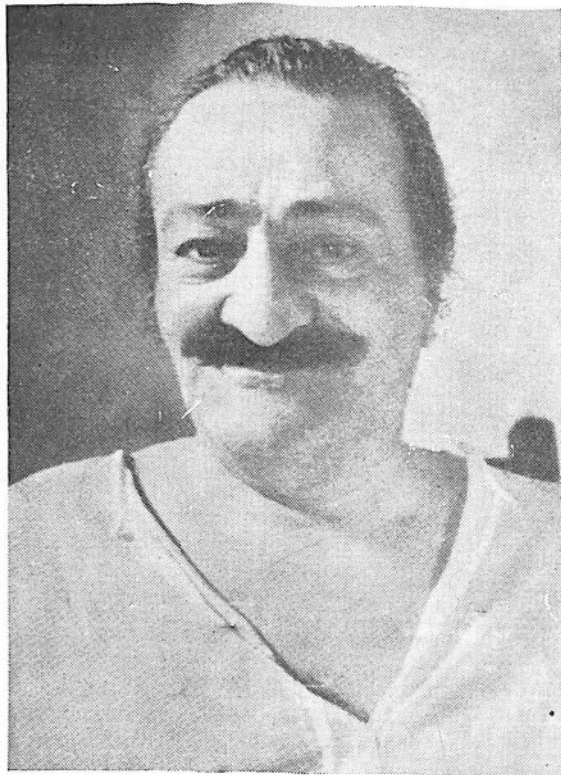


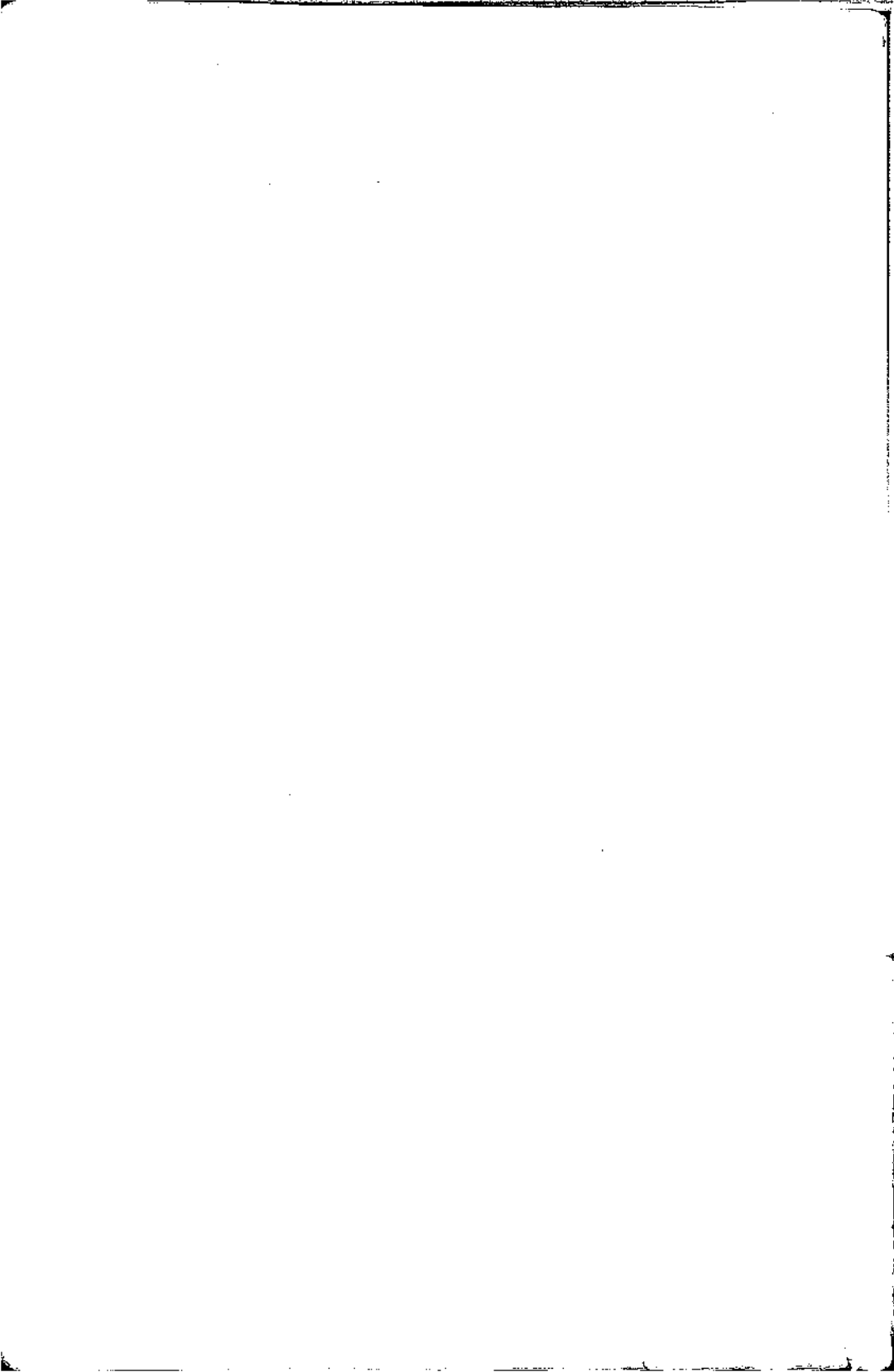
**71st BIRTH DAY CELEBRATIONS OF
AVATAR MEHER BABA
WELCOME SPEECH**



