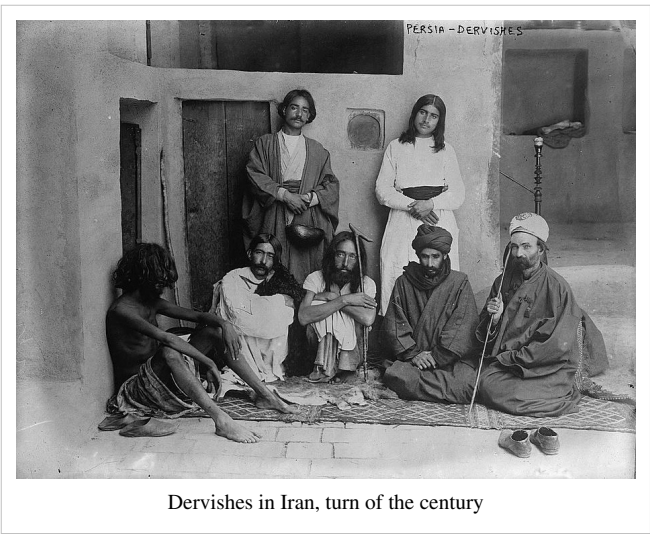
Sheriar Mundegar Irani

| Sheriar Mundegar Irani | |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------|
| <div></div> <div>Father of Meher Baba</div> | |
| Born | 21 March 1853Khorramshahr, Iran |
| Died | 30 April 1932 (aged 79)Bombay, India |
| Occupation | Toddy shop owner |
| Religion | Zoroastrianism, Sufism |
| Spouse | Shireen Sheriar Irani |
| Children | Jamshed, Merwan, Freiny, Jal, Beheram, Adi, Mani |

Sheriar Mundegar Irani (or: **Shahr-Yar Moondegar Irani**) (March 21, 1853 - April 30, 1932) was a mystic and the father of Meher Baba.

Biography

Sheriar was born into a poor Zoroastrian family in Khooramshar, near Yazd, Iran. His mother died when he was aged five, and he was then raised by his father Moondegar, caretaker of the local Zoroastrian funeral site. The Tower of Silence (*dakhma*) was a place where the dead were left exposed to the elements and to birds of prey, and Sheriar was often left in charge in these eerie surroundings while still a boy. Alienated from his peers by his occupation, oppressed by the Muslim majority because of his religion, unschooled and illiterate, he left his birthplace at the age of twelve.^[1] For the next eight years he adopted the life of a solitary wandering dervish.



In 1874 he emigrated from Iran with his brother to India, in search of economic opportunities among the long-established Parsi community. After brief employment in Bombay, he gave away most of the money he had saved and resumed his mystical quest. He wandered through Gujarat and Sindh among other places for another ten years, begging only when he was hungry. Disappointed that nearly two decades of dervishi had not led him to spiritual realization, he returned to Bombay where his sister Piroja now lived.^[2] Slowly integrating into conventional life, he reluctantly became betrothed to a young girl, Shireen Khuramshahi, whose family had also immigrated

from his birthplace. The marriage took place 8 years later in 1892 when Shireen came of age: she was 14 and Sheriar 39. To support his new lifestyle he became first a gardener and later the owner of a successful palm wine business in Poona (present-day Pune) where the couple moved in 1893. In all Sheriar and Shireen had nine children – seven sons and two daughters. Of these, three died in childhood: one son Shirmund at seven months, a second Jehangir at two years, and a daughter Freiny who died of plague at age six in 1902.^[3]

In his spare time he learned to read and write his native Persian, as well as the Gujarati, Arabic and Marathi languages. This allowed him to continue his mystical studies in the textual realm, where he became recognized as an able scholar. Kevin R. D. Shepherd has linked him with the Ishraqi tradition of Iranian illuminationist philosophy, as mediated by the 16th-century Iranian Zoroastrian sage Azar Kayvan.^[4] The circle of savants associated with Kayvan combined Zoroastrian, Sufi, Neoplatonic and other gnostic beliefs with a nonsectarian approach to the study of comparative religion.

The dichotomy of Sheriar's religion and mysticism

There is an apparent dichotomy in the fact that Sheriar is referred to in biographical sources as both a Zoroastrian and a Sufi dervish, as Sufism is a branch of Islam and not a part of Zoroastrianism. However, this fact is explained in Bhau Kalchuri's *Lord Meher*. Sheriar's personal philosophy incorporated elements from both Zoroastrianism and Sufi mysticism, a characteristic that he adopted from his father Moondeggar who was an enigma to his Iranian Muslim neighbors because as a Zoroastrian he participated in both Muslim and Zoroastrian festivals and was a devout follower of a Muslim saint.^[5] Because there are no mystic, mendicant, or ascetic traditions in Zoroastrianism, Sheriar chose to practice an Islamic mystic path such as that of the Sufi mendicant. However he neither officially converted to Islam nor left his birth religion of Zoroastrianism. After his marriage, arranged by his sister Piroja to a Zoroastrian girl Shireen in India, Sheriar rejoined his Irani community in Poona, was a householder and followed all Zoroastrian practices. Thus he could be said to have returned to his Zoroastrian roots.

The general claim by Meher Baba's devotees that Sheriar's famous son was also Zoroastrian is supported by the fact that Meher Baba wore the Zoroastrian *sudra* (a muslin undershirt) and the 72-thread *kusti* girdle all his life. 'Meher' is a Zoroastrian theophoric name that reflects his father's devotion to the *Yazata* Mithra. Also Meher Baba always signed his name 'M. S. Irani' and never 'Meher Baba'. Considering his teachings, which often included Sufi references, it seems plausible then that Meher Baba acknowledged both Zoroastrian and Sufi philosophies like his father.



Sheriar and his wife Shireen



Sheriar and Shireen's son Merwan who grew up to be named Meher Baba

Sheriar's surname

The surname 'Irani' was adopted by the Zoroastrian immigrants in the 18th century and later, and only by them, for legal and communal reasons. Sheriar was then not born with 'Irani' as a last name, and would originally have had his father's first name as a surname; thus his birth name was probably Sheriar Moondeggar. Inversely, in Indian Zoroastrian tradition, which goes back to the days before family names were introduced by the British colonial government, the middle name is always the father's first name, so if one knows a person's middle name, one knows the name of the father. For instance, Meher Baba's full legal name was Merwan *Sheriar* Irani.

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- [4] Shepherd, Kevin R.D. (1988) *From Oppression to Freedom: A Study of the Kaivani Gnostics*. Cambridge, Anthropographia Publications, Part One.
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Perfect Master (Meher Baba)

Perfect Master is the English translation that the Indian spiritual master Meher Baba began to use in his writing as early as 1925 ^[1] to denote the Eastern sense of a sadguru (Vedanta) or a qutub (Sufism). A Perfect Master, according to Baba, is a God-realized person (one whose limited individualized consciousness has merged with God) who can use his Divine attributes of Infinite Power, Knowledge and Bliss for the spiritual upliftment of others. ^[2] In describing Meher Baba's specialized use of the term C. B. Purdom writes "The title 'Perfect Master'...means one who has himself reached the goal to which he directs others: one who, pointing to God, has himself realized God." ^[3]

States of God-realized souls

Meher Baba stated in his book *God Speaks* that when a spiritually advanced soul loses its consciousness as a separate being, it merges in God in one of three distinct states:

- The soul becomes conscious of itself as God and enjoys eternally His divine attributes of Infinite Power, Knowledge and Bliss, but remains completely unconscious of Creation.
- The soul becomes conscious of itself as God and retains consciousness of Creation but does not use His divine attributes in it.
- The soul becomes conscious of itself as God and uses His divine attributes for the spiritual advancement of others. ^[4]

Meher Baba calls people who are in the third state **Perfect Masters** or *Mukammil*. He distinguishes the second state from Perfect Masters, calling them instead "Perfect Ones" or *Kamil*. One of the aspects that he says demarcates the Perfect Master from the Perfect One is that the Perfect Master has disciples, while the Perfect One does not. Also Baba says that a Perfect Master can make like himself any number of souls or even the whole of creation, while the Perfect One can only make one soul like himself. However, Meher Baba makes it clear in his system as outlined in *God Speaks* that the consciousness of these souls is absolutely One and the same. To explain this apparent contradiction he likens the difference between these two classifications of God realized souls to a difference in the 'office' of the God Realized person. ^[5]

Meher Baba says that at all times on Earth there are fifty six incarnate God-realized souls, but that of these only five are deemed the five Perfect Masters of their era. When one of the five Perfect Masters 'drops' his physical body, Baba says, another God-realized soul among the 56 incarnate at that time replaces him by taking up that office in that

moment. Thus, Meher Baba says there are fifty six God-realized souls on Earth at all times, but only and exactly five hold the office of Perfect Master.

In addition, Baba says there is one very rare type of God-realized person who has no disciples but who has duties included in his office. These he says are called Most Perfect Ones or *Akmal*.^[6]

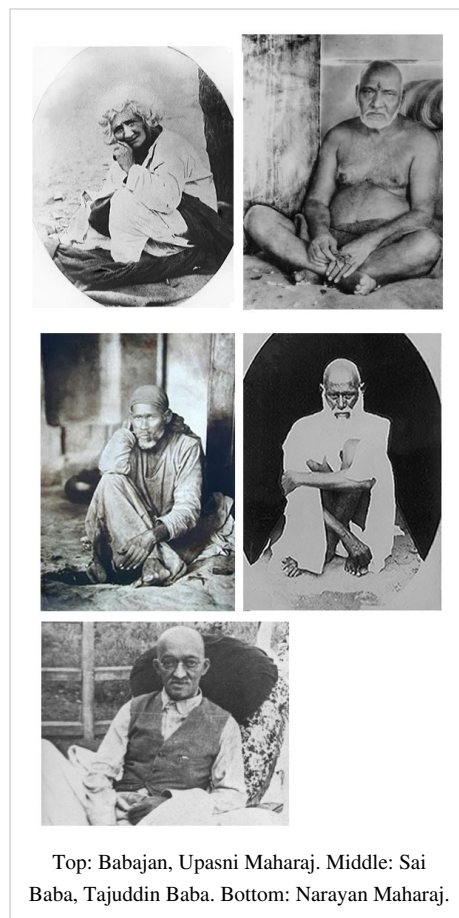
The Five Perfect Masters

Meher Baba is unique among Indian teachers in that he said that the number of perfect masters on the Earth is exactly five at all times. He said further that at the time of his own God-realization the five perfect masters were Sai Baba of Shirdi, Upasni Maharaj, Hazrat Babajan, Hazrat Tajuddin Baba and Narayan Maharaj and that these five brought him down to human consciousness as the Avatar on Earth in this cycle of time. "During the Avataric period, the five Perfect Masters make God incarnate as man."^[7] He also said, "What I am, what I was, and what I will be as the Ancient One is always due to the five Perfect Masters of the Age. Sai Baba, Upasni Maharaj, Babajan, Tajuddin Baba and Narayan Maharaj - these are the five Perfect Masters of this age for me."^[8] All of these have since died and Meher Baba did not say who their replacements were, except to indicate that for the time being they will be in the East. He further indicated that although the 'offices' of the five Perfect Masters are always filled, when they drop their bodies they 'also shed forever their Subtle and Mental vehicles and pass away utterly as God, retaining infinite Individuality and experiencing the Infinite Power, Knowledge and Bliss'.^[9]

Meher Baba also said on more than one occasion that while there are numerous planets in the Universe with human life on them, Earth is the only planet where God realization is possible and where the five perfect masters take birth.^[10]

The Avatar

Meher Baba asserts that beyond the five Perfect Masters of the age, (distinguished as those God-realized souls which fulfill the office of Perfect Master temporarily until they drop their physical bodies), there is also the Avatar. "The number of God-Realized souls on earth is eternally fixed at fifty-six and is never altered, except during Avataric ages when God directly descends as a man."^[11] The Avatar, according to Meher Baba, is a special Perfect Master who was the original Perfect Master, or the Ancient One, who never ceases to incarnate in spite of his original attainment of God-realization. Baba says that this particular soul personifies the preserver or sustainer state of God which in Hinduism is called *Vishnu* and in Sufism is called *Parvardigar*. According to Meher Baba the Avatar appears on Earth every 700–1400 years, and is brought down into human form by the five Perfect Masters of that age to aid in the process of moving creation in its never ending journey toward Godhood. He said that in other ages this role was fulfilled by Zoroaster, Rama, Krishna, Gautama Buddha, Jesus, and lastly by Muhammad. "Of the most recognized and much worshiped manifestations of God as Avatar, that of Zarathustra is the earliest – having been before Ram, Krishna, Buddha, Jesus and Muhammad."^[12]



Top: Babajan, Upasni Maharaj. Middle: Sai Baba, Tajuddin Baba. Bottom: Narayan Maharaj.

Majzoob

Besides Perfect One (*Kamil*), Most Perfect One (*Akmal*), and Perfect Master (*Mukammil*), Meher Baba described one other type of incarnate soul that has transcended the finite ego and merged in a state of God-consciousness, but cannot help others. This type is the *Majzoob* (Arabic: *Absorbed*). Unlike the Perfect Master, or any of the other sub-types of God-realized souls, the Majzoob is absorbed in God to such a degree that he cannot be of any direct assistance to anyone else in creation though he can be of indirect help to those who honor him. This is because he is a perfect mast and as such has no experience of the external physical or internal mental worlds. According to Meher Baba the Majzoob has no experience of the gross, sublte, or mental worlds, but is entirely absorbed in the bliss of his state of Godhood.^[13]



Chacha of Satara in the back of a Tonga after his one and only bath for about thirty years. He is wearing a spotless new kafni. Ajmer, February 1939 A 7th plane majzoob mast.


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- [5] *God Speaks, The Theme of Creation and Its Purpose*, Meher Baba, Dodd, Mead and Company, 1973, Sec. Ed. pp. 148-149
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- [12] Kalchuri, Bhau: "Meher Prabhu: Lord Meher, The Biography of the Avatar of the Age, Meher Baba", *Manifestation, Inc.* 1986. p. 4216
- [13] Donkin, William, M.D., "The Wayfarers: Meher Baba with the God-Intoxicated", Adi K. Irani, 1948, *Sheriar Foundation*, 2001, pp. 16, 18 (ISBN 1-880619-24-5)

External links

- Meher Baba on Perfect Masters (<http://www.avatarmeherbaba.org/masters.html>)
- Photos of Meher Baba's five Perfect Masters (http://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/Meher_Baba#Masters_of_Meher_Baba)

Eruch Jessawala

| Eruch Jessawala | |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------|
|  | |
| Born | October 13, 1916Bombay, India |
| Died | August 31, 2001 (aged 84)Meherazad, India |
| Religion | Zoroastrianism |
| Notes Photo by Win Coates | |

Eruch Byramshaw Jessawala (October 13, 1916 - August 31, 2001), born in Bombay, India, was a close disciple of the silent Indian master Meher Baba, and one of his *mandali*. Jessawala was also the primary interpreter of Meher Baba's alphabet board ^[1], and later his unique sign language.

