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I think it is safe to say that the first reaction a person has, once he discovers an out-of-the-ordinary phenomenon, is to convey it to the people around him, especially those he cares most about. And when such a phenomenon has had a salutary effect on him, the urgency to convey it becomes even more pressing. I wanted everyone to partake of my bounty as soon as possible. But in my haste to convey it I didn't pause to think how the people around me would react to it, because I was so sure of how I felt when faced with it. I didn't even think they might doubt my word. After all, it was their interest I had in mind, not mine.

As soon as I discovered Dahesh's teaching and lifestyle, I wanted everyone to know how beautiful they were. In other words, I was turning into another Chucry—to some extent, of course. Chucry and I might have had the same intent, but we didn't use the same approach, in view of the differences in our respective characters. But notwithstanding the means, it became imperative to me to introduce all the people I knew to that beautiful world I had been in touch with, and bring them to share my joy. We all in the Family went through that kind of drive. We couldn't wait to spread the good tidings from the housetops, thinking that people—at least our friends, would welcome our finding, not only because of the beauty of that sensational news but also because of the conditions prevailing in our country.

In an Arab country such as ours, built on sectarian rule (which was and still is, alas, hidden behind a mask of democracy), finding a common ground where people could live in peace and harmony often became a matter of life and death. In a country as Lebanon plagued with so many religious beliefs, deeply rooted even in its governmental establishment, cementing a good friendship with a heartfelt tolerance, based on an honest acceptance of each other, became an urgent need. Political and religious leaders were pulling us apart by highlighting our alleged differences for the sole purpose of confirming us in separate clans, making thus of our dissension a tool to control us better. They stopped at nothing to reach that goal—least of all, instigate our hatred toward one another. To counter their vicious intent we had either to meet on neutral ground, and keep our distrust under a lid, or find an ideal strong enough to persuade us to leave our differences behind, so as to live in harmony.

It was in the spirit of establishing such a harmony that I wanted so much to have my close friends discover and share with me the beauty of this new life I was opening my heart to. If prior to knowing Dahesh I had strongly believed that Religion should never be an impetus to separate people, now I had a religious proof in Dahesh that I was right in my belief. The question was, how to bring the others to touch what I saw. I asked Doctor Dahesh on several occasions to let me bring my friends along, so they too could experience what I have experienced, hoping that it would open their hearts as it opened mine. He gladly consented to my request, though he cautioned me not to raise my hopes too high.

He turned out to be right, as always. Not one of those I brought along to see him conceded the truth, even after all the spiritual manifestations they were given to witness. And though they couldn't deny the fact that something special had transpired right before their eyes, they refused to act upon it. What were their reasons? Oh, when you don't want to relate to a verity at hand, you will find all the reasons in the world to substantiate your denial.

One of them attributed what took place to some magical powers Doctor Dahesh had and brushed it off, as if to possess such a power is

the most natural thing in the world. It's hard to convince a person who believes in djinns of the uniqueness of Dahesh. Another one claimed that Doctor Dahesh must have hypnotized him into seeing what he wanted him to see. When I reminded him that he was still holding in his hand the truth of what transpired there, and that Doctor Dahesh wasn't with us any longer, he became annoyed, for not being able to corroborate his refusal with sound reasoning.

Another one admitted that, although he was certain that something miraculous had taken place, he didn't want to embrace Doctor Dahesh's doctrine, for it would entail a complete change in his way of life and thinking—something he wasn't ready to do, because he thought he would be losing a lot. Sound familiar? (Now that, I could relate to!) And the one who took the cake was this friend who was afraid Doctor Dahesh would make him lose his mind. With such reasoning, I stopped insisting lest he adduce me as his case in point.

Those were the kinds of reactions I got from the friends I considered close and whom I cared a great deal about. There is enough here to cause a novice proselyte to forgo any missionary ardor he might still hold in his heart. Thank God my belief in what I had espoused was strong enough to keep that ardor kindling in me. As I said in my preamble, to believe in an irrefutable truth when, and because, everybody does, is not that much of a feat; the real feat is to believe in it when your heart and soul tell you it is so, even if it is contrary to the ideas you have so far believed in, or even if the whole world thinks otherwise.

