

JOSEPH HENRI CHAKKOUR

REFLECTIONS ON MY LIFE

BEFORE AND AFTER

DOCTOR DAHESH

ÉDITIONS JEUNE LÉVRIER

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PREAMBLE

There is a Book lying dormant in every one of us, awaiting the reviving kiss of a princely self to come to life. The book I am referring to is the Story of our life with all the events that have shaped it, the happy ones as well as the sad. They are special events that have not only influenced the course of our life but have also stamped that life with a unique cachet, thereby securing a dear and permanent place in our heart and mind. As to the kiss, it is the nostalgic need on our part to relive those very moments, a need that becomes more pressing the further we advance in age—youth being too preoccupied with the joy of living and discovering to make allowance for reminiscing and pondering.

I am now at that age, an age metaphorically dubbed wise. So I thought it “wise” to pin down my memories before a senescent mind lets me down, or my memories start to play hooky on me, or even worse: decide to desert me for good, in a condign requital for my having ignored them for too long. Should that happen, it would be unforgivable, for some memories ought to be shared with the rest of the world, especially when they have an out-of-the-ordinary tincture. Some of my memories are of that nature, which, in part, explains my apathy. I know, this is no excuse, for my having gone through extraordinary events should give me more reason to talk about them. Alas, this is more easily said than done, because

the events I am talking about are way out of the ordinary. They are in the realm of the Fantastic—the Sacred Fantastic. That is why I have long hesitated to talk about them.

Another reason for my apathy is the lack of the means at hand, namely, the ease of expression. For as praiseworthy as my intention might be, the will alone, as I have found out over time, is not enough to bring a book to life. To be able to give flesh to our thoughts, we need to be endowed with a lyrical breath—the power of the words, if you will. Alas, this magic wand is not granted to all, the Muse of poetry being too jealous of her bounty to shower it at random.

What are we to do should we not be among those fortunate ones? Enlist the offices of a ghostwriter, a trend that seems to have caught on in this day and age? But if we were to have recourse to this convenience to remedy our incompetence, or lack of verve, where would our personal merit be, especially since the outcome is meant as an act of faith? Wouldn't the outcome be unfaithful to the portrayal of our true nature? Our book would be missing that personal touch which makes it an integral part of us, a testimonial of our own capabilities, an authentic reflection of our soul. Granted, we cannot all be endowed with artistic eloquence. Still, this should not keep us from trying, in spite of our shortcomings.

What is important here, in my humble opinion, is to relate the events as they happened, together with the joys and sorrows we felt. And what better way to do so than to tap our own well of emotions. Our own words will depict the most intimate facet of our existence, with whatever good or bad is embodied there.

Heartened by this thought, I embarked on the journey, only to stop more often than not to beg the Muse to throw my way a few crumbs of her bounty. In time, my inadequacy made me envy the remarkable facility of some writers in expressing their thoughts. It also made me respect and admire them the more for being able, with the tools of mere words, to bring a solacing smile or a heartfelt tear into our lives. Ah, to be such a writer—what a destiny. To be able to stir feelings, to touch a heart through the simple words of my heart—what a dream. To be able

to create music by the flow of words like clear water in a mellifluous stream—oh, what a fantasy.

Somewhere in the realm of magical eloquence there is a source of words that my disheartened feelings long to reach. These words are so fascinating in their simplicity that they generate unusual warmth deep inside of me; they thrill my soul down to the core. Their beauty is that they are part of my daily life—nothing fancy, just simple words in simple sequences. But they are so overwhelming that I am in awe of the soothing effect they have on me, and the way they make me bask in a sublime state through the meaning they create. The strange part is that these words are within the reach of everyone, yet few are those who are capable of setting them into an enchanting flow. That flow is the Holy Grail of all writers, and they long to see it through their prose and rhymes. It is also the quest of a weary soul in the loneliness of her inner self, looking for solace in a state of mind that goes beyond the realm of our world, a soul who finds nothing that can comfort her down here.