Early life

Jessawala was born in Bombay to Zoroastrian parents, Beheram and Gaimai Jessawala. His father Beheram was an engineer with a high post in the Indian government in Nagpur, the capital of central provinces at that time. Due to constant relocations of his father, Jessawala was placed in an orthodox Zoroastrian boarding school in Nashik, India at the age of 6. When his father eventually bought an estate, Jessawala was transferred to a Catholic school at the age of 8 where he excelled as a student, eventually planning to study engineering like his father.

Meeting Meher Baba

According to Jessawala the first time he remembered meeting Meher Baba was in 1925 at the age of nine on a trip with his family to Ahmednagar. Twelve years later, while Jessawala was preparing to study engineering, Meher Baba called him to Panchgani and asked him, "Will you leave everything and come to be with me?" To this Jessawala answered, "By your grace anything is possible."^[2] ^[3] Thus Eruch Jessawala joined Meher Baba as his disciple in 1938 at the age of 21.

Work as translator of Baba's silent gestures

Meher Baba was silent for 44 years, from 1925 until his passing in 1969. Eruch Jessawala was Meher Baba's main interpreter, interpreting both his English language alphabet board ^[1] and later his sign language. He also dictated from the alphabet board Meher Baba's major book *God Speaks*, wrote the ninth chapter of that book working from a chart by Meher Baba under Baba's direct supervision, and wrote the book's conclusion. Jessawala's stories of his life with Meher Baba were also published during his lifetime (see below).

Death and legacy

Jessawala survived Meher Baba's death by 32 years, continuing to live at Meherazad and working for the Avatar Meher Baba Perpetual Public Charitable Trust in the trust office in Ahmednagar until his own death in 2001. He continued to be an inspiration for followers and disciples of Meher Baba from the East and the West until the end. Jessawala was well known for telling stories of Meher Baba's life, and his books are taken from those accounts.

Books

- *That's How it Was, Stories of Life with Meher Baba*, Eruch Jessawala, Sheriar Press; 1995 (ISBN 1-880619-17-2)
- *Is That So*, Eruch Jessawala, Meher Nazar Books, Kings Road, Amhednagar, M.S. India. 1985
- *Determined to Be His*, Eruch Jessawala, Meher Nazar Books, Ahmednagar, M.S. India. 1987
- *Tales from the New Life with Meher Baba*, Narrated by Eruch, Mehera, Mani and Meheru, Published by Meher Baba Information, 1976

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- [2] Short Biography from Avatar Meher Baba Trust (http://www.google.com/search?q=cache:-TjWA0IVgWUJ:www.ambppct.org/events/inhisservice/IHS_NL_01_Dec.pdf)
- [3] PDF Version (http://www.ambppct.org/events/inhisservice/IHS_NL_01_Dec.pdf)

External links

- Photos of Eruch demonstrating Baba's hand gestures ([http://www.theawakenermagazine.org/avol21/av21n01/av21n01p08.htm#Next Page](http://www.theawakenermagazine.org/avol21/av21n01/av21n01p08.htm#Next%20Page))
- Audio of Eruch Jessawala Telling his story (<http://web-animator.com/mehercast/Eruch/eruch.html>)
- Stories by Eruch Jessawala (<http://www.avatarmeherbaba.org/erics/eruch.html>)
- That's How It Was (<http://www.amazon.com/gp/product/1880619172>)
- Jessawala describes Baba's sign language in 1973 film (<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VAY1HvB4ZUc>) (video)
- Interview with Eruch Jessawala (<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4aUjj9MHSr4&feature=related>) (video)

Silence Day

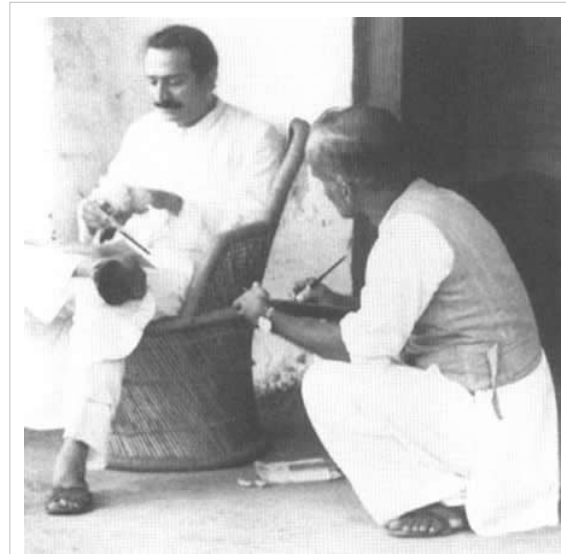
Silence Day is the name the followers of Meher Baba give to their practice of commemorating July 10 of each year by maintaining verbal silence for twenty-four hours.

From July 10, 1925 until his death in 1969, Meher Baba was silent.^{[1] [2]} He communicated first by using an alphabet board, and later by hand gestures which were interpreted and spoken out by one of his *mandali* (devoted disciples), usually by his disciple Eruch Jessawala. For many years, Baba asked his followers to undertake austerities on this date. These took various forms: in addition to keeping silence, Baba had asked his followers to fast, to pray, to repeat the names of God, and similar practices. In his last request to his followers on the subject, in 1968, he asked only that they keep silent.^[3]

While Meher Baba did not establish any ongoing requirement, even after his death the majority of his followers voluntarily keep silent on July 10. Some stay in seclusion for the duration, while others attempt to engage in their typical activities; there are therefore many humorous anecdotes associated with keeping silent on Silence Day.

About his silence Meher Baba wrote,

Man's inability to live God's words makes the Avatar's teaching a mockery. Instead of practising the compassion he taught, man has waged wars in his name. Instead of living the humility, purity, and truth of his words, man has given way to hatred, greed, and violence. Because man has been deaf to the principles and precepts laid down by God in the past, in this present Avataric form, I observe silence.^[4]



Meher Baba dictating messages to a disciple by pointing to letters on an alphabet board.

References

- [1] Haynes, Charles C. (1993). Meher Baba, the Awakener. Avatar Foundation, Inc. p. 2
- [2] Kalchuri, Bhau (1986). Meher Prabhu: Lord Meher, The Biography of the Avatar of the Age, Meher Baba. Manifestation p.738
- [3] Kalchuri, Bhau (1986). Meher Prabhu: Lord Meher, The Biography of the Avatar of the Age, Meher Baba. Manifestation p. 6633 - "I want all my lovers to observe complete silence for twenty-four hours, from midnight of July 9th to midnight of July 10th, 1968."
- [4] *Meher Baba's Universal Message*, World's Fair Pamphlet, 1964 The Universal Message (<http://www.ambppct.org/meherbaba/universal-message.php>)

External links

- Online video about Meher Baba's silence (<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Ipa8Pw6ruQ>)
- Online video of Meher Baba's hands pointing to letters on his alphabet board (<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=m2AUOj19Z54>)

Discourses (Meher Baba)

Discourses (ISBN 1-880619-09-1) is a book by Meher Baba that has received seven editions since 1939 and is still in print. Besides *God Speaks* it is considered the second most important of Meher Baba's books by followers of Meher Baba.

Overview

The book covers many subjects, both practical and highly esoteric. Some chapters go into the human search for the Truth and God, spiritual advancement, aspirants, various states of God-realized beings, the Avatar and discipleship. Other chapters deal methodically with several aspects of spiritual advancement and the spiritual path, such as the formation and removal of *sanskaras* (mental impressions), various aspects of meditation, transcending good and evil, and clarify Meher Baba's views on such topics as occultism, reincarnation and maya. Several chapters are discourses on individual subjects such as selfishness, violence, sex, love, happiness and spiritual work. Due to the nature of the Discourses, some topics occur repeatedly in various contexts. Yet the book maintains a methodical flow and structure rather than being a random collection of individual discourses.



Meher Baba dictating messages on his alphabet board much as it is believed he did his discourses

The nature of the ego and its termination

The use of the term *Ego* in the Discourses does not follow strictly the Freudian definition, although generally it refers to the same concept and many parallels can be drawn. Baba makes no mention of the *Id* or the *Super-ego*, but only the distinction between the *implicit* and the *explicit* ego. The latter finds manifestation in consciousness, whereas the former remains in the subconscious mind. Isolated subconscious tendencies stored in the implicit ego must come to the explicit side to take part in a conscious process. Yet the explicit ego is very intricately organized and has self-protection mechanisms that act as a repressive barrier to subconscious tendencies. Since spiritual progress requires all subconscious tendencies to gradually pass through the conscious part of the mind and become refined and eventually eliminated, the explicit ego has to be weakened, under certain conditions, to permit this to happen.^[1]

Evolutionarily, the ego is formed by the inherent nature of living beings to store, integrate and evaluate experience around a central mental point. The organized mental structure of experience eventually takes over the sense of "I" and starts considering itself as the central identity of the individual. This creates various erroneous assumptions from the ego's side, such as identifying itself with the physical body, the psychological functions or the mind of the individual, or endowing external objects and events with values that don't really belong to them but that it projects on them. Generally the ego is the central cause of all mental conflict. Its presence during the evolution of consciousness is of instrumental importance, but from a certain point on it starts acting as a hindrance to the further development of self-consciousness. A lot of spiritual effort has to be made to weaken the ego's dominance on self-consciousness and as the effort moves deeper it becomes increasingly difficult to proceed. The individual can get indefinitely stuck in some stages and therefore help from outside becomes very important. The final emancipation of consciousness from the ego is practically impossible without the intervention of a perfect master or sadguru.^[2]

Self-consciousness and the consciousness of the apparent universe do not end after the dissolution of the ego and several chapters of the book are dedicated to the states of consciousness gained by those who have transcended the ego. Also, most chapters of the book get into particular practices for the emancipation of consciousness from the ego, qualities that have to be developed by the individual, and examine important issues that have to be confronted in the process.

Good and evil

In the chapter on *Good and Evil*, Meher Baba takes a unique position. What we call *evil*, according to Meher Baba, is most often a misapplied relic of a past good. For instance, an act beneficial to a lower species in evolution becomes detrimental to the individual and society in a human cultural context. Similarly, the ego, which plays a vital role in the process of evolving self-awareness, becomes a spiritual hindrance once full awareness (in human form) is achieved. Still, Baba asserts that good actions (judged as good in their context) are preferable to so-called bad actions, in that they are far less binding to the soul. According to Baba, both good and bad actions are binding in the sense that they leave impressions (*sanskaras*) that must be worked out or balanced by ongoing experience in reincarnation. But even in this context, good actions are preferable and less binding. He gives the analogy that bad actions are like ropes that bind both feet and hands, but good actions bind only the feet, and thus can more easily be disentangled. This principle of evil being the relic of a past good, becoming bad in the wrong context, is repeated in his writing on the subject of war. A war may be deemed necessary, and thus not necessarily bad, when its use serves the greater good of the people (such as in repelling a significant unprovoked threat) as seen from the highest possible vantage point. However, Meher Baba says that war is generally the least creative means of resolving human conflict and is most often misguided. Also he points out that war is only a symptom, while the root cause of the problem is individual and collective egoism.

Meher Baba suggests that in the final analysis there is no such thing as *bad* in the sense that we conceive it, but rather there are more truly only degrees of good. Rather than categorizing actions in terms of good and bad (which are sometimes little more than societal conventions) Meher Baba divides actions into binding and unbinding, i.e., those actions that emancipate the soul from illusion (Maya) as opposed to those that further retard or thwart the soul's release from all bindings (*sanskaras*). Baba also makes a distinction between *natural* and *non-natural* impressions derived from natural and non-natural actions. Natural actions, such as marriage, are far less spiritually entangling and easier to process and balance than, for instance, promiscuity. Thus it is far more advantageous, from a spiritual point of view, to choose good and natural actions over less good and less natural ones.

Maya

The concept of Maya, or the principle of illusion, is not new to oriental philosophy. The concept appears at least as early as the works of Indian philosopher Adi Shankara writing in the 8th century. Meher Baba makes a distinction, however, from the traditional interpretation of Maya as illusion itself, and says that it is that principle that causes one to be deceived into seeing the false as real.

Maya is not illusion; it is the creator of illusion. Maya is not false; it is that which gives false impressions. Maya is not unreal; it is that which makes the real appear unreal and the unreal appear real. Maya is not duality; it is that which causes duality.^[3]

Maya does not mean this world and its affairs. The illusion that this world and everything in it is real – and of feeling happy or unhappy over certain conditions – is Maya.^[4] For its spiritual significance, Maya is primarily connected to intellectual misjudgments. But while errors on objective facts (such as the size of an object) can be relatively easily corrected, errors in valuation (such as considering rituals as ends in themselves) are much harder to correct, because they are connected to subjective desires. This second kind of misjudgment leads to false beliefs, which are taken as self-evident and are the hardest to eliminate. From the point of view of the awakening individual, however, Maya disappears completely as consciousness becomes free of its grasp. This

awakening from Maya is also termed *Mahapralaya*, or *the final annihilation of the world*, since *the world is the creation of Maya*. This also stands in view of the statement: *"The soul in its transcendental state is One, Formless, Eternal and Infinite, yet identifies itself with the phenomenal world of forms, which are many, finite and destructible. This is Maya or the cosmic illusion"*.

Meditation

Meher Baba describes meditation as the path that an individual makes for himself in his effort to get beyond the limitations of the mind. He distinguishes meditation from concentration in that in the former the mind moves from one relevant idea to the other, whereas in the latter there is no movement in the mind, which remains fixed on its object. Meher Baba disqualifies as meditation any other mental process that doesn't have spiritual significance for the subject. However, he accepts philosophical thinking, as a general type of meditation, provided its goal is to grasp the ultimate nature of life and the universe. He also points out that any effort to force the mind during meditation is bound to be spiritually fruitless. Spontaneity and love for the object of meditation are of utmost importance. He considers seclusion and silence as necessary for meditation and states some helpful factors, such as darkness, posture and place, but leaves much room for alternatives (*"Even when walking, one may be absorbed in meditation"*). In the case of aspirants who are in harmony with each other and when one is not concerned about the other's course of meditation, collective meditation is also possible and can even be helpful for the individual. He warns also that many disturbing thoughts are bound to try to distract the mind from its object and he advises patience and the confidence that they will subside. Any direct effort to repress them, apart from being a waste of psychic energy, is bound to entangle further the mind with the disturbance and therefore strengthen it.

In the relatively long chapter *The Types of Meditation*, Meher Baba makes very elaborate classifications of the various types of meditation. He makes three different types of classifications: one based on their functionality in spiritual advancement, one according to the predominant part of the personality that is involved in the process and one on the basis of items of experiences pondered.

First classification of meditation

According to the meditation's functionality in spiritual advancement, Meher Baba distinguishes between associative meditation, in which consciousness associates itself with various aspects of the eternal Truth (such as "I am Infinite") and dissociative meditation, where consciousness dissociates itself from illusion (such as "I am not my desires"). In the associative type the synthetic activity of the mind (*Anwaya*) is involved, while in the dissociative type the analytic activity of the mind (*Vyatireka*) is at work. Dissociative meditation prepares the way for associative meditation, which is spiritually more fruitful than the former. Translator E.B. Cowell defines *anwaya-vyatireka* as "affirmative and negative induction," in his edition of Colebrooke's Essays, vol. i., p. 315, note 3.