Avatar Meher Baba

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I have great pleasure in welcoming you all on this auspicious occasion of the 71st Birthday Celebration of Avatar Meher Baba. All religions in the world proclaimed that a "second coming" of their particular prophet is to be expected. The examples are: "The second coming of Christ", "The Imminent manifestation of Imam Mehdi", the birth of "Kalki Avatar", "Soshiyant" of zoroastrianism and the Last Buddha. These are all evidences for the universal belief in the expected coming to this world of God in the shape of man. Hindus believe in Avatarhood, and it is part and parcel of Hindu religious belief that God takes human form periodically whenever Dharma needs to be protected from the onslaughts of Adharma. Thus we have previous Avatars of God on earth.

During Avataric manifestation it is not every one that can realise the Avatar's existence and his true significance. It is far easier to accept God as an existing reality than to accept Avatar during his earthly manifestation. If we read Puranas or History we realise how few realised Rama, Krishna, Zoraster, Buddha, Christ & Mohammad as Avatars during their life time. It is after they dropped their mortal body that their true significance is generally realised. Physical nearness or blood relationship does not help much in the realisation of the Avatar's significance. Pandavas worshipped Sri Krishna while Kauravas defied him. Arjuna, Uddhava, and Vidura are some of the fortunate few who realised that Sri Krishna was an Avatar of God. Even so some of us believe that

Meher Baba is an Avatar of God living in this age. This belief has firmer basis than ever before because Baba himself says categorically that he is an "Avatar of the age". In the previous Avatatic manifestations this kind of categorical assertion was not made so openly, so unmistakably, as it is being made now. He also says that there will soon be a manifestation of His Avatarhood and people who are prepared to receive him will benefit by this Cosmic-spiritual event of Universal significance. For one like me who accepts Baba's Avatarhood it is very exciting because what can be more exciting than Divine manifestation on Earth. I believe that Human reason can only take one, a short distance, in the realm of values which are after all spiritual. People who do not believe in God believe at least in Human Ideals for their own sake, as Human beings. There is no valid reason except faith in Humanism to believe in Truth, Peace, Sacrifice, Equality, Fraternity, Freedom etc. If some one like Hitler sets at naught all Humanism and says that deception, falsehood, cruelty, and murder are good instruments for the attainment of Ideal National Socialism or Nazism who can reason against him? We can only have faith in Goodness, Truth, Beauty, Kindness and Love for ourselves to live with as Human Beings. Who is the human judge who can decide in this dispute about values to the satisfaction of all human beings for one set of values as against the other, giving valid universal reasons? I believe there is none. Every one must judge for himself, in other words, his conscience is his own judge. Even so is the belief in the existence of God; all the traditional philosophical arguments cannot convince one because God cannot be argued about, he can only be believed and experienced. Without belief experience is not possible, and if one argues that how is it possible to believe with-

out experience, the answer is that in many cases we actually believe first and experience afterwards. We must first read and learn before we can experience the resulting knowledge, because knowledge cannot be experienced without learning. The beauty of poetry, music, or painting or any other fine art can be experienced only after one learns with great effort the capacity to experience beauty through that particular art. This capacity to experience beauty, truth, love and reason are dependent partly on the general capacity of the human brain, as well as the particular development of it in an individual. These three capacities are: one, the capacity of rational human brain to reason; two, the inborn; and three, the acquired capacities of a particular individual. Let us take the 1st point. If the Rational Human brain is not there it is not possible to reason and learn by experience. At the human level we experience the sensory world and come to some conclusions, that is we attain knowledge. Human being has the capacity to generalise from particulars, that is to separate experience from the experienced and the experienter. Human being sees that every man dies after some time, not only man but also every thing dies and fades. He comes to the conclusion that life is not permanent. An animal which has no rational brain but only "Instinct" experiencing brain, that is a brain capable of experiencing the particulars and not generalities, cannot reason. It has love, hate, herd feeling etc., but these are all instincts only, inborn qualities of the species, it has no capacity to learn by reasoning like a human being. It learns by instinctual experience which is only habit forming but it is not rational. Coming to points two and three, animal has in-born instincts while man also has instincts he has in addition reason, will and capacity to freely think, not mere instinctual feelings and habits.

