

Avatar Meher Baba

Avatar Meher Baba was born Merwan (Meherwan) Sheriar Irani into a Zoroastrian (Parsi) family at Pune, India, in 1894. During his teens and twenties, Merwan associated with, and was proclaimed Avatar ('descent of God into human form') by five spiritual Masters from long-established Maharashtra lineages within the Chistiyyah and Qalandari Sufi, and Hindu Datta avadhuta traditions. These figures: Hazrat Babajan (1790-1931), Sai Baba of Shirdi (1836-1918), Upasni Maharaj (1870-1941), Narayan Maharaj (1885-1945) and Tajuddin Baba (1861-1925) command pan-Indian followings.

Meher Baba's spiritual mission began in 1921. In that year, he drew together his first close disciples in Pune. It was these early disciples who gave him the name Meher Baba, which means "Compassionate Father". After years of intensive training of his disciples, Meher Baba established a colony called Meherabad, near Ahmednagar, in Maharashtra State. Here the Master's work embraced a free school, where spiritual training was stressed, a free hospital and dispensary, and shelters for the poor. No distinction was made between high castes and untouchables; all mingled in fellowship through the inspiration of the Master. To his disciples, who came from different castes and creeds, he gave a training of moral discipline, love for God, spiritual understanding and selfless service. It is at Meherabad on the 31st January each year that up to 70,000 people from the East and the West visit Meher Baba's tomb for the anniversary of his death.

In 1925, Meher Baba hinted to his disciples that he would soon begin a period of silence. On July 10 of that year he began observing this silence which he maintained for the remaining 44 years of his life. Of his silence, Meher Baba said, "You have asked for and been given enough words – it is now time to live them" and "If my silence cannot speak, of what avail would be speeches made by the tongue". Meher Baba's discourses and messages were dictated by means of an alphabet board and later solely through unique hand gestures, interpreted by his disciples.

An important part of Meher Baba's work through the years was to personally contact and serve hundreds of those known in India as masts. These are advanced souls who have become spiritually intoxicated from direct awareness of God. For this work, Meher Baba travelled many thousands of miles to remote places throughout India and Sri Lanka. Other vital work was the bathing of lepers, washing the feet and bowing down to thousands of poor, and distributing food, clothing and money to the destitute. Baba saw his work as awakening the world through love to a new consciousness of oneness of all life. To that end he lived a life of love and service which included extensive work with the poor, the physically and mentally ill, and many others, including such tasks as feeding the poor, cleaning the latrines of untouchables and bathing lepers. He saw a responsibility to give spiritual help to "advanced souls," and traveled throughout the Indian subcontinent to find such persons.

These outward activities Meher Baba saw as indications of the inner transformation of consciousness that he came to give the world.

By the 1950s, as many as one hundred thousand people came daily to seek Meher Baba's darshan, or blessing. People journeyed from all over the world to spend a few days, or even a single day, in his presence. Nevertheless, in his later years, Meher Baba placed himself in ever-stricter seclusion for the purpose of what he called his

“universal work”. This intensive work, which he did inwardly, combined with the effect of two serious car accidents, took a great toll on his health and on the 31st of January, 1969 – a few months after having announced that he had completed his work 100% to his satisfaction – he died.

Meher Baba’s cosmology may be summarised as follows: all souls are One; any apparent differences between souls are due to their differing levels of consciousness and experience. These souls and the cosmos burst into existence out of God’s “original whim” to know itself. God found infinite ways to do this through constantly evolving and dissolving worlds, life forms and spiritual states. Each soul is unconsciously God, gradually becoming more self-aware as it evolves. Over countless millions of years, on numerous planets, souls evolve from gas through to mineral, plant, invertebrate, bird and mammal forms, culminating in human beings. This evolutionary process creates a ‘false ego’ of countless impressions and desires that must then be tediously ‘unwound’ through innumerable reincarnations. Eventually, however, the soul involves (starts realising its Divinity through sudden or sequential stages of spiritual unfoldment). Ultimately this culminates in ‘God-realisation’: the soul living eternally as God in everything.

According to Meher Baba, a ‘spiritual hierarchy’ of advanced souls, saints and Masters governs the universe. The head of this hierarchy is the Avatar: the very first soul to complete the involutory process and become one with God. Every 700–1400 years, “when the wick of righteousness burns low”, the Avatar is brought down to creation by the five Perfect Masters of the time. He has appeared previously as Zoroaster, Rama, Krishna, Buddha, Jesus, Muhammad and other great religious founders. Meher Baba claims that he is that same God-man: “the Ancient One, the Highest of the High.” According to Meher Baba, the Avatar is the quickest, safest path to God-realisation and “the eternal Redeemer of humanity.”

Meher Baba did not encourage set spiritual techniques. As he explained, “I lay down no precepts. Throughout eternity I have laid down principles and precepts but mankind has ignored them”. He taught that “approach to Truth is individual” and that meeting the challenges of everyday living is the best means of spiritual growth. Consequently, Baba lovers do not have distinctive practices or customs. Meher Baba considered love – especially love of God – as “the solution to our difficulties and problems.” He also emphasised the importance of obeying and constantly remembering the Avatar, and the importance of selfless service: “forget yourself in love and service to others”

We are trying to follow his path. Can you come with us..???

Miles to Go !

Jai Baba