Second classification of meditation

According to the predominant part of the personality involved in the meditation, Baba distinguishes between "discriminative meditation", where the intellect is predominant and can include both types of the previous system, the "meditation of the heart", where the heart is predominant in a steady flow of love from the aspirant towards the Divine Beloved, and the "meditation of action", where the active nature of man is predominant, in the form of selfless service of the Master or humanity. These three types, although undertaken one at a time, are to be used complementarily, but in such a manner that the one doesn't interfere with the progress of the other.

Third classification of meditation

According to items of experiences involved, two subdivisions are made: general meditation, which aims at the mental assimilation of the Divine Truths (through philosophical thinking, hearing discourses from the Masters, or reading the written expositions of the Masters), and specialized meditation (meditation concerned with the object of experience, meditation concerned with the subject of experience and meditation concerned with mental processes), in which the mind is exclusively concerned with some definite experience it selects. In this system of classification are also mentioned two types of meditation of the Spiritually Perfect: *Nirvana* (or absorption) and the *Nirvikalpa State* (or divinity in expression).

Love

In the Discourses, love is mentioned in many forms. Love pervades the universe. The first fundamental force known to have split as an independent principle from the original primordial unity in recent Cosmology is gravity. Baba says that gravity is the reflection of love. All the forces of attraction and of repulsion in every level (from small particles to material objects to living organisms) are expressions of love. In the animal kingdom this love becomes explicit in conscious processes through instinctive drives. The drive to look for nutrition is love. Sex-attraction is love. Actually anything that drives an organism to fulfill a bodily impulse or desire is love.

In the human level, with the development of consciousness, love, although continuous with its lower forms, attains a higher form because of its relation to reason. In the beginning these two factors are in a natural harmony, but the one doesn't have conscious access to the other. Each one operates almost separately from the other. Then comes a stage where reason and love come in rapport and conflict with each other, yet the important factor is that they start coming simultaneously in the conscious sphere. Then comes a third stage where a synthesis of love and reason is achieved to bring an altogether new type of consciousness, best described as *superconsciousness*.

Obviously the longest part of human development deals with the second phase. Yet from the effort to resolve the conflicts brought about between love and reason there arises spiritual progress. As lower forms of love come in conflict with higher ones, human love is limited by many factors. Lust, greed and anger are limiting factors mentioned in many philosophies. The only hope of breaking these limits is the appearance of a pure form of love, called *Divine love*. This love can only arise through the grace of spiritual Masters. This is not a momentary event. The Avatar comes to awaken humanity to this higher love. An individual has to develop a conscious longing for this love and has to give up all forms of desires except for the desire to attain it. In human love the duality of the lover and the Beloved persist. In Divine love, lover and Beloved are indivisibly one.

God realization

According to Meher Baba, the aim of all beings in creation, in fact the very purpose of creation, is *God-realization*. A soul is God-realized when it has first traversed evolution, taking each successive form in creation until it achieves full consciousness in the human form (the terminus of physical evolution according to Meher Baba), then has gone through successive lives during reincarnation, and finally, having traversed the inner planes of consciousness during involution, has achieved consciousness of its true original identity as God. This experience of Oneness with God, according to Meher Baba, is not the same as simply a discursive realization of this condition through reading or contemplation, but rather must be fully experienced with the help of a perfect master or sadguru. Thus he emphasized that a man who reads, in Vedanta literature for instance, that he is God and then says that he is God, is in fact a hypocrite, since he does not have this experience. The goal of life, instead, is to achieve this "I am God" state as a permanent and genuine experience. According to Meher Baba this ultimate experience, for which the universe came into being and is continually sustained, cannot be described or talked about, but only lived and directly experienced.

History of the Discourses

The text of the *Discourses* was first published in New York as a series of essays in *Meher Baba Journal* between 1938 and 1943 by Princess Norina Matchabelli and Elizabeth C. Patterson. Between 1939 and 1954 in India, a five-volume compilation titled *Discourses of Meher Baba* received several printings.^[5] In 1955 an early single volume edition edited by C.B. Purdom titled *God to Man and Man to God* was published by Victor Gollancz Ltd, London. In 1967 the discourses were re-released as a three-volume set titled *The Discourses*, and finally took their current form as simply *Discourses* in 1987 (Sheriar Foudation). In 2007 a reprinting of the three-volume 6th edition was released, which also includes a fourth companion volume on the history of the Discourses.

Material from Meher Baba's discourses is also printed in part in many other works and anthologies, including *Silent Teachings of Meher Baba* by Naosherwan Anzar, *Treasures from Meher Baba Journals* by Jane Barry Haynes, *Meher Baba the Awakener* by Charles C. Haynes, *Much Silence* by Tom & Dorothy Hopkinson, *Mastery of Consciousness* by Allan Cohen, *The Narrow Lane* compiled by William Le Page, and *The Silent Master Meher Baba* by Irwin Luck.

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- [1] *Discourses*, 1967, Volume II p. 71 The Nature of the Ego and Its Termination: II
- [2] *Discourses*, Meher Baba, 1967, Volume II p. 74 The Nature of the Ego and Its Termination: II
- [3] *Discourses*, Meher Baba, 1967, Volume III p. 155 Maya: IV
- [4] *Lord Meher*, Bhau Kalchuri, Manifestation, Inc. 1986, p. 1991
- [5] Purdom, Charles B.: "The God-Man: The Life, Journeys & Work of Meher Baba with an Interpretation of His Silence & Spiritual Teaching", *George Allen & Unwin*, London, 1962, p. 320

External links

- Online version of *The Discourses* (1967, 6th edition) (<http://discoursesbymeherbaba.org/>)

Avatar's Abode

Avatar's Abode

| | |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------|
|  | |
| Founded | 1958 |
| Location | Queensland, Australia |
| Motto | <i>a stopping place on the road to the Beloved</i> |
| Website | avatarsabode.com.au ^[1] |

Avatar's Abode is a 99-acre (40 ha) spiritual retreat about 75 miles (121 km) north of Brisbane, Australia dedicated to Meher Baba. It was established by Australian poet and disciple of Meher Baba Francis Brabazon in 1958 on the summit of Kiel Mountain near Woombye on Queensland's Sunshine Coast. Brabazon purchased the land, an eighty-two-acre pineapple farm, with money willed to him by the Australian Sufi leader Baron Von Frankenburg. The site has a panoramic view of the Pacific Ocean to the east and over valleys, farmlands and rolling blue hills to the west. By Meher Baba's wish, Avatar's Abode can never be sold, but must be kept as a place of pilgrimage.^[2]

The founder of Avatar's Abode, Francis Brabazon, met Meher Baba on a trip to America in 1952 and later described Baba as "the very personification of truth and the very embodiment of beauty." After returning to Australia, Brabazon and a party of helpers managed to complete a structure called "Beacon Hill house" in time for Baba's first visit to Australia in August 1956. It was later called "Meher House". In 1958 Brabazon established a new building on Kiel Mountain, Woombye, Queensland to host Meher Baba on his next visit. While he was there, Baba named the property "Avatar's Abode" and said it would become a place of world pilgrimage.^[3] Francis Brabazon's grave is located there overlooking the ocean.

References

- [1] <http://www.avatarsabode.com.au>
- [2] Avatar's Abode Main Information Page (<http://www.avatarsabode.com.au/theabode.htm>)
- [3] *Lord Meher*, Bhau Kalchuri, 1986, p. 5460

External links

- Official website (<http://www.avatarsabode.com.au/>)

Satguru

Satguru or **Sadguru** (Sanskrit: सद्गुरु) means true guru. The term is distinguished from other forms of gurus, such as musical instructors, scriptural teachers, parents, and so on. The satguru is a title given specifically only to an enlightened rishi/sant whose life's purpose is to guide initiated *shishya* along the spiritual path, the summation of which is the realization of the Self through realization of God, who is omnipresent.

Ancient and traditional sources

The recommendation says that the first and the foremost qualification of the True Master (Satguru) is that he must have known the True Lord (God) himself.^[1]

In one of Kabir's songs^[2] the satguru is described as the real sadhu:

He is the real Sadhu, who can reveal the form of the Formless to the vision of these eyes;
 Who teaches the simple way of attaining Him, that is other than rites or ceremonies;
 Who does not make you close the doors, and hold the breath, and renounce the world;
 Who makes you perceive the Supreme Spirit wherever the mind attaches itself;
 Who teaches you to be still in the midst of all your activities.
 Ever immersed in bliss, having no fear in his mind, he keeps the spirit of union in the midst of all enjoyments.
 The infinite dwelling of the Infinite Being is everywhere: in earth, water, sky, and air;
 Firm as the thunderbolt, the seat of the seeker is established above the void.
 He who is within is without: I see Him and none else.^[3]

Vashishta, Lord Rama's Guru was the satguru in Treta yuga. Swami Shankar Purushottam Tirtha quotes Yoga Vasistha:

A real preceptor is one who can produce blissful sensation in the body of the disciple by their sight, touch, or instructions.^[4]

According to Satguru Sivaya Subramuniyaswami, a Hindu satguru is always a *sannyasin*, an unmarried renunciate,^[5] but not all writers include this stricture.^[6] Tukaram, a Hindu satguru, is known to have had a family, and Moinuddin Chishti also had children. Satguru Kabir had a son, Kamal, who was very devout.^[7]

Other usages

- In Sikhism, Satguru symbolizes a mediator and directs one toward God. It also means the Wisdom from inside.
- In path to self-realization, Satguru is the one who initiates followers into the path.
- In Sant Mat and Advait Mat the living Satguru is considered the path to God-realization.^[8]

Analogous concepts

- The Sufi concept of the Qutub (literally, pole, tower, lighthouse) could be viewed as analogous to the *satguru*. The Qutub is the *shaykh* who provides a focus for spiritual teachings.^[9] Other terms include *Pir* and *Sarkar*.
 - Jacques Vigne, in his book *Indian Wisdom, Modern Psychology and Christianity* asserts that John the Baptist might be looked upon as someone very much like a *satguru*.^[10]
-

References

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- [2] LVII. 68. bhāi kōi satguru sant kahāwāi
- [3] *Songs of Kabir* LVI, I. 68 - Translated by Rabindranath Tagore New York, The Macmillan Company (1915)
- [4] Tirtha, Swami Shankar Purushottam (1992). *Yoga Vani: Instructions for the Attainment of Siddhayoga*. New York: Sat Yuga Press. pp. 27.
- [5] Subramuniyaswami, Satguru Sivaya. *Living with Siva*, glossary (http://www.himalayanacademy.com/resources/books/lws/lws_glossary_S-Z.html). Himalayan Academy Publications. ISBN 0-945497-98-9
- [6] *God Speaks*, Meher Baba, PUB Dodd Meade, 1955, 2nd Ed. pp. 150,158,196, 291
- [7] *Meher Prabhu*, Bhau Kalchuri, Manifestation, Inc. 1986. p.92 - Footnote 1
- [8] Lewis, James R. *Seeking the Light*, p.62. Mandeville Press, ISBN 0-914829-42-4
- [9] Ahmed, Nazeer. *Islam in Global History: From the Death of Prophet Muhammed to the First World War*, Xlibris Corporation, ISBN 0-7388-5966-4
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Sahavas

Sahavas (Vedanta - singular & plural, also **sahawas**; **sahavasa**) literally means dwelling together, close companionship, or in the company of. It may also refer to a spiritual retreat or a gathering held by a guru or master so that his devotees may enjoy his company, i.e., his physical presence, or a gathering in his honor where his followers meet to remember him.^[1]

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- [1] Davis, Frank; *The Master's Glossary*

Darśana

Darśana or **Darshan** (Sanskrit: दर्शन) is a Sanskrit term meaning "sight" (in the sense of an instance of seeing or beholding; from a root *dr̥ś* "to see"), vision, apparition, or glimpse. It is most commonly used for "visions of the divine" in Hindu worship, e.g. of a deity (especially in image form), or a very holy person or artifact. One could "receive" darshana or blessing of the deity in the temple, or from a great saintly person, such as a great guru.^[1]

In the sense "to see with reverence and devotion," the term translates to hierophany, and could refer either to a vision of the divine or to being in the presence of a highly revered person. In this sense it may assume a meaning closer to audience. "By doing darshan properly a devotee develops affection for God, and God develops affection for that devotee."

Darshan is ultimately difficult to define since it is an event in consciousness—an interaction in presence between devotee and guru; or between devotee and image or sculpture, which focuses and calls out the consciousness of the devotee. In either event, a heightening of consciousness or spirituality is the intended effect.



Murti of goddess Durga, during Durga Puja festival in Kolkata (2008).

In Hinduism

In Indian culture, the touching of the feet (*pranāma* or *charaṇa-sparśa*) is a show of respect and it is often an integral part of darshan. Children touch the feet of their family elders while people of all ages will bend to touch the feet of a great guru, murti or icon of a Deva (God) (such as Rama and Krishna).

There is a special link between worshiper and guru during pujas, in which people may touch the guru's feet in respect, or remove the dust from a guru's feet before touching their own head.

In chapter 11 of the Bhagavad Gita, Arjuna is granted a vision of God (trans. Telang 1882),

Hari, the great lord of the possessors of mystic power, then showed to the son of Prithâ his supreme divine form, having many mouths and eyes, having (within it) many wonderful sights, having many celestial ornaments, having many celestial weapons held erect, wearing celestial flowers and vestments, having an anointment of celestial perfumes, full of every wonder, the infinite deity with faces in all directions. If in the heavens, the lustre of a thousand suns burst forth all at once, that would be like the lustre of that mighty one. There the son of Pându then observed in the body of the god of gods the whole universe (all) in one, and divided into numerous (divisions). Then Dhanañgaya filled with amazement, and with hair standing on end, bowed his head before the god, and spoke with joined hands.

[Arjuna said:] O god! I see within your body the gods, as also all the groups of various beings; and the lord Brahman seated on (his) lotus seat, and all the sages and celestial snakes. I see you, who are of countless forms, possessed of many arms, stomachs, mouths, and eyes on all sides. And, O lord of the universe! O you of all forms! I do not see your end or middle or beginning. I see you bearing a coronet and a mace and a discus—a mass of glory, brilliant on all sides, difficult to look at, having on all sides the effulgence of a blazing fire or sun, and indefinable. You are indestructible, the supreme one to be known. You are the highest support of this universe. You are the inexhaustible protector of everlasting piety.

The Gospel of Sri Ramakrishna describes several visions of Ramakrishna Paramahansa (1836 – 1886), describes including Kali, Sita, Krishna, Jesus, Mohammed, as does *Mother Reveals Herself*, an account of the early life of saint Anandamayi Ma (1896 - 1982).

In Nepalese culture Darshan stands for "Namaste", reverence to older or superior person, as well.



A Hindu priest giving blessing.

In Sikhism

Receiving darśan ("a sight of", a blessing) from the guru is seen as of utmost importance in Sikhism.

