

An Integrated Darshana: *God Speaks* in Relation to Meher Baba's Discourse Literature of the 1920s

TIME: Fridays, 26th April through 24th May 2022, 10:00 to 11:30 a.m.

PLACE: Avatar's Abode Bookstore

PRESENTER: Ward Parks

With the publication of *Creation and its Causes* in August 2022, we now have available for our reading and study, in published form, the complete body of Meher Baba's major discourse content from the early Meherabad period in the 1920s—with the exception of “The Book,” whose whereabouts remain unknown. Despite this one huge hiatus, we can still say that the combination of *In God's Hand* (1925), *Infinite Intelligence* (1926), *Tiffin Lectures* (1926–27), and *Creation and its Causes* (1927–28) provides us with a comprehensive account of what we could call the Avatar's early Meherabad dispensation. How does this extraordinary body of content integrate with Meher Baba's classic “philosophy and teachings” of later decades? In particular, what is the relation between this early material and *God Speaks* (1955), widely held to be Meher Baba's metaphysical masterpiece?

Certain fundamental themes characteristic of Avatar Meher Baba's message to the modern world are common to all of His discourse, from the earliest to the latest. His metaphysics could be summarized in the four-word sentence “God alone is real.” God is Everything, and the created world is a manifestation of the Nothing. The path to the realization of this great truth is accomplished through the long journey of the soul. Meher Baba gave to this narrative the name “the Divine Theme”; it represents one of His greatest contributions to humanity's understanding of spiritual truth. Another central teaching concerns the causes of human bondage in *sanskaras* and *karma*; it is this that ties us to the cycle of reincarnation. Our escape from this enslavement lies in the path to God and the ascent through the planes of higher consciousness. There are several great paths, or *yogas*; yet the most important of these is the path of love. And the highest manifestation of such love lies in the relation between the seeker and the Master, the lover and the Beloved, who presents Himself to our eyes as the Perfect Master and Avatar.

All of these foundational themes feature in Meher Baba's discoursing throughout the nearly five decades of His Avatic career. Yet His discourse in the 1920s brings into view perspectives that may seem strange and unfamiliar to close students of *God Speaks* and *Discourses*. One such theme is the dichotomy of *thinking* and the *imagination*. The scope and significance of the imagination, as explained in *Infinite Intelligence*, could never have been guessed at from Meher Baba's later writings. *In God's Hand* provides us with what we could call an *illuminationist* philosophy. Throughout this early literature, we are introduced to another major dichotomy, *prāṇ* and *ākāsh*, energy and space, which

play an enormous role in the creation and constitution of the imaginary world that we see around us. *Creation and its Causes* also gives us a developed account of the *āsmāns* or “skies,” which function as a kind of adjunct to the seven planes of consciousness and embroil many spiritual seekers and adepts in their visionary and fantastic inner domains.

Now that this body of literary and discourse content is available to us in published form, humanity is faced with the challenge of integrating it into a coherent picture of Meher Baba’s “darshana” or spiritual philosophy. This series of sessions represents an early such attempt, as we explore the relations between Meher Baba’s early and later “writings” through inquiry into a series of topics, as below.

Schedule and Topics

<p>26th April, Friday, 10:00 to 11:30 a.m.</p>	<p>Session 1. “The Divine Theme, or the Soul’s Biography.”</p>	<p>Topic A. The meaning of the phrase “Meher Baba’s Darshana.” Topic B. The narrative of the soul’s biography as Meher Baba’s “signature” philosophical theme. Topic C. A history of the Divine Theme from 1926 through 1959. Topic D. The elements of the story: creation, evolution, reincarnation, involution, and God-realization. Topic E. The Divine Theme as the Ten States of God.</p>
<p>3rd May, Friday, 10:00 to 11:30 a.m.</p>	<p>Session 2. “Meher Baba’s Metaphysics: The Everything and the Nothing, and Thinking the Imagination.”</p>	<p>Topic A. The Everything and the Nothing, or Light and Darkness. Topic B. Thinking the imagination, and the role of the imagination in Meher Baba’s darshana. Topic C. Prāṇ and ākāśh as the primordial dichotomy within the imagination. Topic D. Meher Baba’s two creation narratives.</p>
<p>10th May, Friday, 10:00 to 11:30 a.m.</p>	<p>Session 3. “Cosmic Architecture.”</p>	<p>Topic A. The Divine Foundations of the Cosmic Order. Topic B. God’s trio-nature as Knowledge, Power, and Bliss and its cosmological consequences. Topic C. God as the Triune Actor: Creator, Preserver, and Destroyer. Topic D. The three states: wakefulness, dream, and sound sleep. Topic E. Self and the other, the microcosm and macrocosm.</p>

17th May, Friday, 10:00 to 11:30 a.m.	Session 4. “Bondage, sanskaras, and the operation of karma.”	Topic A. What are sanskaras, and what is their relation to karma? Topic B. The role of sanskaras at different stages in the Divine Theme narrative. Topic C. The reincarnationary cycle. Topic D. Sanskaras in the process of experience and the playing out of the law of karma. Topic E. The categories of sanskaras and the means to their elimination.
24th May, Friday, 10:00 to 11:30 a.m.	Session 5. “The Path to God”	Topic A. The three great <i>mārgs</i> or paths. Topic B. The involutory journey: the planes and the <i>āsmāns</i> . Topic C. The preeminence of love. Topic D. The role of the Master.

Reading for the study program: The books that we will be focusing on the most are *God Speaks*, *Infinite Intelligence*, and *Creation and its Causes*, though we will find occasion to refer to the two other major publications from the 1920s, *In God’s Hand* and *Tiffin Lectures*, as well as Meher Baba’s magnificent *Discourses*. Though reading in the literature of Meher Baba’s words is always desirable, the five presentations will not presume prior knowledge, and all are cordially invited to attend and participate.