It is my very quest.

Deep in my heart I know that this Source exists. My heart longs for it, and this longing is my proof of its existence. And if I long for it, it is not just to express my thoughts but also to be in touch with—and relish—the beauty of existence, as I have come to know it. Purity and simplicity are at the core of this life. They are the mystical characteristics that bestow the beauty and serenity that lead to that long-sought peace of mind. I try to achieve peace of mind in my personal life through my inner strength, but when I fail, I tend to look for it in the life and thoughts of those rare persons who have found it: my role models.

What is a role model? It is a prophet, reformer, philosopher, poet, musician, man of letters or science, man of state ... The scope is unlimited, since each one of us has his or her own ideal, which we fashion according to our desires in life. We read about our role models in books only to dream about their achievements and exploits, and the more they have achieved the farther they are from our reach. These men and women occupy such an important place in our life that they become our light.

They become our joy, too, for we rejoice to know they walked in our world once upon a time. To find a high role model within our history books, compatible with our needs, is a rare feat, but what are the odds of being coeval with such a person, or meeting him or her in person? Better yet, being fortunate enough to live with such a person the best years of our life? Who can claim such a rare joy?

I do.

And if I eagerly want to see this book of mine come to life, it is because I long to reminisce about those unusual moments of joy and wonder I lived near such a person.

Such purity did exist in our world, and I touched it.

Such beauty did walk the realm of our world, and I beheld it.

Such joy did grace my world, though only for the while of a smile, and I lived it. And I will keep on living it, in spirit, now that I am alone again, because it helps me overcome the hardships of life. For what good would it be to have high ideals if they did not provide the strength and fortitude to help me make my way through the intricacies of this life? And if I desperately long for that magic Source, it is to be able to describe what I witnessed in its real beauty, and express what I felt in a manner that does honor to its worth.

The role model I am talking about is Dahesh.

Dahesh is the purity, beauty, and joy I longed to find in my life, am fortunate to have found, and am blessed to have lived with, as though living a dream. Without Dahesh my life would have been run of the mill. I am an ordinary man—nothing fancy. And I have lived a normal life—nothing outstanding. In a world that abounds with the great deeds of extraordinary people, I have not much to offer. Still, I believe there are deeds greater than the conquering of cities, the building of empires, or the making of great discoveries. These greater deeds induce us to forgo willingly the rule of an eye for an eye, to live by the rule of loving our neighbor as ourself. In other words, they help us conquer ourselves for the betterment of Society—a feat that is incumbent upon every person of conscience and integrity. People whose deeds have such a salutary effect

on us are rare. They are a breed apart. To have known such a person is, in my view, a blessing in itself worth talking about.

Dahesh is such a person.

To me, Dahesh is the apotheosis of mankind—mankind in the most perfect form our world can produce. I know, the need to create man at his best, with all the sublime values entailed, is not a novelty. Many poets, writers, and philosophers have dabbled with this thought. Gibran Khalil Gibran's Prophet is an amazing personality, but he will always be a figment of Gibran's imagination, however inspired that imagination might be. The genuine novelty is to encounter such an extraordinary man in reality. And if we do, the real exploit—for self—is to be able to recognize him as such. I am sure the world will see Dahesh as such a person, once he is presented to the world in his truth. The phenomenon, Dahesh, is within the reach and scrutiny of every mind diligently looking for truth, because truth will show itself clearly through his life and struggles. Dahesh is not a reflection of our world, but of the world of the Sublime.

With this in mind, I hope people will understand what I mean when I say that the time I spent with him belongs more to the realm of fantasy than to that of reality. And that is my difficulty. I am in a quandary as to how to present him in his proper truth, so far is his truth outside the reality and recognition of our world. Still, his beauty is that he walked in this world with unassuming steps, an ordinary man among other men, though on his shoulders he carried the promise of centuries of waiting for the enlightenment of man. Owing to the difficulty of believing in the existence of such a man, I am tempted to diminish the wonder of his personality and accomplishments to render him more credible. In other words, make him more human, that he may be more acceptable to humankind. How strange. Do the flaws of Man make him more of a man? Or, is perfection so far out of our reach that we have written it off for good and refuse to acknowledge it in anyone? Or, are extraordinary men in such abundance in our world that we have lost all interest in them?