In Meher Baba's teachings

Similar to the respect given to it in Sikhism, Meher Baba also emphasized the importance of darshana, or sight of the Master:

For an aspirant to see saints and masters does not yield its full significance except in the context of all the corresponding happiness of the inner planes. The ancient *Rishis* have attached great importance to having the *darshana* of saints and masters, because *they are the source of the constant flow of love and light which emanates from them and makes an irresistible appeal to the inner feeling of the aspirant even when he receives no verbal instruction from them....* To derive bliss and contentment from the mere *darshana* of the Master is a great thing because it indicates that the aspirant has desirelessness and love, which are the two essentials of spiritual life. Having had the *darshana* of the supreme Beloved, the

aspirant naturally desires nothing except to have more of his *darshana*, and is thus impelled by his inner spiritual urge to seek the *sahavasa* (company) of the Master as often as possible. Further *sahavasa* of the Master implements and strengthens the purifying effect of *darshana* and also results in drawing the aspirant closer and closer to the Master on the inner planes of life.^[2]

Other meanings

The other common use of the term 'darshan' is its application to the six systems of thought, dealt with under Hindu philosophy. It can also mean radiation or radiance, in the sense of a radio signal being radiated from the transmitter aerial.

Notes

[1] Encyclopædia Britannica (2011). *darshan* (<http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/151828/darshan>).

[2] Baba, 93.

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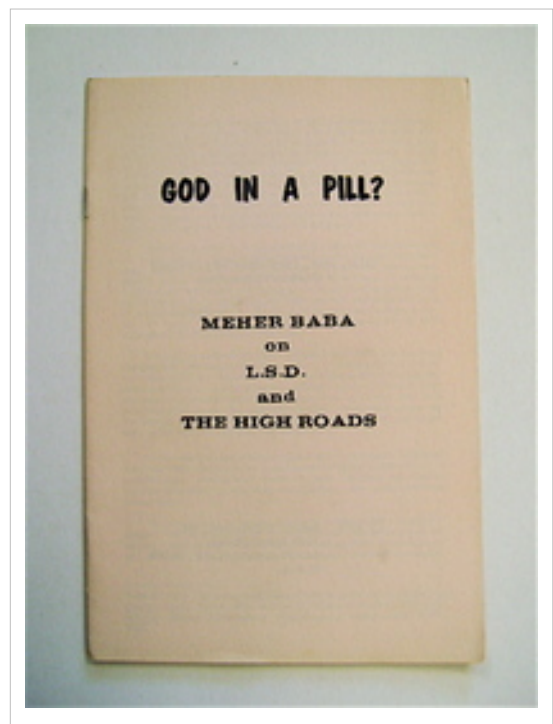
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God in a Pill?

God in a Pill? was a 1966 pamphlet by Meher Baba in which he spoke out strongly against taking illicit drugs like marijuana and LSD, saying they were harmful "physically, mentally, and spiritually."

The pamphlet, originally titled *God in a Pill? Meher Baba on L.S.D. and The High Roads*, was published in 1966 by Sufism Reoriented using quotes by Meher Baba where he strongly disparaged the view that hallucinogenic and mind-changing drugs, especially LSD, but also marijuana, psilocybin, and other drugs, might be used to elicit meaningful spiritual insight. Meher Baba wrote, "If God can be found through the medium of any drug, God is not worthy of being God."^[1] It was compiled from letters to several academics in the West such as Allan Cohen, Robert Dreyfuss and Richard Alpert.^[2]

The pamphlet went out of print, but in 2003 was rewritten and published as *A Mirage Will Never Quench Your Thirst, A Source of Wisdom About Drugs* by Laurent Weichberger (Sheriar Foundation, 2003).^[3] The new book has material not contained in the original *God in A Pill?* and a section entitled *God in A Pill? Revisited*, which reprints those quotes from *God in A Pill?* which were directly from Meher Baba related to drugs.



History

Not long before his death in 1969 Meher Baba's name spread throughout the hippie counterculture movement of the 1960s, his image appearing in the documentary movie *Woodstock* and on posters and inspiration cards of the era, and even on the cover of *Rolling Stone* in 1970. In the mid-1960s Meher Baba became concerned about the rising use of illicit drugs in the West. He told several academics (including LSD guru Timothy Leary) in correspondence not only to stop using drugs, but to help others to get off drugs. In a November 1970 *Rolling Stone* article, Pete Townshend, leader of the rock band The Who and a follower of Baba's, discussed Baba's message on drugs, writing:

Baba did emphasize to a young devotee going to see Baba in about 1966, that the biggest single gesture a man could make for youth, would be to spend his life trying to show the dangers of dope. Remember, Baba was concerned with a set of people that felt the psychedelics held the key to religious experience, to Universal consciousness. God in a pill.^[4]

Baba's statements on drugs

Meher Baba emphatically told several disciples not only to cease taking hallucinogenic drugs, but also to spread his word that drugs were harmful physically, mentally, and spiritually.

Tell those who indulge in these drugs (LSD, marijuana, and other types) that it is harmful physically, mentally and spiritually, and that they should stop the taking of these drugs. Your duty is to tell them, regardless of whether they accept what you say, or if they ridicule or humiliate you, to boldly and bravely face these things.^[5]

In addition Baba made specific claims about drugs, giving a clarification to several American professors through his secretary Adi K. Irani on July 4, 1964.^[6]

- Meher Baba did say that the user of LSD could never reach subtle consciousness in this incarnation despite its repeated use, unless the person surrendered to a Perfect Master. To experience real, spiritual consciousness, surrenderance to a Perfect Master is necessary.
- The experiences gained through LSD are, in some cases, experiences of the shadows of the subtle plane in the gross world. These experiences have nothing at all to do with spiritual advancement.
- Beloved Baba stresses that repeated use of LSD leads to insanity which may prove incurable in mental cases, even with LSD treatment.
- Medical use of LSD helps to cure, in some cases, mental disorders and madness.
- There is no such thing as “areas in the brain reserved for subtle consciousness,” and the question of LSD affecting them has no meaning.
- When LSD is used for genuine medical purposes, in controlled doses under the supervision of specialists, there are no chances of the brain, liver or kidney being damaged.
- Baba answered again that continued LSD use for non-medical purposes results in madness, and eventually death.

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- [2] *Lord Meher* by Bhau Kalchuri, 1986, p. 6473
- [3] Amazon (<http://www.amazon.com/dp/188061927X>)
- [4] *Rolling Stone*, No. 71 (November 26, 1970)
- [5] Meher Prabhu: Lord Meher, The Biography of the Avatar of the Age, Meher Baba, Bhau Kalchuri, Manifestation, Inc. 1986. p. 6403
- [6] CAMPAIGN AGAINST LSD & STREET DRUGS (<http://www.lordmeher.org/index.jsp?pageBase=page.jsp&nextPage=6467>) *Meher Prabhu: Lord Meher, The Biography of the Avatar of the Age, Meher Baba*, Bhau Kalchuri, Manifestation, Inc. 1986. p. 6469

External links

- Excerpt from *God in a Pill* by Meher Baba (<http://www.avatarmeherbaba.org/erics/godpill.html>)
- Avatar Meher Baba On Drugs (<http://home.online.no/~solibakk/drugs01.html>)
- Lord Meher, Bhau Kalchuri, pp. 6467-6470 (<http://www.lordmeher.org/index.jsp?pageBase=page.jsp&nextPage=6467>)
- In Love With Meher Baba (http://www.thewho.net/articles/townshen/rs_1970.htm) (Complete 1970 *Rolling Stone* article by Pete Townshend)

Amartithi

Amartithi is the day which commemorates Meher Baba's death on January 31, 1969.

The word "Amartithi" appears to have been coined by Meher Baba and means "deathless day" (Literally, *amar*, deathless; *tithi*, day). Also translated as "eternal date" or "date with the Eternal."^[1]

The town of Meherabad hosts 10,000 - 12,000 overnight visitors, and 25,000 - 30,000 daytime visitors, from all over the world during a three-day program in celebration of Amartithi.^[2] Many of Meher Baba's followers celebrate Amartithi outside of India, mainly in Australia, Europe, and the United States. It is considered one of the most significant holidays among followers of Meher Baba in addition to "Silence Day", and Meher Baba's birthday.

At Meherabad the climax of the event takes place on Amartithi day itself when the assembled crowd keeps silence for fifteen minutes in honor of the physical passing of Meher Baba at 12:15 p.m. on January 31, 1969.^[3] Meher Baba's flag is flown over Meherabad during Amartithi.



Meher Baba's samadhi Photo by Win Coates

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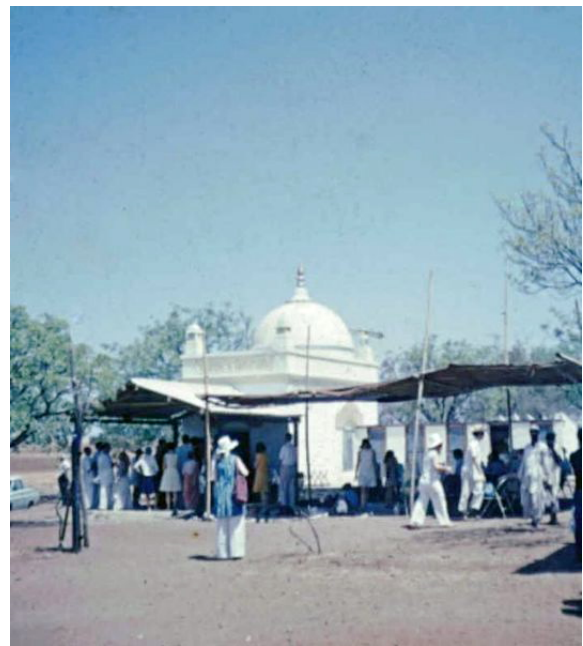
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- [2] Avatar Meher Baba Trust - Calendar of Events (<http://www.ambppct.org/events/events.php>)
- [3] Meher Baba Trust : Events : Amartithi (<http://www.ambppct.org/events/amartithi.php>)

External links

- Photos of 2006 Amartithi celebrations (<http://www.ambppct.org/events/amartithi-photos-06-16.php>)
- Amartithi 2007 (<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pfVq52Z779g>) on YouTube

1969 Darshan

The 1969 Darshan (also known as **The Last Darshan** and **The Great Darshan**) was a darshan (Sanskrit for 'instance of seeing or beholding') where many followers of Meher Baba from around the world, many of whom had not met Meher Baba, came from East and West to Pune and Meherabad, India to pay homage to him after his death on January 31, 1969.^[1] The programs, held in spring of that year, had been arranged by Meher Baba in advance of his death. The darshan programs took place mostly in Pune, in phases, from April to June 1969. Thousands attended^[2] ^[3], mostly Easterners, but including about 800 Westerners. Each group was given one day in which it got to see his samadhi (tomb) in Meherabad (150 miles from Pune; see photo). In Pune Westerners attended programs in the morning and Easterners in the afternoon.^[4] The programs were held at *Guruprasad*, a large private home of the Maharani of Baroda, which has since been torn down.



Last Darshan, Meherabad, India, May 1969

History

Before his passing, Meher Baba had made extensive preparations for a public darshan program to be held in Pune, India in the Spring of 1969. Originally the darshan had been planned for Meher Baba's followers in the East and West to see Meher Baba personally. Many in the West had heard of Meher Baba only in the last years of his life while he was maintaining strict seclusion and were hoping to see him for the first time. The darshan had been planned for April-June 1969, but Baba died at the end of January, ahead of the scheduled event. Meher Baba's body was laid in his samadhi (tomb) at Meherabad and was kept viewable to the public for one week, but was interred on February 7, 1969. Meher Baba's mandali decided to proceed with the arrangements for the large darshan despite the physical absence of the host. Baba's secretary Adi K. Irani sent out a circular that read, "God has invited you, and you are free to keep your appointment." Several thousand attended this "Last Darshan," including many hundred people from the U.S.A., Europe, and Australia.^[5]

Amartithi

Meher Baba's death is commemorated annually in India in festivities known as Amartithi held at Meherabad in the last week of each January. 10,000-12,000 overnight and 25,000-30,000 daytime visitors from all over the world gather at Meherabad for the three-day program.^[6]

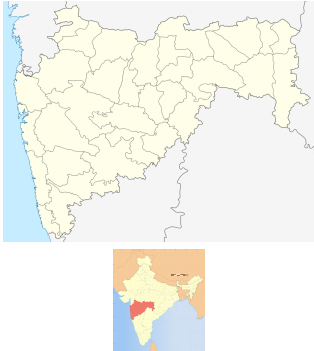
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- [2] *Listen, Humanity by Meher Baba* 3rd Ed, Harper Colophon Books, New York, 1982, Introduction to the Colophon Edition, p. x
- [3] Who is Meher Baba (http://www.trustmeher.com/meher_baba/meherbaba/who_is_meherbaba.htm)
- [4] Darshan Schedule as explained by Eruch Jessawala (<http://www.mandalihall.org/Mixedtalks/GreatDarshanProceedings/mp3pagesGreatDarshan/ScheduleAndAnnouncements1.html>) (1969 tape recording of darshan schedule being explained to attendees)
- [5] Kalchuri, Bhau: "Meher Prabhu: Lord Meher, The Biography of the Avatar of the Age, Meher Baba", *Manifestation, Inc.* 1986. p. 6739
- [6] Avatar Meher Baba Trust - Calendar of Events (<http://www.ambppct.org/events/events.php>)

Meherabad

Meherabad

— town —



Meherabad

Location of Meherabad
in Maharashtra and India

| | |
|-----------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------|
| Coordinates | 19°01′46″N 74°43′09″E |
| Country | India |
| State | Maharashtra |
| District(s) | Ahmednagar |
| Time zone | IST (UTC+5:30) |
| Area <div>• Elevation</div> | <div>• 672 metres (2205 ft)</div> |
| Website | ambppct.org ^[1] |

Meherabad (meher flourishing: "abad" meaning a prosperous settlement, or a flourishing colony) was originally an ashram established by Meher Baba near Arangaon Village, India in 1923 about 9 kilometres (6 mi) south of Ahmednagar. It is now the site of Meher Baba's samadhi (tomb-shrine) as well as facilities and accommodations for pilgrims. A large number of buildings mostly associated with the earlier decades of Baba's work, the graves of disciples, and a range of pilgrim accommodation and charitable establishments are also there. Many Baba lovers work or live in the vicinity.^[2] The samadhi structure itself is located at 19°01′52.05″N 74°42′50.90″E.



Meherabad is a popular place of pilgrimage for both Eastern and Western followers of Meher Baba with reported numbers of around 30,000 annual pilgrims at Amartithi (the celebration of his passing, January 31).^[3] The Meher Pilgrim Center and Meher Pilgrim Retreat located there are open to the public. There is also a free dispensary and school.