My failure to convince my friends to share with me that vision made me wonder about the reasons of my failure. Was I the problem? Were they? Wasn't I convincing enough? Then what about Doctor Dahesh's miracles: weren't they proof enough of his extraordinary powers? Another thought also crossed my mind. Were the miracles of Doctor Dahesh meant to open only my eyes, and those of people like me—whoever they might be? In that case, what made some people more receptive than others when the same phenomenon was witnessed by so many and was within everybody's reach, without exception? And if not everyone is predestined

to embrace that truth, wouldn't that mean that whatever I might try, it was not in my power to open their eyes?

This brings to mind something that happened to me when I was a Boy Scout, which bears a certain resemblance to my honorable intentions.

We were on a camping trip in one of the beautiful Lebanese regions. I remember that it was close to a river called *Nabr-el-Maut*, the River of Death—you can't forget a name like that. (It was probably called so because it sleeps during the summer season, but don't quote me on that; other storytellers might give you different versions, for in a country that thrives on myths and lives by the sword, death espouses many a form.) We were out in the fields playing a game in which you had to find a flag on a pole hidden within a radius of five to six miles around the camp. To help us in the search, we were given a set of clues in the form of riddles, which we were supposed to solve. For a patrol to win the game, one of its members had to bring the flag back to the camp without losing his life—meaning the scarf hanging behind his back, which could be snatched by the members of rival patrols once the flag was found. To those of my readers familiar with Scouting, this game might bring a lot of good memories; to the others, suffice it to say it was a lot of fun.

No sooner had we embarked on our search than I realized that the members of my patrol (the Panthers, for the record) were slowing me down. They were not as enthusiastic about the game as I was. So I suggested we separate, so we could cover more territory. That was the reason I gave them, but in reality, I wanted to look on my own. My patrol leader, Georges Saba, was right after all. I did have a tendency to work alone. Actually, I had a good reason this time. I thought it would be easier for one member of the patrol to return the flag to the camp unnoticed, than for a whole patrol, for then it would indicate to the other patrols that the flag was in our possession, making us thus more susceptible to attack. At first, the members of my patrol met my suggestion with opposition, but after some discussion and more insistence on my part they acceded to my request. So they went their way and I went mine.

Half an hour of further search led me to one conclusion: I was lost. By then I had reached a densely wooded area, isolated but peculiarly quiescent. I decided to rest a while. It was a question of catching my breath while I cast a second look at the riddles, to check if I hadn't missed something of importance. Now that I was alone, I could concentrate better on solving them.

Seconds, and my senses fell in unison with the wholesome quietude pervading the area, immersing me in a feeling of well-being. As I sat there, going through the words of my riddles, a soothing murmur fell gently upon my ears—like the gentle trickle of water in a rill. I looked around but saw nothing in my immediate vicinity, which piqued my curiosity even more. So I decided to look for the source of the sound, forgetting all about the riddles, the game, and the flag.

A few searches further and I was still without a source, but my urge to find it was ever more pressing. For some strange reason, it became imperative that I find it. I kept looking by following the swelling of the sound. After a while, I reached a coppice made of small trees, wild shrubs, and bushes, all covered with menacing thistles that warned me against getting closer or I would bear the consequences. But the sound seemed to be coming from behind those thistles—a realization that left me no choice but to defy their sting. What also beefed up my determination was the idea that the flag might be hidden behind that hard-to-penetrate natural barrier. With some difficulty, I forced back the branches, and, with scratches all over my body (I tell you, those damned shorts were not helpful), I succeeded in wedging my way through that forbidding hedge. Once on the other side, I found myself in a fairylike glade. It was as if I were transported into a different world, a kind of a Garden of Eden, so beautiful was it.