This special rational capacity of man enables him not only to experience like an animal but to generalise from that experience, not only to learn instinctually like an animal and stop at the level of habit but to transcend it and go beyond to the level of knowledge and freedom of thought at this level the new power of "Free Will" comes into being.

Thus we see how faithful learning is necessary before the actual experience of knowledge. Can we now accept that faith is necessary before the experience of God or Supreme Reality? I know that all that I said will not convince many. At least can I say to the people who still doubt, that in life we take many risks at every stage; if we do business we may incur loss, if we study for an examination we may fail, if we go in a car we may crash, if we walk we may be run over by a vehicle, if we sit quiet anything from a heartfailure, to an earthquake, or to an atom bomb might end our life. Life is full of risks. When we are prepared to take risks for a small thing like "success" in this short life, why may we not take the spiritual risk of complete faith in Baba as an Avatar for an incomparably grander objective of everlasting liberation?

Meher Baba has been observing silence for the last thirty-nine years and he gives in his own words the significance of his silence "God has been everlastingly working in silence, unobserved, unheard, except, by those who experience His Infinite silence."

"If my silence cannot speak, of what avail would be speeches made by the tongue?"

"The very moment when He thinks my speaking would be heard universally, God will make me break my silence."

"I have not come to establish any cult, society or organization; nor even to establish a new religion. The religion that I shall give teaches the Knowledge of the ONE behind the MANY. The book that I shall make people read is the book of the heart that holds the key to the mystery of life. I shall bring about a happy blending of the head and the heart. I shall revitalize all religions and cults, and bring them together like beads on one string."

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

- Avatar Meher Baba -

Meher Baba today is the fulfilment of the highest aspiration of men on earth. He is the Goal of man's strife and struggle for Freedom. He is the path to that goal as well.

"Baba is the Soul of souls,
The Beloved of the Gods
The Life of His lovers,
And He is the Slave of His dear ones".

"God has never spoken in my presence, But I am sure that I have seen Him act in human form. That is the only manner in which I can explain the incredible sensitivity of action and reaction which characterised Meher Baba.....when I first saw Him in action.....". writes Don. E. Stevens, Washington (U.S.A.), in his introduction to "God speaks" by Meher Baba. A honest expression of simple truth. For, how is it possible for man to see God or hear God?

To see man, it is only possible for another man, not an animal, however intelligent it may be. Thus, to see God as god, man has to become God and not till then.

"I am the Ancient One - the Highest of the High," says Meher Baba with Divine authority and scientific accuracy. Baba says, "he alone can see Me in My real form, who lives a life of love, honesty and self sacrifice".

"During the last global tour of Baba, He asserted His Divinity before the Western world - the public, the press and His followers thus":

"I am the Lord of the universe".

"I am the One for whom mankind eagerly awaits".

"I am the Ocean of Love. Fear Me not but love Me more and more". Avatar Meher Baba.

Let us see what Baba's message is in his own words. "My message always has been and will be Love Divine. The force that can overcome all difficulties is the force of love. because the law of God is love, which holds the key to all problems. This mighty force not only enables one to put the ideal of selfless service into practice, but also transforms one into God. It has been possible through love for man to become God, and when God becomes man it is also due to His Love of His beings."

"Where there is love there is oneness, and in Oneness the Infinite is realized completely at all times and in every sphere of life, whether science, art, religion or beauty. The Spirit of love and sacrifice is beyond all calculation and cannot be measured. A constant wish to love, and non-calculating will to sacrifice are the best means that man can take to be his best and most joyful self"

"No sacrifice is too great to set man free from his bondage to physical and material things. He must be

inspired to realize that God alone is REAL; all else is a vain and empty pursuit of transitory values. He must be helped to inherit the TRUTH that mankind is ONE. He must be given the capacity to love all men as his brothers regardless of colour, creed or country."

"It is my divinely appointed task to bring this spiritual freedom to mankind; and I look to those who would be crusaders in the cause of TRUTH to help me in this GOD-ORDAINED mission".

- Avatar Meher Baba -

May Baba shower his love and blessings on all.

JAI BABA