Established in May 1923, Meherabad was the first permanent residence of Meher Baba and his disciples in Ahmednagar district.^[4] In 1944 Meher Baba moved his residence north to Meherazad located 24 kilometres (15 mi) away on the other side of Ahmedagar.^[5]

References

- [1] <http://ambppct.org>
- [2] *Avatar Meher Baba, His Life, His Message and His Followers*, Copyright 1996 Ray Kerkhove, Peter Milne and Ray Kerkhove,
- [3] Avatar Meher Baba Trust - Calendar of Events (<http://www.ambppct.org/events/events.php>)
- [4] *Meher Prabhu: Lord Meher, The Biography of the Avatar of the Age, Meher Baba*, by Bhau Kalchuri, Manifestation, Inc. 1986. p. 519
- [5] Meher Baba's Last Sahavas, pp. 15-16 Copyright 1969 Dr. H. P. Bharucha

External links

- Meherabad and Meherazad (<http://www.ambppct.org/pilgrimage/index.php>)
- Meherabad History and Description (<http://home.online.no/~solibakk/mbad.html>)
- Photo tour of Meherabad sites (<http://meherbhupal.tripod.com/ptour.html>)
- Meherabad Then and Now (<http://www.meherspiritualuniversity.org/mbtn/index.html>)

Nondualism

Nondualism is a term used to denote affinity, or unity, rather than duality or separateness or multiplicity. In reference to the universe it may be used to denote the idea that things appear distinct while not being separate. The term "**nondual**" (meaning "not two") can refer to a belief, condition, theory, practice, or quality. Nondualism has been linked with "Monism" or "qualified monism" with which it is sometimes confused (even conflated).

Etymology

"Nondualism", "nonduality" and "nondual" are terms that have entered the English language from literal English renderings of "advaita" (Sanskrit: not-dual) subsequent to the first wave of English translations of the Upanishads commencing with the work of Müller (1823–1900), in the monumental *Sacred Books of the East* (1879), who rendered "advaita" as "Monism" under influence of the then prevailing discourse of English translations of the Classical Tradition of the Ancient Greeks such as Thales (624 BCE–c.546 BCE) and Heraclitus (c.535 BCE–c.475 BCE). The first usage of the terms are yet to be attested. The English term "nondual" was also informed by early translations of the Upanishads in Western languages other than English from 1775. The term "nondualism" and the term "advaita" from which it originates are polyvalent terms. The English word's origin is the Latin *duo* meaning "two" prefixed with "non-" meaning "not".

Nondualism and Eastern philosophy

Pritscher (2001: p. 16) attributes a salient view on nondual realization to Loy (b.1947), an author of a work on comparative philosophy of nondual theologies i.e. Loy (1988)^[1]:

"According to David Loy, when you realize that the nature of your mind and the [U]niverse are nondual, you are enlightened."^[2]

Loy (1988: p. 3) contrasts his view of the historicity of nonduality in some of its evocations in the experience of the peoples of The East and The West as follows:

"...[the seed of nonduality] however often sown, has never found fertile soil [in the West], because it has been too antithetical to those other vigorous sprouts that have grown into modern science and technology. In the Eastern tradition...we encounter a different situation. There the seeds of seer-seen nonduality not only sprouted but matured into a variety (some might say a jungle) of impressive philosophical species. By no means do all these [Eastern] systems assert the nonduality of subject and object, but it is significant that three which do - Buddhism, Vedanta and Taoism - have probably been the most influential."^[3]

Nelson (1951: p. 51-52) cites Radhakrishnan's *The Principal Upanishads* (1953) where Radhakrishnan renders a passage of the *Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad* (verse 1.4.16) which demonstrates a theme that one becomes transpersonally identified with, or nondual to, or develops qualities associated with that to which one is engaged, worships or holds holy and though it is translated with a male pronominal it may be understood as not being gender-specific:

"Now this self, verily, is the world of all beings. In so far as he makes offerings and sacrifices, he becomes the world of the gods. In so far as he learns (the Vedas), he becomes the world of the seers. In so far as he offers libations to the fathers and desires offspring, he becomes the world of the fathers. In so far as he gives shelter and food to men, he becomes the world of men. In so far as he gives grass and water to the animals, he becomes the world of animals. In so far as beasts and birds, even to the ants find a living in his houses he becomes their world. Verily, as one wishes non-injury for his own world, so all beings wish non-injury for him who has this knowledge. This, indeed, is known and well investigated."^[4]

Transpersonal psychology

Theriault (2005) in a thesis explores comparative non-dual experience and the psycho-spiritual mechanisms that bring the awareness about.^[5] Lewis (2007) in her thesis explores a number of specific women's experiences on their journey to wholeness and healthfulness in the nondual path of Tantra post-sexual trauma and identifies common themes.^[6]

Nondualism versus monism

The philosophical concept of monism is similar to nondualism. Indeed, the terms are used as congruent by many scholars. Some forms of monism hold that all phenomena are actually of the same substance. Other forms of monism including attributive monism and idealism are similar concepts to nondualism. Nondualism proper holds that different phenomena are inseparable or that there is no hard line between them, but not that they are the same. The distinction between these two types of views is considered critical in Zen, Madhyamika, and Dzogchen, all of which are nondualisms proper. Some later philosophical approaches also attempt to undermine traditional dichotomies, with the view they are fundamentally invalid or inaccurate. For example, one typical form of deconstruction is the critique of binary oppositions within a text while problematization questions the context or situation in which concepts such as dualisms occur.

Daniélou (1907–1994) opines that "nondualism" is "dangerous" as it "rests" on "monism":

"The term "nondualism" has proved, in many instances, to be a dangerous one, since it can easily be thought to rest on a monistic concept. The Hindu philosophical schools which made an extensive use of this term opened the way for religious monism, which is always linked with a "humanism" that makes of man the center of the universe and of "god" the projection of the human ego into the cosmic sphere. Monism sporadically appears in Hinduism as an attempt to give a theological interpretation to the theory of the substrata.... Nondualism was, however, to remain a conception of philosophers. It never reached the field of common religion."^[7]

Nondualism versus solipsism

Nondualism superficially resembles solipsism, but from a nondual perspective solipsism mistakenly fails to consider subjectivity itself. Upon careful examination of the referent of "I," i.e. one's status as a separate observer of the perceptual field, one finds that one must be in as much doubt about *it*, too, as solipsists are about the existence of other minds and the rest of "the external world." (One way to see this is to consider that, due to the conundrum posed by one's own subjectivity becoming a perceptual object to itself, there is no way to validate one's "self-existence"

except through the eyes of others—the independent existence of which is already solipsistically suspect!) Nondualism ultimately suggests that the referent of "I" is in fact an artificial construct (merely the border separating "inner" from "outer," in a sense), the transcendence of which constitutes enlightenment.

Metaphors for nondualisms

"Buddhism has refined various methods to observe consciousness from the first person perspective for two thousand years. Therefore it is meaningful to bring the explanation models of Tibetan Buddhism into a cross cultural dialogue."^[8]

- Jewel Net of Indra, *Avatamsaka Sutra*
- Blind men and an elephant
- Eclipse^[9]
- Hermaphrodite, e.g. Ardhanārīśvara
- Mirror and reflections, as a metaphor for the continuum of the subject-object in the mirror-the-mind and the interiority of perception and its illusion of projected exteriority
- Great Rite
- Sacred marriage
- Marriage
- Sexual union, as well as orgasm
- Water-and-wave, *Awakening of Mahayana Faith*
- Nonduality of rays-of-the-sun or sunrays from the Sun, *Lankavatara Sutra*
- A lamp that self-illuminates as it illumines, for apperception or reflexive awareness
- A lamp and its light, *Platform Sutra* a metaphor for Essence-Function where Essence is lamp and Function is light^[10]

Nondual awareness

Craig, *et al.* (1998: p. 476) convey a 'stream of consciousness' or 'mindstream' as a procession of mote events of consciousness (C) with algebraic notation C_1 , C_2 and C_3 thus to demonstrate the immediacy of nondual awareness:

That nondual awareness is the only possible *self*-awareness is defended by a *reductio* argument. If a further awareness C_2 , having C_1 as content, is required for self-awareness, then since there would be no awareness of C_2 without awareness C_3 , *ad infinitum*, there could be no self-awareness, that is, unless the self is to be understood as limited to past awareness only. For self-awareness to be an immediate awareness, self-awareness has to be nondual.^[11]

To the Nondualist, reality is ultimately neither physical nor mental. Instead, it is an ineffable state or realization. This ultimate reality can be called "Spirit" (Sri Aurobindo), "Brahman" (Shankara), "God", "Shunyata" (Emptiness), "The One" (Plotinus), "The Self" (Ramana Maharshi), "The Dao" (Lao Zi), "The Absolute" (Schelling) or simply "The Nondual" (F. H. Bradley). Ram Dass calls it the "third plane"—any phrase will be insufficient, he maintains, so any phrase will do. The theory of Sri Aurobindo has been described as *Integral advaita*.

Challenges to Cartesian dualism

Brown (2006: p. 19) charts the lineage of philosophers, namely Nietzsche (1844–1900), Husserl (1859–1938), Heidegger (1889–1976), Sartre (1905–1980), Merleau-Ponty (1908–1961), and Levinas (1906–1995) who challenged the entrenched Cartesian dualism of a hard split between "body" and "mind" and hence, embraced different views of nondual 'bodymind' or body-mind continuum thus:

"Like the writings of Nietzsche, the writings of phenomenologists Edmund Husserl, Martin Heidegger, Jean-Paul Sartre, Maurice Merleau-Ponty, and Emmanuel Levinas have been recognized by many as providing alternatives to a Cartesian-dualist and Enlightenment-subjectivity worldview. If Nietzsche's response to Cartesian dualism, enlightenment subjectivity (i.e., Kant), reductive materialism (i.e., Marx), and reductive idealism (i.e., Hegel) is not the only nineteenth-century response, it is one of the most effective."^[12]

Philosopher and Buddhist, Günther (1917–2006), stated:

"What we call 'body' and 'mind' are mere abstractions from an identity experience that cannot be reduced to the one or the other abstraction, nor can it be hypostatized into some sort of thing without falsifying its very being."^[13]

Nondual religious and spiritual traditions and teachings

Classical traditions

Michaelson (2009: p. 130) identifies what he perceives to be the origins of nondualism proper founded in the Neoplatonism of Plotinus within Ancient Greece and employs the ambiguous binary construction of "the West" [as different to 'the East', refer Saïd's utilization of the discourse of 'The Other' in *Orientalism* (1978)]:

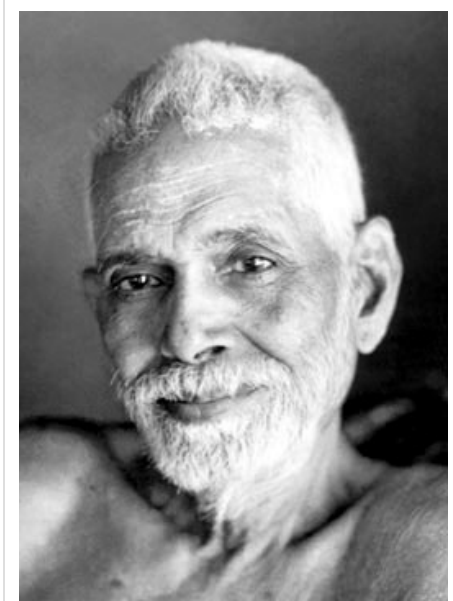
"Conceptions of nonduality evolve historically. As a philosophical notion, it is most clearly found for the first time in the West in the second century C.E, in the Neoplatonism of Plotinus and his followers."^[14]

Hinduism

Advaita

Advaita (Sanskrit *a*, not; *dvaita*, dual) is a nondual tradition from India, with Advaita Vedanta, a branch of Hinduism, as its philosophical arm. Advaita may be rendered in English as 'nondual', 'not-two' or 'peerless' and though there are monist themes in the most recent sections of the ancient *Rig Veda* (Mandala 1 and Mandala 10), that is, the sections that were finalized or interpolated last; nonduality finds its first sophisticated exposition in the "Tat Tvam Asi" of the venerable *Chandogya Upanishad* (6.8.7),^[15] an upanishad favoured by subsequent proponents of Advaita Vedanta. Gauḍapāda (c.600 CE) furthered this philosophical theory that was later consolidated by Sri Adi Shankaracharya in the 8th century CE. Most smarthas are adherents to this theory of nonduality. Further to this, Craig, *et al.* (1998: p. 476) hold that the nonduality of the Advaita Vedantins is of the identity of Brahman and the Atman where the identity is "objectless consciousness, as awareness nondualistically self-aware":

Advaita Vedānta is a scripturally derived philosophy centred on the proposition, first found in early Upaniṣads (800-300 BC), that Brahman - the Absolute, the supreme reality - and the self (ātman) are identical. The identity is understood as an objectless consciousness, as awareness nondualistically self-aware. Arguments in support of the view that nondual awareness is the sole reality are developed by classical and modern Advaitins, from Gauḍapāda (c.600 AD) and Śaṅkara (c.700 AD), in hundreds of texts. Some of these are suggested in Upaniṣads.^[11]



Ramana Maharshi

Advaita does not equal Advaita Vedanta. Advaita Vedanta is for the most part Shaivite or is often identified as having Shaivite leanings and is a specific tradition within the Sanatana Dharma but many other traditions within the Sanatana Dharma have Advaita or nondual aspects, cults, teachings and texts, the Vaishnavas and their Avadhuta literature e.g. Uddhava Gita and Hamsa Gita, the teachings of Ramanuja, etc. Vaishnava-Sahajiya cult, etc.

Yoga

Whicher (2003) in Whicher and Carpenter (2003: pp. 51–52) challenges the "dualistic" historical paradigm of Yoga scholarship founded in a separation of "puruṣa" and "prakṛti" thus:

"It is often said [by Western scholarship] that, like classical Sāṃkhya, Patañjali's yoga is a dualistic system, understood in terms of *puruṣa* and *prakṛti*. Yet, I submit, yoga scholarship has not clarified what "dualistic" means or why yoga had to be "dualistic". Even in avowedly non-dualistic systems of thought such as Advaita Vedanta we can find numerous examples of basically dualistic modes of description and explanation."^[16]

Rājarshi (2001: p. 45) conveys his estimation of the historical synthesis of the School of Yoga (one of the six Āstika schools of Sanatana Dharma) which he holds introduces the principle of "Isvara" as Saguna Brahman, to reconcile the extreme views of Vedanta's "advandva" and Sankya's "dvandva":

"Introducing the special tattva (principle) called Ishvara by yoga philosophy is a bold attempt to bring reconciliation between the transcendental, nondual monism of vedanta and the pluralistic, dualistic, atheism of sankhya. The composite system of yoga philosophy brings the two doctrines of vedanta and sankhya closer to each other and makes them understood as the presentation of the same reality from two different points of view. The nondual approach of vedanta presents the principle of *advandva* (nonduality of the highest truth at the transcendental level.) The dualistic approach of sankhya presents truth of the same reality but at a lower empirical level, rationally analyzing the principle of *dvandva*

(duality or pairs of opposites). Whereas, yoga philosophy presents the synthesis of vedanta and sankhya, reconciling at once monism and dualism, the supermundane and the empirical."^[17]

Sikh dharma

Sikhism is a monotheistic religion which holds the view of non-dualism. A principal cause of suffering in Sikhism is the ego (*ahankar* in Punjabi), the delusion of identifying oneself as an individual separate from the surroundings. From the ego arises the desires, pride, emotional attachments, anger, lust, etc., thus putting humans on the path of destruction. According to Sikhism, the true nature of all humans is the same as God, and everything that originates with God. The goal of a Sikh is to conquer the ego and realize one's true nature or self, which is the same as God's.