The whole area was covered with lush green grass besprinkled with patches of wildflowers—daisies, poppies, violets, and others of different colors and forms for which I knew no name. They were just dots of red, blue, white, yellow, and purple, sprouting randomly about that magic carpet. A stream stealthily meandered across the meadow—the stream I

had been seeking, my source. A soft purring arose from its bed, where clear water flowed up and down the pearly pebbles that lay sparkling in the light permeating the branches in the glade. Some weeping willows stood majestically along the banks of the stream, with their hanging locks caressing languidly the soft flow of the water. Birds were flying from tree to tree, adding their melodious strains to the euphony of the whole setting. Iridescent butterflies fluttered from flower to flower only to enhance their beauty. Everything ebbed and flowed to the sigh of a gentle breeze that added magic to magic. It was hard to conceive how such a breathtaking beauty could have sprouted in such a forsaken spot. I couldn't help it; I just sat on a rock nearby and let myself be lulled by that harmony, in silence. I felt warm tears of joy stealing into my dazed eyes. And Lord, how good I felt.

I don't know how long I stayed in that Arcadian setting. I could not believe that such a beauty existed on earth, and that it could have so strong an effect on me. I was so happy that I didn't want to leave the place. But how could I stay? Soon they would be looking for me. And since that glade was way off the beaten track, there was no chance they could find me, not if they weren't ready to brave the thistles first. I had to go back before they started to worry about me. Then I said to myself: "Why not bring them to enjoy this magical scenery?" Saying which, I cast a last look at that wonder, took a last whiff of its fragrance, and left the place to go fetch them.

When I made contact with my patrol again, they informed me that they had stopped looking for the flag to look for me instead; they were worried sick about me. Hoping to justify my carelessness, as they called it, I related to them the reason for my delay—a reason which, to my surprise, was met with angry faces. How could I have acted so irresponsibly for so futile a reason, they admonished. I insisted on the uniqueness of my discovery, and I was so convincing in my description of it that they agreed to come see for themselves. Unfortunately, when I tried to find the place again, I could not. It had vanished. I realized I should have blazed a trail for my way back, like that rudimentary trick

of Tom Thumb. But I had been so absorbed by the thought of how pleased they would be to see the place that I hadn't even considered the possibility that I might not find it again. And here I was, unable to retrace my steps back to my fairylike glade.

In the end we had to give up the search. It was getting late and we still had a flag to find, and a game to win. Which we did, by the way, and I was the one to find the flag and bring it back to the camp, alive. It was my way of making amends for the time I lost for the patrol, while enjoying that wholesome place. But my heroic exploit did not stop them from making fun of my lack of orientation (as they saw it), once the cheering subsided. And after that, every time I asked them to believe me about something, they were quick to taunt me with their "Yeah, like that heavenly place of yours that we never saw."

Deep in my heart I knew what I had seen and felt, but to them it didn't matter. How could they believe I was telling the truth when they could not see what I saw? To vindicate myself, I tried to find the place again on the following days, whenever I came across some free time. But I was never successful, search as I would—a realization that made me very sad. I could neither enjoy the place anew, nor prove to my friends that I was right. Nevertheless, in my heart I kept the memory of that Arcadian place and the beauty of that heavenly moment I had lived while there. (When, in my famous theory about the world I came from, I described the pastoral setting I was in, I was thinking of this place in particular.)

As to being unable to lead my friends to that beauty, in time I came to terms with the fact that whether they believed me or not was not important; what mattered, to me, was that I had really beheld such a place and felt what I felt while there. (Now that I think of it, that river has one more "dead" story to add to its list of myths—the one about a young boy who discovered a dream of a place but was never able to prove it.)

Looking back at that incident, I can't help but compare it to what happened to me when I tried to let my friends share with me the beauty I found in Doctor Dahesh's garden. I was very disappointed to realize that they could not see it, as I did. It was as if it was meant for my eyes

only. Though I led them to that Eden, they failed to see what I saw. Were they not meant to relate to my kind of world?