Whatever the case may be, the fact that Dahesh is an amazing man

cannot be ignored. His beauty lies in what he is, and is enhanced by his being what he is amidst the rest of mankind. He talked to us about God and the mysteries of life and death as no one else has done since the time of Jesus. Dahesh did not repeat Jesus' words in different turns of phrase. No, he filled in dotted lines that Jesus Himself had left—on purpose—for the Paraclete to complete in due time. That is why any attempt on my part to present Dahesh in a form other than this one is worthy neither of him nor of the people I long to tell about him. For truth should be told as it is, regardless of whether it will be accepted or not.

There is no doubt in my mind that people will react favorably to Dahesh in time, once they have assimilated his truth. Some might say this is a truth that I and the few like me want to see and believe, beauty being in the eye of the beholder. If so, the better for me and the few like me. We witnessed such a beauty in our lifetime. But notwithstanding the freedom to believe or not believe, if such a man could really exist, wouldn't he be special? If such a man were able, through his life, ideals, and deeds, to bring the people who have known, read, or heard about him, to uphold and live by worthy ideals, wouldn't he be unique? Wouldn't he be someone people who had never heard about would be interested in knowing? Aren't we always attracted by the life of unusual men? Indeed we are, though our interest might be motivated by different criteria, and not only do we relish hearing stories about Alexander, Caesar, Napoleon, and their like, but also about Jesus, Buddha, Socrates, Gandhi, and their like. Those last ones are the real great men of our world. They are the men who have eclipsed the world with their glory, though they eclipsed themselves from the glory of our world. And we are fortunate enough to have had followers of theirs who have relayed their beauty to the succeeding generations.

Such is the beauty of Dahesh. He is too amazing a truth not to shine all over the world, in all hearts. The fact that such is not the case so far does not lessen his luster, nor will it keep me from voicing his truth. Actually, it gives me more reason to speak about him. I know it has always been the fate of the rare men of light in our world that only a few people believed

in their truth and carried it through; our history books are more than explicit in that regard. The truth that is Dahesh is no exception. It will survive the flow of time, the vicissitudes of life, and the hindrances of ill-intentioned people who are adamant against it. So it has been with truth ever since time was time, though it must become the manna of our soul and help us cross the desert of this barren life.

Why so? Because Truth is a gift from God to mankind, and no one can stop it from reaching us. No one should come between, either. Truth is meant to help us (as spirit) uplift ourselves beyond our condition (as matter). Truth is vital to the progress of our Society, our moral and spiritual values being the pillars of a sane and lasting Civilization. And no one knows better the destructive effect of the human condition on the soul than the person who tries wholeheartedly to overcome it.

Dahesh is such a man. Not only did he overcome his nature as man but he also lived his spirituality in broad daylight, in plain view of all. That is why he is my icon, my paragon, and my truth. And while some have to believe in a truth they have read about in books or have been born into, I am fortunate enough to believe in a truth I was able to touch, and that touched me. It is a fact of life that we cannot choose the faith we are born into. But we can fashion it so that we relate to it heart and soul, and it is incumbent on us to do so. And the cleaner we make our heart, the more able we are to know what is good for us spiritually. Believing in a truth has always been an individual matter, and each of us must shape his or her belief according to his or her desires and needs in life.

Alas, we live in an age in which spirituality is not a priority, if it counts at all, and in which the custodians of our faith dictate to us what to believe and what to repudiate. But I dared to question my inculcated beliefs, a defiant act that led me to retrace my steps to the Origin of my faith as a Christian, to the Source. And lo and behold, I found Dahesh there. Dahesh, who not only cleared the Source for me, of all the impurities accumulated since the advent of Christ, but increased its flow too. Thus faith flowed profusely into me with a new purity. These humble lines I am writing are the expression of the faith I espoused through Dahesh.