Jain dharma

Buddha dharma

Though popular discourse both etic and emic as well as the discourse of scholarship with which it intersects, employ the term "Buddhism" for the Buddhadharma (and often employ the term uncritically), it is salient to be mindful that the Buddhadharma is not a monolithic tradition^[18] but a continuum of a number of sub-traditions and praxis-lineages (or *sadhana*-lineages), many of which tout a number of nondualities proper in various sub-traditions and 'vehicles' (Sanskrit: *yana*); refer Wallace (2007: pp. 106–107).^[19]

See also * Susila Budhi Dharma

Nonduality as Shunyata and Prajna

Huntington & Wangchen (1995: p. 119) hold where 'emptiness' is a gloss of Shunyata (Sanskrit) and 'wisdom' is a gloss of Prajna (Sanskrit):

With the actualization of emptiness, manifest in wisdom as an effect, the bodhisattva gains access to the nondualistic knowledge of a buddha. It may be that this concept seems particularly abstruse because it is associated not so much with a way of *knowing* as with a way of *being*, for we have seen the justification underlying claims to knowledge of this type is necessarily immersed in a certain form of life...a kind of nondualistic knowledge is present wherever a particular epistemic act is embedded in an intuitive awareness of the unique context through which two apparently discrete phenomena are intimately related, as is usually the case, for example, when we speak of a cause and its effect.^[20]

Further to the coincidence or nonduality of Shunyata and Prajna within the 'Pure-and-perfect-Mind' (Wylie: *byang chub sems*;^[21] Sanskrit: Bodhicitta), Günther & Trungpa (1975: p. 30) state that:

We cannot predicate anything of prajna except to say that when it is properly prajna it must be as open as that which it perceives. In this sense we might say that subjective and objective poles, (prajna and shunyata) coincide. With this understanding, rather than saying that prajna is shunyata, we can try to describe the experience by saying that it has gone beyond the dualism of subject and object.^[22]

Buddhism general

All schools of Buddhism teach No-Self (Pali *anatta*, Sanskrit *anatman*). Non-Self in Buddhism is the Non-Duality of Subject and Object, which is very explicitly stated by the Buddha in verses such as "In seeing, there is just seeing. No seer and nothing seen. In hearing, there is just hearing. No hearer and nothing heard." (Bahiya Sutta, Udana 1.10). Non-Duality in Buddhism does not constitute merging with a supreme Brahman, but realising that the duality of a self/subject/agent/watcher/door in relation to the object/world is an illusion.^[23]

Within the Mahayana presentation, the two truths may also refer to specific perceived phenomenon instead of categorizing teachings. Conventional truths would be the appearances of mistaken awareness - the awareness itself when mistaken - together with the objects that appear to it or alternatively put the appearance that includes a duality

of apprehender and apprehended and objects perceived within that. Ultimate truths, then, are phenomenon free from the duality of apprehender and apprehended.^[24]

In the Mahayana Buddhist canon, the Diamond Sutra presents an accessible nondual view of "self" and "beings", while the Heart Sutra asserts shunyata — the "emptiness" of all "form" and simultaneously the "form" of all "emptiness". The Lotus Sutra's parable of the Burning House implies that all talk of Duality or Non-Duality by Buddhas and Bodhisattvas is merely Skillful Means (Sanskrit *upaya kausala*) meant to lead the deluded to a much higher truth. The fullest philosophical exposition is the Madhyamaka; by contrast many laconic pronouncements are delivered as koans. Advanced views and practices are found in the Mahamudra and Maha Ati, which emphasize the vividness and spaciousness of nondual awareness.

Mahayana Buddhism, in particular, tempers the view of nonduality (wisdom) with respect for the experience of duality (compassion) — ordinary dualistic experience, populated with selves and others (sentient beings), is tended with care, always "now". This approach is itself regarded as a means to disperse the confusions of duality (i.e. as a path). In Theravada, that respect is expressed cautiously as non-harming, while in the Vajrayana, it is expressed boldly as enjoyment (especially in tantra).

Vajrayana Buddhism

Yab-yum



Chakrasamvara-Vajravahni.

Gross (2009: p. 207) a leading Feminist theologian identifies the nondual import of yab-yum iconography where His ever-so-skillful 'method' (*upaya*) really enjoys Her ever-so-spacious 'wisdom' (*prajna*), a wisdom where wisdom-in-reciprocity enjoys method; where His-Her enjoining is coincident in 'great bliss' (*mahasukha*):

...a vital point must be made, especially given that the *yab-yum* image is always said to be an image in which the partners are in sexual union...[t]hough it may seem paradoxical and difficult to understand, this image, nevertheless, is not literally about sex, as in sexual intercourse. It is about nonduality, which is visually represented by the *yab-yum* icon.^[25]

Dzogchen tradition

Dzogchen is a relatively esoteric (to date) tradition concerned with the "natural state", and emphasizing direct experience. This tradition is found in the Nyingma tradition of Tibetan Buddhism, where it is classified as the highest of this lineage's nine *yanas*, or vehicles of practice. Similar teachings are also found in the non-Buddhist Bön tradition, where it is also given the nomenclature "Dzogchen" and in one evocation the ninth in a nine vehicle system. The nine vehicles in both the Bonpo and Buddhadharma traditions are different but they mutually inform. In Dzogchen, for both the Bonpo and Nyingmapa, the primordial state, the state of nondual awareness, is called *rigpa*.

The Dzogchen practitioner realizes that appearance and emptiness are inseparable. One must transcend dualistic thoughts to perceive the true nature of one's pure mind. This primordial nature is clear light, unproduced and unchanging, free from all defilements. One's ordinary mind is caught up in dualistic conceptions, but the pure mind is unafflicted by delusions. Through meditation, the Dzogchen practitioner experiences that thoughts have no substance. Mental phenomena arise and fall in the mind, but fundamentally they are empty. The practitioner then considers where the mind itself resides. The mind can not exist in the ever-changing external phenomena and through careful examination one realizes that the mind is emptiness. All dualistic conceptions disappear with this

understanding.^[26]

Bonpo Dzogchen

Svabhava (Sanskrit; Wylie: rang bzhin) is very important in the nontheistic theology of the Bonpo Dzogchen 'Great Perfection' tradition where it is part of a technical language to render macrocosm and microcosm into nonduality, as Rossi (1999: p. 58) states:

"The View of the Great Perfection further acknowledges the ontological identity of the macrocosmic and microcosmic realities through the threefold axiom of Condition (ngang), Ultimate Nature (rang bzhin) and Identity (bdag nyid). The Condition (ngang) is the Basis of all (kun gzhi)--primordially pure (ka dag) and not generated by primary and instrumental causes. It is the origin of all phenomena. The Ultimate Nature (rang bzhin) is said to be unaltered (ma bcos pa), because the Basis [gzhi] is spontaneously accomplished (lhun grub) in terms of its innate potential (rtsal) for manifestation (rol pa). The non-duality between the Ultimate Nature (i.e., the unaltered appearance of all phenomena) and the Condition (i.e., the Basis of all [kun gzhi]) is called the Identity (bdag nyid). This *unicum* of primordial purity (ka dag) and spontaneous accomplishment (lhun grub) is the Way of Being (gnas lugs) of the Pure-and-Perfect-Mind [byang chub (kyi) sems]."^[27]

Ngakpa tradition

Caplan (2009: p. 163), with an indirect quotation, conveys her understanding of the view of a contemporary Ngakpa who holds duality and nonduality to be nondual:

"Ngakpa Chögyam, a Tibetan Buddhist teacher from Wales, offers a perspective on nonduality that includes all of life as a direct expression of the nondual core of truth. He explains that nonduality, or emptiness, has two facets: one is the empty, or nondual, and the other is form, or duality. Therefore, duality is not illusory but is instead one *aspect* of nonduality. Like the two sides of a coin, the formless reality has two dimensions -- one is form, the other is formless. When we perceive duality as separate from nonduality (or nonduality as separate from duality), we do not engage the world of manifestation from a perspective of oneness, and thereby we fall into an erroneous relationship with it. From this perspective it is not "life" or duality that is maya, or illusion; rather, it is our relationship to the world that is illusory."^[28]

Korean Buddhism

Park (1983: p. 147) identifies essence-function as an East Asian Buddhist strategy to convey nonduality:

Since the *t'i-yung* or "essence-function" construction is originally used by East Asian Buddhists to show a non-dualistic and non-discriminate nature in their enlightenment experience, it should not exclude any other frameworks such as *neng-so* or "subject-object" constructions. Nevertheless the essence-function construction must be distinguished from the subject-object construction from a scholastic perspective because the two are completely different from each other in terms of their way of thinking.^[29]

Park (2009: p. 11) holds that:

"...the terms *mom* and *momjit* are familiar to all Koreans, and have their roots in ancient history. Although I translated them in the introduction as "essence" and "function", a more accurate definition (and the one the Korean populace is more familiar with) is "body" and "the body's functions". The implications of "essence/function" and "body/its functions" are similar, that is, both paradigms are used to point to a nondual relationship between the two concepts. There is a subtle but crucial difference, however, between the two models, "essence/function" and "body/its functions". The term essence/function (which is often translated by East Asian scholars into the Chinese term *t'i-yung*) has a rather abstract, philosophical tone, connoting an impression of being somewhat removed from the

nitty-gritty details of everyday life. My primary interest, however, is in the human being's personal understanding and experience of nonduality."^[30]

Zen

Zen is a non-dual tradition. It can be considered a religion, a philosophy, or simply a practice depending on one's perspective. Zen practitioners follow a way which does not rely on labels or as they say, 'The finger pointing at the moon is not the moon itself.'

Tozan, one of the founders of Sōtō Zen in China, had a teaching known as the Five Ranks of the Real and the Ideal, which points out the necessity of not getting caught in the duality between Absolute and Relative/Samsara and Nirvana, and describes the stages of further transcendence into fully realising the Absolute in all activities.

Nondual themes are very strong in the literary work of Dogen (1200–1253),^[31] who founded the Soto school of Japanese Buddhism.

Indigenous Americans traditions

Burrus & Keller (2006: p. 71-72) in their work of transdisciplinary theological colloquia, convey the casestudies of Indigenous Americans which sing-a-song of nondual gender and nondual biological sexual designation and the natural spectrum of possibility:

However objective it may seem, even the scientific framework for defining the "two sexes" is a cultural construction. As Judith Butler has shown, the dominant American ideology of the body affirms the existence of two sexes, two genders, and two basic sexualities that are treated as naturally distinct. But biological sex is not ideologically independent of the other terms; our culture defines our genetics, object-oriented genital joining, and other gender practices in binary fashion in order to identify us dualistically as either male/masculine or female/feminine (where "normal" males and females are heterosexual). Violations of these norms are deemed unnatural. So doctors have tended to define genetic sex dualistically, as XX or XY, and to label violations of the genetic dualism (such as XXY and XO people), including "mismatches" between genetics, hormones, and appearance, as "diseased." But as Anne Fausto-Sterling describes, there is a spectrum of such deviations, naturally occurring bodies with non-dual genital combinations and diverse physical expressions. Hidden among the males and females living in America are so-called "true hermaphrodites," who possess both ova and testes, "genetically male" (XY) people with Androgen Insensitivity Syndrome who look like and are usually raised as women, "genotypically female" (XX) children whose genitalia are virilized at puberty, and "genotypically male" (XY) children who are anatomically female or androgynous at birth but at puberty develop testes, a fused scrotum, and secondary male sex characteristics.^[32]

Though the inclusion of nondual bodies, genders and sexual designations and other biological florescence, are by definition qualified for inclusion in this article and such inclusion is rarefied, especially when understood as embodying a syncretic and wholistic ideal, a "a one-sex/body, multi-gender model that reflected ancient gender norms" and which is metaphorically apt in many spiritual nondual traditions as Burrus & Keller (2006: p. 71) state:

...the dominant ideology of the body in the premodern West was a one-sex/body, multi-gender model that reflected ancient gender norms for the distribution of power. Only with the rise of Western medicine and genetics has sex been conceived as dual and ontologically stable--male and female.^[33]



Dogen

Diné/Navajo



Detail of *Dance to the Berdashe*, painted by
George Catlin

Burrus & Keller (2006: p. 73) further to the greater cultural context of mainland America and the diverse two-spirit cultures of the Indigenous American peoples, convey the spiritual view of the Diné or Navajo peoples in relation to the ideal that "all humans were spiritually androgynous":

...eighteenth- and nineteenth-century Navajo had a three-sex, multigender system that included the *nádleehí*, a "two-spirit" (bi-gender) person who had one of three anatomical birth-sexes (male, female, or androgynous), but was identified by a combination of masculine and

feminine gender-attributes. Because Native Americans typically thought birth sex matured over time and defined gender primarily based on work preference, "two-spirit" people included non-dually sexed persons; born-males who adopted women's work, manners, and speech patterns; born-females who took up men's work and mannerisms; or those born either male or female who combined elements of women and men's cultural roles. Finally, the Navajo did not denounce the *nádleehí* as unnatural because gender or sex practices did not fit an individual's birth-sex; rather, they thought that all humans were spiritually androgynous, so they treated the *nádleehí* as a special but natural gender.^[34]

Abrahamic traditions

Jewish traditions and Hasidism

Michaelson (2009: p. 130) identifies that nonduality was unambiguously evident in the medieval Jewish textual tradition which peaked in Hasidism:

As a Jewish religious notion, nonduality begins to appear unambiguously in Jewish texts during the medieval period, increasing in frequency in the centuries thereafter and peaking at the turn of the nineteenth century, with the advent of Hasidism. It is certainly possible that earlier Jewish texts may suggest nonduality -- as, of course, they have been interpreted by traditional nondualists -- but...this may or may not be the most useful way to approach them."^[14]

Michaelson (2009) explores nonduality in the tradition of Judaism.^[35]

Judaism has within it a strong and very ancient mystical tradition that is deeply nondualistic. "Ein Sof" or infinite nothingness is considered the ground face of all that is. God is considered beyond all proposition or preconception. The physical world is seen as emanating from the nothingness as the many faces "partsufim" of god that are all a part of the sacred nothingness. Sometimes the faces are referred to as colored spheres "sphirot" that are the same as chakras in eastern traditions. sphirot are seen as emanations or fruit of the tree of life in the sacred garden of paradise. The tree exists and emanates through many, sometimes infinite, stages or levels of reality. All is considered one nondualistic whole. nothingness and somethingness are considered one united and inseparable thing. Duality is seen as an illusion of brokenness or contraction and enlightenment is the act of inner restoration or repair "tikkun" of god's unity.

Christianity

Jesus himself utters deep nondual statements, such as this, from John 17:11(kjv)— Holy Father, keep through thine own name those whom thou hast given me, that they may be one, as we are. . . 14b . . . because they are not of the world, even as I am not of the world. . . 21 That they may be one; as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us[.] And this, from Luke 11:34 The light of the body is the eye: therefore when thine eye is single, thy whole body also is full of light; but when thine eye is evil, thy body also is full of darkness.