It was terribly frustrating, quite a blow to an apprentice disciple. All I succeeded in doing was to make them run away from me. They loved the kind of person I had become after my visits to Doctor Dahesh (unknown to them), but once they found out that Doctor Dahesh was the real culprit of my change, they whirled away from me. The more I tried to reason with them, the more they avoided me. All of a sudden I looked weird in their eyes; I wasn't making sense anymore.

"Oh God," I thought. "Is this the only response I'm going to get from people whenever I tell them about the miracles I've witnessed?"

True, I had had the same doubts as my friends, before meeting Doctor Dahesh, but I simply could not ignore what I saw and felt once I met him. How could they? To doubt is healthy if not imperative, but it should never be at the price of refuting a truth because it goes against what we have been indoctrinated with. I do not claim that my way of thinking and living altered overnight, but there was definitely a change in me soon afterward, a change which led me to question my previous stand. It took me a long time to scuffle myself out of the ditch I had dug with my own hands. It is never easy, and the struggle never ends. But there was no doubt in my mind that what I had seen was true. Why couldn't my friends see it?

To pose such an important question and shy away from giving an answer is not in my character. But I thought it proper to move on with the story of my life and let every reader cogitate in the privacy of his or her own belief as to how he or she would have reacted were they to be confronted with the same truth my friends were confronted with. The phenomenon of Doctor Dahesh is too momentous for it to be taken lightly. I know I am walking here on delicate ground, since it concerns beliefs that might change the way a person looks at life and the beyond, if not change the course of his or her life. Like everyone else, I have my own theory about this question, and it concerns the spiritual willpower we are endowed with, or fluids, something which I will dwell upon in



due time, when I will explain the precepts of Daheshism as I understand them. But before I retrace my steps to my story, allow me to point out some basic points that helped me in my reasoning, hoping that it will help you, my dear reader, in yours.

Conjoining Doctor Dahesh to his spiritual truth depended on me and not on him. He could have performed all the miracles in the world before me, still, if I was not ready to receive him, I would never have been able to recognize him for who he was, and Doctor Dahesh knew it. I base this on what Jesus Himself said: “The Kingdom of God does not come with observation; nor will they say ‘see here!’ or ‘see there!’ For indeed the Kingdom of God is within you.” Accordingly, before looking outside my own self, I had to look first inside my heart and learn how to interpret its signs. And if my experience tells me anything it is that the moment I cleaned up my own house, I didn’t have to go look for the Kingdom of God; it came looking for me.

Each one has his or her own means of search—that is, if we are interested in finding anything in the first place. As far as I was concerned, ever since my childhood I longed for that Kingdom and looked for it in what I thought to be the light of the world in spiritual matters, until Dahesh came, at the right time, and helped me find it within me. He helped me find the Living Church of God in me, where the Flame of His Spirit never dies. He did not confirm me in a definite creed, rather he confirmed me in a certainty: the one that speaks directly to my heart. That’s why I came to the conclusion that I didn’t need a religion to be religious. Religion became a private matter between my Lord and me. Thereon, I started to look for the simple in what concerned matters of religious essence, for that was the kind that stirred my mind and soul.

But to each his or her own God.

That’s maybe the beauty of life.

Once I was singled out as a nonconformist, because of my stand in matters of faith, I started to look at myself as a down-and-out. I felt like the last of the Mohicans, devoid of any belonging, looking for shelter nowhere. I walked alone in the streets of that lore, for I had no definite

home creed to turn to but the one God had given us all: Nature. It was there that I longed to find Him, there, where everything belonged to nothing; where every star spoke His Holy Name; every bird, every flower, every tree, and every sunrise reminded me that He was everywhere. And if I looked closely enough, I would see Him in my heart, for the day when I would be able to clearly read Him in every little breath the world sighed, it would be because He was within me. Not in a temple or a religion, no, but in me, the down-and-out. Because a temple or a religion should never be a place of salvage where wrecked souls go for solace; because Nature is His real Temple, the way my conscience is my real Religion. As to my deeds, I wanted them to be an ode to an Unknown God I had found within my heart, and to glorify Him through what was most beautiful in me. And to be able to reach that stage, to me it was akin to fulfilling a fantasy. That's why I said that Daheshism was in me long before I met Dahesh. What I meant by Daheshism was the need for man to be in unity with Nature, and ultimately be in unity with God.