Because of the debt I owe this faith, I come here to retrace the steps in the journey of my life, to see how my life and thoughts were affected by this faith, and to review my reactions when my time came to face it, live with it, and live by it. My object is by no means to analyze this truth per se, nor am I after adducing proofs to back up my claim, and presenting reasons for others to follow Dahesh. No. All I am after is to understand my own feelings before and after following him, so as to fathom what was in me that made me believe when so many did not, and inspired me to hold onto that belief thereon. Maybe also for a selfish reason: to relive those sweet moments of wonder I felt every time I was in touch with that extraordinary phenomenon that is Dahesh.

When I think about my life with him, I cannot help feeling as though I lived a dream out of this word. And the only thing we can do once we wake up from a wonderful dream is to daydream about it, to keep bathing in its soothing aura. I guess that is what I am doing right now. Albeit, it is a strange feeling: to be a mere spectator to the reel of my own life. To sit outside the wheel of my life and let the events that have shaped it roll before my eyes without tampering with their authenticity. For then I can examine the why of my reactions and the consequences of my actions so as to see how I fared in the crucible of destiny.

Imagine the difficulty of such a task, for I have not only to tackle the different aspects of my life but also tread the fine path of self-evaluation. Where is the difficulty? The difficulty is that I have to face my weaknesses and failures regardless of the way I feel about them. For, alas, my comportment hasn't always been to the standard that I now strive for, and there are many things in my life that force me to look away, so reproachable was my comportment. Still, these weaknesses and failures are mine, whether I like it or not. They are part of my memories. True, some memories do bring great joy to my heart, and they are memories of the moments when I felt that Doctor Dahesh approved of me as I endeavored to be the kind of person he wanted me to be. But other memories, and unfortunately they are legion, are of things I wish had never taken place. These are the ones that bring bitter tears to my heart, for they are of the moments

when I did not heed his teachings, and worse, when I hurt his feelings. I wish I could reach out with my bare hands and tear away those memories from the records of my soul. But I can't. I have no choice but to keep looking at them, in my mind's eye. They stand there looking back at me with sadness, crying out to me with muffled shrieks, begging me to retrieve them from the mire I sent them to.

I do not think it would be out of keeping to blame these weaknesses on being human. But when I think about how greatly Dahesh loved me and cared for me and I still hurt him, life becomes unbearable to me. Alas, tears cannot efface the faults of the past. Even if they could, somehow with the remorse there is an impenitence that lurks in the confines of my mind. That is why I cannot help thinking about my flawed behavior, however hard I try. And I have no one to blame but myself. Yet if there is any consolation, it is that I know how much he loved me, for, in spite of my weaknesses, he never let me down. Now, my only hope is that God, in His mercy, will lessen the burden of them on my soul, for they encumber my every move.

When writing the story of my life, I am tempted to beautify some events, circumscribe others, and delete those I find embarrassing. In my defense, let me say that, concerning the embellishing of facts, I wish I could do justice to the beauty I felt and witnessed in reality. Suffice it to say that if I have difficulty relating the truth to its actual beauty, how could I render it more beautiful? My quill is too lame; I cannot even think of retouching this truth I have come to talk about. Besides, my responsibility to the truth is more important than the desire to please my ego, or to convince a reluctant reader of the veracity of my assertions and my portrait of him. Were I to twist the facts, whom would I be fooling? My aim is solely to understand and analyze my own feelings. Also, I want to try to profit from those memories as much as I can. I know that by tracing them the way they took place, I can learn a great deal from them. Be they blameworthy, they will remind me of that which I should avoid; and be they praiseworthy, they will encourage me to take another cautious step in life, and afford me solace when the burden becomes too heavy.