Christian Science has been described as nondual. In a glossary of terms written by the founder, Mary Baker Eddy, matter is defined as illusion, and when defining 'I, or Ego' as the divine in relationship with individual identity, she writes "There is but one I, or Us, but one divine Principle, or Mind, governing all existence" — continuing — ". . . whatever reflects not this one Mind, is false and erroneous, even the belief that life, substance, and intelligence are both mental and material."^[36]

Griffiths' (1906–1993) form of Vedanta-inspired or nondual Christianity, coming from the Christian Ashram Movement, has inspired papers by Bruno Barnhart discussing 'Wisdom Christianity' or 'Sapiential Christianity'.^[37] ^[38] Barnhart (1999: p. 238) explores Christian nondual experience in a dedicated volume and states that he gives it the gloss of "unitive" experience and "perennial philosophy".^[39] Further, Barnhart (2009) holds that:

It is quite possible that nonduality will emerge as the theological principle of a rebirth of sapiential Christianity ('wisdom Christianity') in our time."^[38]

Gnosticism

Since its beginning, Gnosticism has been characterized by many dualisms and dualities, including the doctrine of a separate God and Manichaeism (good/evil) dualism. The discovery in 1945 of the Gospel of Thomas, however, has led some scholars to believe that Jesus' original teaching may have been one accurately characterized as nondualism.^[40]

An English rendering from The Gospel of Thomas that showcases a nondual vision of reconciling opposites which are also preserved, that is "make the two one":

When you make the two one, and when you make the inside like the outside and the outside like the inside, and the above like the below, and when you make the male and the female one and the same...then you will enter [the Kingdom].^[41]

The Gospel of Philip also conveys nondualism:

Light and Darkness, life and death, right and left, are brothers of one another. They are inseparable. Because of this neither are the good good, nor evil evil, nor is life life, nor death death. For this reason each one will dissolve into its earliest origin. But those who are exalted above the world are indissoluble, eternal.^[42]

Islam

Sufism and Irfan (Arabic تاصوف *taṣawwuf*) are the mystical traditions of Islam. There are a number of different Sufi orders that follow the teachings of particular spiritual masters, but the bond that unites all Sufis is the concept of ego annihilation (removal of the subject/object dichotomy between humankind and the divine) through various spiritual exercises and a persistent, ever-increasing longing for union with the divine. "The goal," as Reza Aslan writes, "is to create an inseparable union between the individual and the Divine."

The central doctrine of Sufism, sometimes called *Wahdat-ul-Wujood* or *Wahdat al-Wujud* or Unity of Being, is the Sufi understanding of *Tawhid* (the oneness of God; absolute monotheism). Put very simply, for Sufis, *Tawhid* implies that all phenomena are manifestations of a single reality, or *Wujud* (being), which is indeed *al-Haq* (Truth, God). The essence of Being/Truth/God is devoid of every form and quality, and hence unmanifest, yet it is inseparable from every form and phenomenon, either material or spiritual. It is often understood to imply that every phenomenon is an aspect of Truth and at the same time attribution of existence to it is false. The chief aim of all

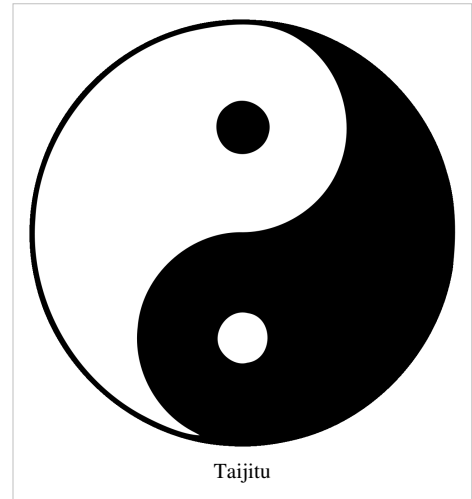
Sufis then is to let go of all notions of duality (and therefore of the individual self also), and realize the divine unity which is considered to be the truth.

Jalal ad-Din Muhammad Rumi, (1207–1273), one of the most famous Sufi masters and poets, has written that what humans perceive as duality is in fact a veil, masking the reality of the Oneness of existence. "All desires, preferences, affections, and loves people have for all sorts of things," he writes, are veils. He continues: "When one passes beyond this world and sees that Sovereign (God) without these 'veils,' then one will realize that all those things were 'veils' and 'coverings' and that what they were seeking was in reality that One."

Taoism

Dechar (2005: p. 5-6) identifies that the terms "Tao" and "[D]harma" are etymologically rooted by identifying the etymon "da":

"The word Tao has no exact English translation, but it relates most closely to the Western idea of wholeness, to the unknowable unity of the divine. When used by the Taoist philosophers, Tao became the Way, the path or cosmic law that directs the unfolding of every aspect of the [U]niverse. So Tao is the wisdom of the divine made manifest in nature and in my individual life. The Chinese word Tao has an etymological relationship to the Sanskrit root sound "da", which means "to divine something whole into parts". The ancient Sanskrit word dharma is also related to this root. In the Buddhist tradition, dharma means "that which is to be held fast, kept, an ordinance or law...the absolute, the real." So, both dharma and Tao refer to the way that the One, the unfathomable unity of the divine, divides into parts and manifests in the world of form."^[43]



Taijitu

Taoism's *wu wei* (Chinese *wu*, not; *wei*, doing) is a term with various translations (e.g. inaction, non-action, nothing doing, without ado) and interpretations designed to distinguish it from passivity. From a nondual perspective, it refers to activity that does not imply an "I". The concept of Yin and Yang, often mistakenly conceived of as a symbol of dualism, is actually meant to convey the notion that all apparent opposites are complementary parts of a non-dual whole. The Tao Te Ching has been seen as a nondualist text; from that perspective, the term "Tao" could be interpreted as a name for the Ultimate Reality (which, as the Tao Te Ching itself notes, is not the reality itself).

Contemporary

A Course in Miracles

A Course in Miracles is an expression of nondualism that is independent of any religious denomination. For instance in a workshop entitled 'The Real World' led by two of its more prominent teachers, Kenneth Wapnick and Gloria Wapnick, Gloria explains how discordant the course is from the teachings of Christianity:

"The course is very clear in that God did not create the physical world or universe - or anything physical. It parts ways right at the beginning. If you start with the theology of the course, there's nowhere you can reconcile from the beginning, because the first book of Genesis talks about God creating the world, and then the animals and humans, et cetera. The course parts company at page one with the Bible."^[44]

A Course in Miracles presents an interpretation of nondualism that recognises only "God" (i.e. absolute reality) as existing in any way, and nothing else existing at all. In a book entitled *The Disappearance of the Universe*, which

interprets *A Course in Miracles*, it says in its second chapter that we "don't even *exist* in an individual way - not on *any* level. There is no separated or individual soul. There is no Atman, as the Hindus call it, except as a mis-thought in the mind. There is only God."^[45] A verse from the course itself that displays its interpretation of nondualism is found in Chapter 14:

"The first in time means nothing, but the First in eternity is God the Father, Who is both First and One. Beyond the First there is no other, for there is no order, no second or third, and nothing but the First."^[46]

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- Nondualism (http://www.dmoz.org/Society/Religion_and_Spirituality/Advaita_Vedanta/) at the Open Directory Project

Sanskara

In Hinduism **sanskaras** (singular: **sanskara**) (Sanskrit for impression; under the impulse of previous impressions) are the imprints left on the subconscious mind by experience in this or previous lives, which then color all of life, one's nature, responses, states of mind, etc.

Overview

Sanskaras are impressions derived from past experiences that form desires that influence future responses and behavior (karma). Extensive writing on the impressional sanskara has been done by the Indian author Meher Baba, who discusses the concept in depth in his books *God Speaks* and *Discourses*. According to him sanskaras are imprints left on the subconscious by experiences in past lives, or the present life, and which determine and condition one's desires and actions.^[1] They are not entities with substance or shape, nor are they forces, but are understood in psychological terms only. In *Discourses* Meher Baba writes:

The mental processes are partly dependent upon the immediately given objective situation, and partly dependent upon the functioning of accumulated **sanskaras** or impressions of previous experience... From the psychogenetic point of view, human actions are based upon the operation of the impressions stored in the mind through previous experience.^[2]

Sanskaras, once acquired and accumulated, form what can be compared to a lens through which the subjective aspects of our experience arise.^[3] Thus when we *perceive* (either thoughts or external objects) we *apperceive* those objects through the lens of past experience. We perceive through the imprint or conditioning of past impressions or sanskaras.

According to Meher Baba, in the course of evolution sanskaras play a vital role in that they aid in the formation of conscious experience, and thus eventually bring about self-awareness in the human form, but then serve no further purpose. According to Baba they are actually a hindrance once full consciousness is achieved in the human form because they slant our experience of things as they are. The goal for the human being then is to be rid of them by "unwinding" them or through "shakings" caused by progressive variously opposite life experiences over many human lives in reincarnation, thereby eventually unveiling and revealing the true nature of reality and the true

identity of the self. According to Meher Baba the ridding of sanskaras can be quickened by the help or guidance of a perfected master or satguru.^[4]

The idea of the sanskara holds implications for metaphysics, psychology, and process philosophy by offering a verb-like or dynamic way to account for experience rather than a purely substance or entity-based model. In this view the 'what' of the object of perception is the result of the 'how' of the act of perceiving. What one sees is determined by the condition of one's mind influencing how one is seeing. In this view experience supervenes to produce objects; objects do not supervene to produce experience - the current western view. See physicalism.

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External links

- Dictionary of Sanskrit Terms (http://www.advaita.org.uk/sanskrit/terms_rs.htm)
- Mimi.hu - definitions of sanskara (<http://en.mimi.hu/yoga/samskara.html>)

Involution (Meher Baba)

For Indian spiritual master Meher Baba, **involution** is the inner path of the human soul to the Self. Charles Haynes, in describing Meher Baba's sense of involution writes, "The old and new impressions, both of which create a veil over consciousness, gradually wear away, revealing an increasingly clearer experience of God; that is, the soul wearies of the world and is ready to begin the third phase of the journey, involution, which may be seen as the 'ascent' back to God."^[1]

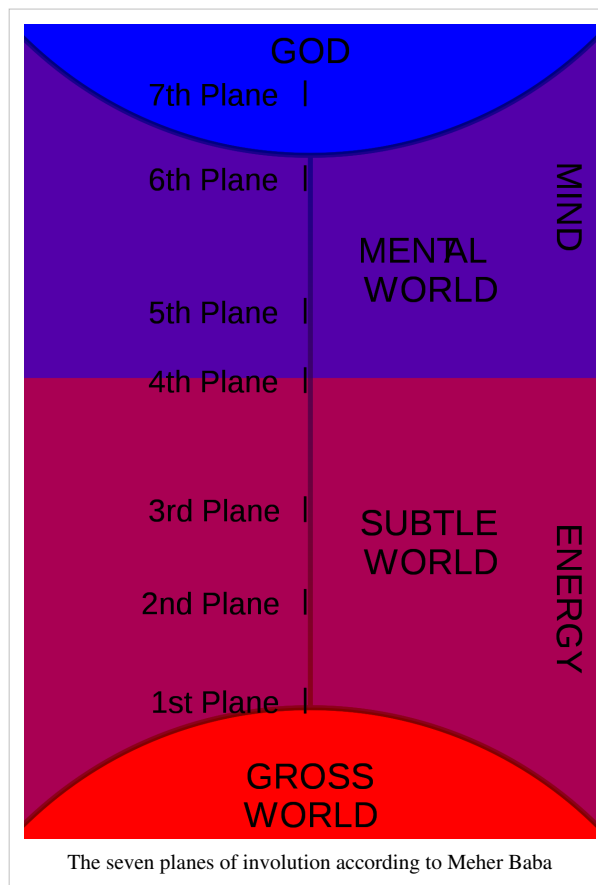
Overview

Meher Baba states that evolution is the soul's gathering of full consciousness, reincarnation is the state of ordinary people caught up in karma, and involution is the inner journey of the spiritual pilgrim back to its origin through higher planes of consciousness. According to Meher Baba, there are seven inner planes of consciousness beyond the state of ordinary human experience. Ordinary consciousness he calls "gross consciousness" and is entirely of the gross physical world. Planes one through four are of the subtle world (*pran*, or energy); planes five and six are of the mental world (*mana*, or mind); and plane seven is of the Self.^[2]

Process

According to Meher Baba reincarnation is a necessary part of the process of the advancement of consciousness, but that consciousness more or less comes to a stalemate in the human form due to the impressions acquired during evolution. These, Meher Baba says, must be worked out in human form through the experience of diverse opposites in reincarnation before involution begins.^[3] It is due to the fading of these impressions and the awareness that one is in stalemate that one's attention is eventually turned inwards and one begins the path of involution. Meher Baba writes,

This process of involution of consciousness gradually takes place as the gross impressions of the opposites gradually become fainter and less concentrated. At this stage the consciousness of the gross-conscious human soul gradually gets dissociated from the gross world, as the involution of consciousness infolds, and gradually dissociates from experiencing the impressions of the gross world.^[4]



Sources

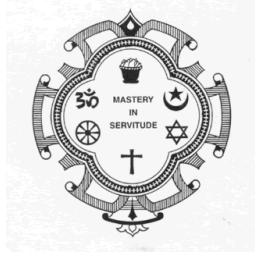
Meher Baba describes his view of the planes of involution in detail in his principal book *God Speaks*.^[5]

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Avatar Meher Baba Trust

Avatar Meher Baba Perpetual Public Charitable Trust

| | |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------|
|  | |
| Type | Charitable trust |
| Founded | April 6, 1959 |
| Location | Ahmednagar, India |
| Key people | Bhau Kalchuri |
| Website | ambppct.org ^[1] |

The Avatar Meher Baba Perpetual Public Charitable Trust (AMBPPCT) is a Charitable trust created by Meher Baba in 1959 to fulfill after his death various directives given by him. Bhau Kalchuri is currently its chairman.

History and charter

Meher Baba signed the Trust Deed on April 6, 1959 on Meherabad Hill, near Ahmednagar, India. The Trust was inactive for the remaining ten years of his life, but he encouraged the trustees, who were his close disciples, to meet intermittently on trust matters. In the 1960s, he gave certain instructions to them for the future about spiritual training and educating the public about his life and message. These were later incorporated into the Trust Deed.

One of the purposes of the Meher Baba Trust was to provide for his disciples who were dependent on him, and to care for his future Tomb and his property at Meherabad, located near Ahmednagar, India. Meher Baba also specified in the Trust Deed that after he had died the Trust should maintain and care for his Tomb at Meherabad, create facilities for pilgrims there, foster spiritual and cultural activities relating to the spreading of his message, and carry out certain charitable activities for the benefit of humanity irrespective of caste, creed, religion, sex or nationality.

In the years since, Meherabad and Baba's nearby home Meherazad have become places of pilgrimage. Meherazad was incorporated into the Trust in 1999. Free clinics, a hospital, a school, a library, museum and study hall, a veterinary clinic, and a variety of accommodations for visitors have been established at Meherabad in accordance with the Trust's directives.

Mani Irani, Baba's sister and close disciple, was the Trust's chairman for over 20 years. After her passing in 1996, Eruch Jessawala occupied the seat until his death in 2001. Since then, Bhau Kalchuri, another of Baba's close disciples, has been the chairman. The nine trustees are all dedicated followers of Meher Baba.