I went to Doctor Dahesh hoping that he would tell me how to be a better person, and he neither preached to me about salvation or damnation, nor told me what to do. He left it to me to find out and decide, though he made it easy for me to walk with firmer steps, thanks to the certainty he afforded me: his spiritual manifestations. Yes, I walked alone, but he was there to guide me with his mere presence.

I tried to introduce those I cared for to this world, but I forgot that they too had to work for their share, regardless of the fact that what I was proffering was meant for their own good. Many a time I uttered my concerns and disappointment to Doctor Dahesh, regarding my inability to convince my friends about his truth, and he was quick to advise me not to be discouraged, telling me that I did what I could; the rest was up to them. It was another way of telling me that they could not relate to that which they were not part of.

Though he knew his sheep, to use the Bible's metaphor, still Dahesh gave everyone the opportunity to join in, as he said it in his book *Words*:

“Would that people embrace my doctrine which aims at breaking loose from the noose of this life filled with evil.”

Having said this, and whatever I may think, it is not up to me to decide whom to convey this message to, whatever the circumstances. For Dahesh could read the heart of man, I can't. I do not also pretend that my testimony will change anyone's mind, for if a prophet could not succeed in bringing that feat about, who am I to claim such a feat?

All of this to say that I have no illusions about my capabilities; and when I think about the means I have in hand to convey Dahesh's message, I am somewhat sympathetic to Jonah when he chose to flee his responsibility rather than face the doubts of the people in Nineveh. Nevertheless, I don't need a “big fish” to remind me of my responsibility, because I am certain that Dahesh's teaching and revelations will prevail in due time, for the Lord will not allow such a beautiful truth to go unnoticed. But the sun must die first for its light to live on, scattered in the firmament in unreachable stars. Those stars are our religions ... the absence of light when the sun is no longer in our midst, as Dahesh said it in his book *Words*:

“When the sun of my life sets, they will then speak of my marvels and miracles.”

And by “they” he didn't mean yours truly and the few like me. As to how and when this will happen? Your guess is as good as mine, my dear reader, but I am sure it will happen some day. Didn't Jesus compare Celestial Verity to a thief? Truth comes always as a thief ... and at a time least expected. And Dahesh keeps reminding me of that fact every now and then, in his own special way. One funny incident comes to mind, and it happened when I started to work on this book.

In August, 2001, I was in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia, working on this chapter that dealt on spreading the word from the housetops. Upon reaching

the part where I say I didn't know when and how Doctor Dahesh's Message would be spread, I couldn't help stopping to dream about that happy day when his name would be known around the world (especially in America, where he spent the last years of his life), an indulgence which brought to mind all the difficulties that might be involved. To mark my point, I thought how more difficult it would be to spread the word in Saudi Arabia than in America. In Saudi Arabia? I heard myself think out loud: are you crazy? And the mere implication of that thought made me laugh, knowing how much people in Saudi Arabia were one-track minded when it came to their Muslim beliefs. "No way," I said to myself, "not in a million years" and this based on how the clerics there have a heavy hand on every medium of religious teaching and information, to the point that no newspaper ever mentioned Doctor Dahesh's name, let alone speak of his message as being divine—an anathema to them. With that thought in mind, I looked at my watch; it was time for lunch, so I decided to have a break, a question of blowing off some negative thoughts before going back to my book.

Since I was on my own at the time, rather than preparing lunch at home, I took to eating out or bringing in some takeout food, which I gobbled up at leisure at home before resuming my work. There were enough restaurants in the area where I lived (Oleya District) to allow a good variety for the whole week. I restricted this variety to four in particular where I went in turn: Burger King, Roasters, KFC, and Yamal Ash'Am, a Syrian-cuisine restaurant. It was the turn of that last one.

I went there and stood in line at the cashier counter to pay for my order (it was a self-service whereby you had to pay first for your order). There were two cashiers at the counter with two separate lines. I stood in one of them. To my surprise, when came my turn to pay for my order, I saw the cashier close his booth and ask me to go to the other line, and there was no one behind me. I was the last one in his line. I pointed out to him that this was rude on his part, since he had given me no prior notice of his intention all the while I was waiting for my turn. His only excuse was that his time was over. I would hear none of it and insisted that he

take my order before leaving. He refused. I was mad as hell at his discourteous comportment. And just when I was about to give him a taste of my temper, the other cashier offered gently to take my order instead, but I refused, telling him it was unfair to those waiting in his line. Which brought the customers waiting there to tell me they saw no inconvenience in my doing so, with a Syrian fellow insisting: “*Hotta be'da'enna, khayó*” (Put it in our chin, bro, an Arabic metaphor I was never able to figure out, though I knew it meant Let it slide).

Rather than be a pain in the neck—or in the chin, in this particular case—for everybody there, I decided to let it slide. But when I went through the menu board, I couldn't decide what to order; I was too peeved to think about food. So I excused myself and stormed out of the restaurant, vowing to never return to it again—and I never did. The KFC was close to the Syrian restaurant, but I needed time to cool off, so I decided to go to the Burger King instead, which was the longest distance from where I was.

On the right side of the order counter at the Burger King there was a set of soda-beverage machines for the customers to fill their cup at will, once they had placed their order. Next to it were newspaper shelves where the restaurant kept some Arabic daily papers and magazines as a courtesy for the eat-in customers. Since I rarely read any Arabic newspaper, nor ate my meals on the premises, I had never given it any heed. After I had placed my takeout order, the cashier gave me a paper cup to fill my beverage. I took the cup and went to fill it.

While the machine was filling my cup, I mechanically cast a glance at the newspaper stand, only to see Doctor Dahesh's picture there. I jumped back at once, so surprised was I, spilling the beverage on the floor. But my eyes were now concentrated on the picture: it was on a newspaper, *Asharq Al-Awsat*, a Saudi newspaper based in London. I can't tell you how astonished I was to see Doctor Dahesh's picture there. It was in the middle section of the newspaper [page 15 of Vol 24. 8303, dated: Wednesday - 22 August 2001].

By then, one of the waiters working there was next to me cleaning my mishap.

“Oh, I am very sorry,” I managed to tell him, after I had found some composure. “I’ll pay for any damage.”

“Think nothing of it,” said to me, in a polite tone, the manager, who by then had come to the fore. “We are here to serve you, sir.”

Lord, what a difference between the two establishments.

“Could I keep this newspaper, please,” I asked. “I will be happy to pay double for it.”

“Of course you can have it, sir,” he said with a smile, “and you don’t have to pay for it.”

I thanked him, took my order and the newspaper, and headed quickly back home after a short stop at the waiter who cleaned my mess, to tip him handsomely. And my tip reflected my joy to have discovered Doctor Dahesh there in so unusual a way.

Never in a million years would I have expected a Saudi newspaper to write an article about Doctor Dahesh and his miracles. In my mind that was inconceivable. And to boot, it was a fair and long article, spread over a full page (with a follow up article on the next issue), in which they talked about his phenomena and fame as a man of spiritual manifestation without proffering an opinion as to what to believe. Needless to say, I forgot about my lunch and went on to read every little word of that article. In a way, Doctor Dahesh was as though reminding me, in a funny way, that mine was not to say how things would turn out in time, be it in Saudi Arabia or America. Mine was to say what I saw and felt and let the Lord take care of the rest.