Charitable projects

The Avatar Meher Baba Trust sponsors two free health clinics (The Meher Health Centre and The Meher Pilgrim Retreat Dispensary), a free hospital (The Meher Hospital), free school (The Meher English School), a physical education centre, and a veterinary clinic. The Meher English School is an English-medium primary and secondary school facility encompassing a full pre-college curriculum with a full time faculty of about 25 teachers. The school currently enrolls about 400 students, most of them from surrounding rural villages. The fifteen-room school building

includes classrooms, two auditoriums, laboratories, and a central playground for sports and other activities. The Meher Hospital does not yet function as a full time hospital, but offers bimonthly cataract “camps” at which an ophthalmic surgeon performs ocular implants for about 60 patients a year, a biweekly dental clinic, and numerous medical programs. The Veterinary Aid Centre gives veterinary treatment to 4000-5000 animals annually. [2] [3]

Encouraging the arts

As per Meher Baba's directives, the Trust encourages and facilitates expressions of love for God through music, dance, plays, story-telling, poetry, painting, sculpture, videos, and films. A focal point for expression in the creative arts is the Music and Arts Demonstration Centre, which houses a full-scale professional theater and encompasses various satellite facilities. In addition, the Centre sponsors a concert approximately every two weeks in which visiting musicians, dancers, or other performing artists give their own personalized expression to Meher Baba's message. On an occasional basis the theater hosts lectures and other programs. [4]

Books and research

Meher Baba never wanted or encouraged propaganda. Therefore, the Meher Baba Trust does not promote creeds or dogmas, nor does it seek “converts”. Rather it is devoted to the celebration of the love of God through charitable works and through the arts. The Trust also archives the written works by Meher Baba and facilitates publications of Meher Baba's works and supplies facilities for research. [5]

Development plan

Recently the Trust created a long-term development plan for Meherabad to preserve the atmosphere around Baba's Tomb while meeting the needs of an ever-increasing number of visitors. Long-range plans are also being created for his home at Meherazad, particularly creation of a park-like environment around the property with gardens and amenities for visitors, as well as facilities for Meherazad's charitable activities.

References

- Avatar Meher Baba Trust ^[1]

External links

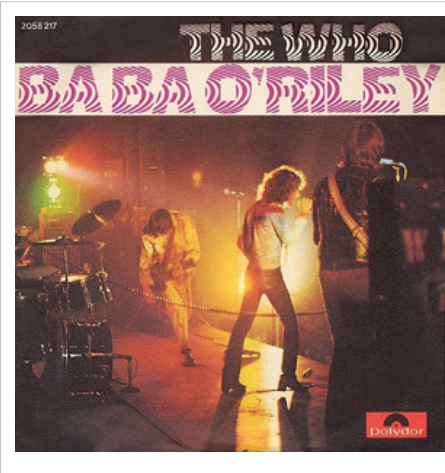
- Official website ^[1]
 - AMBPPCT PDF file ^[6] Declaration of Trust
 - AMBPPCT PDF file ^[7] Copyright
 - Online streaming video about the Trust ^[8]
 - Trust Archives ^[9]
 - Donating to the Trust ^[10]
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Baba O'Riley

"Baba O'Riley"



Single by The Who

from the album *Who's Next*

| | |
|-----------|---------------------------------------------------------------|
| B-side | "My Wife" |
| Released | November 1971 |
| Format | 45 R.P.M. |
| Recorded | May 1971 at Olympic Studios in London, England ^[1] |
| Genre | Hard rock |
| Length | 5:05 |
| Label | Decca (US) Polydor (UK) |
| Writer(s) | Pete Townshend |
| Producer | The Who, Glyn Johns |

Who's Next track listing

"Baba O'Riley"
(1)

"Bargain"
(2)

"**Baba O'Riley**" is a song written by Pete Townshend for the English rock band The Who. Roger Daltrey sings most of the song, with Pete Townshend singing the middle eight: "Don't cry/don't raise your eye/it's only teenage wasteland". The title of the song is derived from this combination of the song's philosophical and musical influences: Meher Baba and Terry Riley.^[2]

History

Townshend originally wrote "Baba O'Riley" for his *Lifeshouse* project, a rock opera that was to be the follow-up to The Who's 1969 opera, *Tommy*. The song was derived from a nine minute demo, which the band reconstructed.^[3] "Baba O'Riley" was going to be used in the *Lifeshouse* project as a song sung by Ray, the Scottish farmer at the beginning of the album as he gathers his wife Sally and his two children to begin their exodus to London. When *Lifeshouse* was scrapped, many of the songs were released on The Who's 1971 album *Who's Next*. "Baba O'Riley" became the first track on *Who's Next*. The song was released as a single in several European countries, but in the United States and the United Kingdom was only released as part of the album.

Drummer Keith Moon had the idea of inserting a violin solo at the coda of the song, during which the style of the song shifts from crashing rock to an Irish folk-style beat. Dave Arbus plays a violin in the studio recording. In concert, lead singer Roger Daltrey replaces the violin solo with a harmonica solo. The Who have produced a live version of the song with a violin, provided by Nigel Kennedy, during their 27 November 2000 concert at the Royal Albert Hall.

The violin solo in the coda of the song is based on Indian classical music as homage to Meher Baba, the Indian mystic who inspired this song.

The song's backing track was derived from deep within the *Lifeshouse* concept. Townshend wanted to input the life information of Meher Baba into a synthesizer, which would then generate music based on that information. That music would have been the backing track for "Baba O'Riley," but in the end, the frenetic sequence - which resembles the clattering of a Roulette wheel - was played by Townshend on a Lowrey Berkshire Deluxe TBO-1 organ using its marimba repeat feature.^[4] This modal approach used for the synthesizer track was inspired by the work of minimalist composer Terry Riley. The names of Riley and Meher Baba were incorporated into the song title as a tribute by Townshend. Although they never actually did it in concert, The Who considered pulling a person from the audience and programming their vital statistics into a synthesizer that would, in effect, translate that person into a musical theme around which a song could be built (an idea later resurrected as The Lifeshouse Method).

Lifeshouse concept

"Baba O'Riley" was initially 30 minutes in length and was planned to be used during the concerts at the Royal Festival Hall in London, England. When *Who's Next* was being arranged "Baba O'Riley" was edited down to only the "high points" of the track.^[5] The other parts of the song appeared on the third disc Pete Townshend's *Lifeshouse Chronicles* as "Baba M1 (O'Riley 1st Movement 1971)" and "Baba M2 (2nd Movement Part 1 1971)".

"Teenage Wasteland"

"Baba O'Riley" is often mistakenly called "Teenage Wasteland" after the phrase repeated throughout the song. "Teenage Wasteland" was in fact a working title for the song in its early incarnations as part of the *Lifeshouse* project, but eventually became the title for a different but related song by Townshend, which is slower and features more lyrics.^[6] A version of "Teenage Wasteland" is featured on the *Lifeshouse Chronicles*, a six disc set of music related to the *Lifeshouse* project, and on several Townshend compilations and videos.

Personnel

- Roger Daltrey: lead vocals
- Pete Townshend: lead vocals (middle eight), synthesizer, piano, guitar
- John Entwistle: bass guitar
- Keith Moon: drums
- Dave Arbus: violin

Accolades and use in popular culture

"Baba O'Riley" appears at #340 on the list of Rolling Stone's 500 Greatest Songs of All Time.^[7] The song is in the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame for being one of the 500 Songs That Shaped Rock and Roll.^[8] A remixed version of the song was used as the theme song for the popular TV program *CSI: NY*. Each *CSI* show used a Who song as its theme. "Baba O'Riley" is played during player introductions for the Los Angeles Lakers during home games at the Staples Center.^[9]

Charts

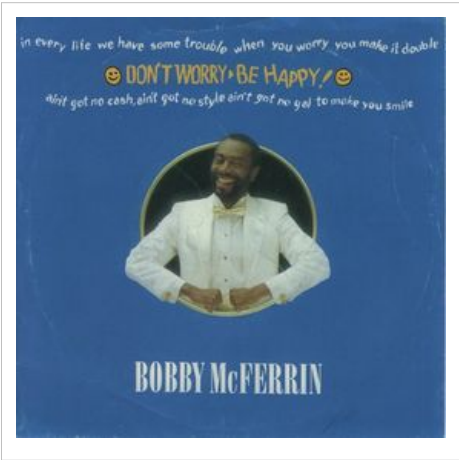
| Chart (1972) | Peak position |
|---------------------|---------------|
| Dutch Singles Chart | 11 |

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Don't Worry, Be Happy

"Don't Worry, Be Happy"



Single by Bobby McFerrin

from the album *Simple Pleasures*

| | |
|-----------|------------------------------------------|
| Released | 1988 |
| Format | 7", CD |
| Recorded | 1988 |
| Genre | Reggae, A cappella |
| Length | 4:50 (Album Version), 4:03 (Music Video) |
| Writer(s) | Bobby McFerrin |
| Producer | Linda Goldstein |

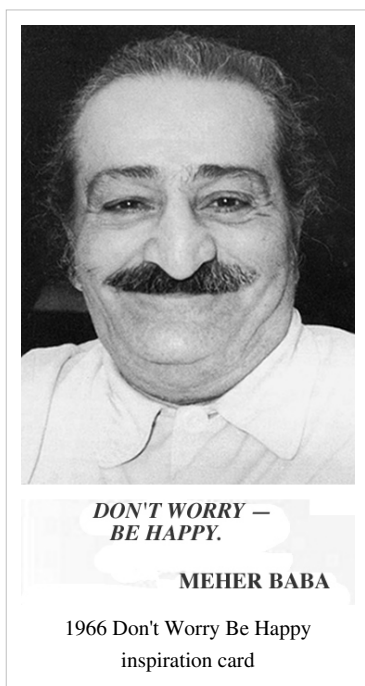
Bobby McFerrin singles chronology

-

"Don't Worry, Be Happy"
(1988)

"Don't Worry, Be Happy" is a song by musician Bobby McFerrin. Released in September 1988, it became the first a cappella song to reach number one on the Billboard Hot 100 chart, a position it held for two weeks. On the UK Singles Chart, the song reached number 2 during its fifth week on the chart. At the 1989 Grammy Awards, "Don't Worry Be Happy" won the awards for Song of the Year, Record of the Year, and Best Male Pop Vocal Performance. The song's title is taken from a famous quote by Meher Baba. The original music video stars Robin Williams and Bill Irwin. The "instruments" in the *a cappella* song are entirely overdubbed voice parts and other sounds made by McFerrin, using no instruments at all. The music video for the song is considerably shorter than the album version. It is ranked #31 on VH1's *100 Greatest One Hit Wonders of the 80s*.

History



The Indian mystic and sage Meher Baba (1894–1969) often used the expression "Don't worry, be happy" when cabling his followers in the West.^[1] However, Meher Baba communicated variations of the sentiment; fuller versions of the quote—such as, "*Do your best. Then, don't worry; be happy in My love. I will help you*"^[2] -- also incorporate responsibility ("do your best...") alongside the detachment ("don't worry..."), as well as the master/disciple spiritual relationship ("I will help you"). In the 1960s, the truncated version of this expression by Baba was printed up on inspiration cards and posters of the era. In 1988, McFerrin noticed a similar poster in the apartment of the jazz band Tuck & Patti in San Francisco. Inspired by the expression's charm and simplicity, McFerrin wrote the now famous song, which was included in the soundtrack of the movie *Cocktail*, and became a hit single the next year. In an interview by Bruce Fessier for *USA Weekend Magazine* in 1988 McFerrin said, "Whenever you see a poster of Meher Baba, it usually says 'Don't worry, be happy,' which is a pretty neat philosophy in four words, I think."^[3]

Versions of "Don't Worry, Be Happy" have been recorded by several artists. The Katsimiha Brothers made a Greek cover of the song with original lyrics,

and Montenegrin musician Rambo Amadeus made a parody entitled "Don't Happy, Be Worry," as a critique to the optimism of the music scene in the former Yugoslavia in the face of war and economic depression. The lyrics of "Fight the Power" by hip-hop artists Public Enemy also refer to "Don't Worry, Be Happy". This song is also added into the Big Mouth Billy Bass, a very popular animatronic singing toy. Hermes House Band covered the song on their "Rhythm of the Nineties" album in 2009. Reggae artist Cas Haley covered the song as a hidden bonus track on his "Favorites" album (together with former Jah Roots lead singer, Josh Heinrichs). Also in 1989 Dutch rock DJ Alfred Lagarde recorded a version in Dutch with a heavy Surinam accent under the name Johnny Camaro. Spanish Ska band The Locos covered this song in a similar style, Ska.

Usage in films, television and politics

The song, and its title are commonly repeated in US culture. Comedian George Carlin wrote in *Napalm and Silly Putty* that many Americans would embrace the philosophy of denial in the song. The song was used in George H. W. Bush's 1988 U.S. presidential election as Bush's 1988 official presidential campaign song, without Bobby McFerrin's permission or endorsement. In reaction, Bobby McFerrin publicly protested that particular use of his song, including stating that he was going to vote against Bush, and completely dropped the song from his own performance repertoire, to make the point even clearer. The George H. W. Bush campaign then reportedly desisted from further use of the song.^[4] The song is frequently used in filmmaking and television production soundtracks to accompany light-hearted scenes, such as in *Sayonara Zetsubou Sensei*, *Flushed Away* (2006), *WALL-E* (2008), *The Fresh Prince of Bel-Air*, *The Simpsons*, *Futurama*, *Nip/Tuck* and *That '70s Show*. It was also featured in the soundtrack to 1988 film *Cocktail* and it was featured in the 1997 film *Casper: A Spirited Beginning*. It has also been used in an ironic context for shocking or traumatic scenes, such as in *Dawn of the Dead* (2004) and *Jarhead* (2005). The song has been used in various forms in TV advertising for brands including Alamo Rent A Car, Walkers and Huggies.

Chart success

Originally released in conjunction with the film *Cocktail* in 1988, the song originally peaked at No. 88 on the Billboard Hot 100^[5]. The song was re-released the same year and peaked at No. 1 on September 24, 1988^[5]. The song also peaked at No. 11 on the Billboard Hot R&B/Hip-Hop Tracks chart^[6] and No. 7 on the Billboard Hot Adult Contemporary Tracks chart^[5]. The song was also a hit in the United Kingdom and peaked at No. 2 on the UK Singles Chart.

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- [2] "Don't Worry, Be Happy!" entry in Baba's Words, The Master's Glossary, C-D (<http://www.avatarmeherbaba.org/erics/glossc-d.html>)
- [3] *USA Weekend Magazine*, October 21–23, 1988
- [4] ""Don't Worry, Be Happy", Bobby McFerrin". *VH1's Pop-up Video*. 1997.
- [5] (<http://www.billboard.com/#/charts/hot-100?chartDate=1988-09-24>)
- [6] "(((Bobby McFerrin > Charts & Awards > Billboard Singles)))" (<http://www.allmusic.com/artist/p7090>). allmusic. 1950-03-11. . Retrieved 2009-10-22.

External links

- "Don't Worry, Be Happy" music video (<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=d-diB65scQU>) on YouTube
- Bobby McFerrin official website (<http://www.bobbymcferrin.com>)
- Snopes.com on the suicide rumour (<http://www.snopes.com/music/artists/mcferrin.htm>)
- Don't Worry, Be Happy (<http://www.allmusic.com/artist/p7090>) at Allmusic

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