Had not the first cashier been rude to me, had I accepted the offer of the second cashier, had I not been true to my nature when provoked and stormed out of that place, and had not the newspaper been hanging on the inside page where Doctor Dahesh’s picture was, I doubt I would have seen this article. Too many “hads” to bring me to see this article, if you ask me. Coincidence? Maybe. But coincidences like this incite me to take a more joyful step in life, knowing that if I walk with firm steps the Lord will reserve better “coincidences” for me along the way—to say nothing of His soul-lifting surprises. Still, and notwithstanding my own

efforts to speak about Doctor Dahesh, there is another element to take into consideration in that equation, and it is the willingness of the people to see Dahesh with my own eyes. And that rests on their personal endeavor and personal interest. I say this in line with what Doctor Dahesh once told me.

“It is easy for me to go on TV and perform the greatest miracle ever in front of many millions of people, bringing thus everyone to believe without the shadow of a doubt. But this is not the way of the Lord. To believe is a personal endeavor. And were they to believe because of so obvious a miracle, where is their personal merit?”

A loud and clear statement for me. But notwithstanding people’s reaction, that need to talk about Dahesh will always be imbedded in me, for the moment I became part of him I also embraced his dreams concerning us all.

As for those of my friends who thought I was weird for having followed Dahesh, let me refer them again to Jesus when He said to His disciples:

“If the world hates you, you know that it hated me before it hated you. If you were of the world, the world would love its own. Yet because you are not of the world, but I chose you out of the world, therefore the world hates you.” [John 15: 18-19]

If being a Daheshist means that I am not part of this world ... so be it. If being a Daheshist means that I have to be on my own because no one is touched by my world ... so be it. Anyway, most of the time I feel so much alienated by everything that goes around me that I already consider myself a stranger. And I believe I am not alone in that odd if not weird feeling of mine in our modern age Babel, where the Computer is king and technology is Merlin the venerable magician. But I’m of a different breed of weird. Thus if you are looking for a real alien, look no further: you have found him in me. I am the one who fits nowhere in this funny

cosmopolitan world of aliens. But I don't mind, for I have found my own world right inside of me, and the outside one has yet to match its glee. Yet deep in my heart I know I am not alone. Out there, there are people who feel the same way I do. These are decent people who believe in no religion in particular but the one of adoring God wholeheartedly. They adore Him not out of fear, not as an obligation, not even as a tradition, but as an expression of true love. It is a kind of love they feel deep in their heart and in the silence of their soul, where they let no one in, lest their peace and beauty be disturbed—two elements so sacred to their mere being. It is of them that I often think, for no one cares to speak for them since they care not even to speak for themselves. Yet they do count, and God only knows how much. Whether they believe that Dahesh is whom I say him to be, is not important; what is important is that they keep holding onto that pure faith and live by it, for in doing so they would have declared their silent appurtenance to this creed. It is for them that people like Dahesh come to our world; it is for them that they suffer; and it is for them that they forgo their own happiness in order to help them reach their own.

True, there was a time I didn't think like that, but thank God for the change. And to think that I spent a lifetime finding myself, when in reality all I did was lose myself. But I had to pay for it—I still do. Like all the others, I was given my share of the talents. Whether it was ten, five, or one ... is not important; what matters is that I bring those talents to prosper.

“For, to every one who has, more will be given, and he will have abundance, but him who does not have, even what he has will be taken away.” [Mathew 25: 29]

How cruel a rule, but just, whether we care to acknowledge it or not. I brought many of my friends to Doctor Dahesh so that they, too, could discover the beauty of his world, because I wanted them to savor the same joy I felt. But they chose not to respond to it, since each one of



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them was deeply involved in his, or her, own world. I wanted them so much to discover this New Dawn where God is no more a notion of fear but a presence of love. But the problem with us is that we have imprisoned God so deep within the walls of our temples that we can no longer recognize Him outside. We are brought to Him once born; visit Him once a week, depending on the occasion, or the mood; and we are brought back to him in a coffin, when dust returns to dust.

And we call ourselves sons of God.