When I look back at my life, I cannot envision it without Doctor Dahesh's presence. In the wheel of my life, he is a cynosure. I find myself always relating the events of my life to his presence and persona. Some might think this is akin to losing one's identity. But not so with Doctor Dahesh. If he had any influence on me, it was not to direct me toward his own persona but to guide me toward my own self, my conscience if you will. Accordingly, this book of mine is not only about me but also about me in relation to him. As to the reason why people might be interested in that relation, I believe a time will come when people will want to know every little detail about this man. Why? Because he is bound to change the course of life and the way people think. For Dahesh holds in his hand the key to a new certainty, a certainty that will bring us to look at ourselves with a new perspective, and to look at the world we live in with different eyes. Men like Dahesh are hard to come by, if not impossible.

When I ponder the ways that life on Earth has evolved since the dawn of time, I am amazed that our development has rested on the shoulders of a few visionaries. And those visionaries were never well received by their contemporaries—were often persecuted for their beliefs—though their vision became an indispensable source of light to the world in time. We draw from it at will, only to be affected differently by it, depending on how often we visit the source and how well we assimilate that which we have drawn. Some of these visionaries are blessed with an extra power that neither abides by Nature's laws nor can be explained by Man's acumen. This is the power of the Miracle. And though it has been witnessed by the few, it has been accepted by the multitudes in time as an indisputable truth. Why? Because such is the destiny of men of vision—and our destiny, too.

Dahesh is such a man of vision and miracles. He is also a miracle of a man of vision at his best.

I come here to talk about a man of miracles, yet in my hands I have nothing but memories that, alas, I won't be able to put in chronological

order, being that I was never the type that took notes. Does this mean I am an unreliable source? Did John or Matthew walk with Jesus holding a scroll, to record His words at the moment He uttered them, and the events at the instant they took place? They did not. That which John and Matthew relayed to us is not the message of Jesus verbatim, but the spirit of that message. It is the same with Plato when he talks about Socrates. It is Plato's words that make us hunger for Socrates. And if Plato was able to talk about Socrates with such dexterity and eloquence, it is thanks to the spirit Socrates instilled in him. In other words, a part of Socrates lives in Plato, in the same way that a part of Jesus lives in John, Matthew, Mark, and Luke. What those worthy disciples meant to relay to us is not only the beauty of the role model they walked with, but also their love of that role model; and they did it in their own words. That is the beauty of a Jesus, or a Socrates, that they instilled such love in the hearts of their disciples. I know I am no Plato, John, Matthew, Mark, or Luke, but my love for Dahesh is not less.

If what is required of me is to be a mere historian, let me say up front that I would be a lousy historian. I am too biased to qualify as an observer—not to mention that I hate to fall into that category, where an extraordinary phenomenon such as Dahesh is involved. Thus, my words are meant more as an act of faith than to inform others of what I saw and heard. For anyone interested only in the facts, the Daheshist Chronicles are more than ample—not to mention the many articles written on the subject in our part of the world. I was, and still am, too involved with what I believe to be an impartial narrator. Nevertheless, I will always be faithful to the truth I am beholden to, for I shall be judged according to what I say; and that concerns me most.

Had I followed Doctor Dahesh's example, I would have written down all the events with their circumstances in the right order, together with all the thoughts and feelings they stirred in me, each in its own time and context. Instead, I just lived them, plain and simple. I was so much taken by the joy of living by his side at the time that nothing else mattered to me. (Wouldn't anyone have done the same in the circumstances?)

If not, then throw the first notebook at me; it might come in handy.) Or it might be that I was too lazy to sit down and record events for the sake of history, knowing what kind of man Dahesh was and how important was his message. It all adds up to what kind of person we are, and frankly, I was never the writing kind. And I am not the reading kind either, but that is another story.

Dahesh's presence pervaded my heart and soul so completely, it obviated the fear that a time might come when I would have to resort to my memory whenever I felt the need of his paternal love to alleviate the burden of life. I never thought he would leave so soon. Or if I did, at times, I was quick to brush it off, considering it just a passing uneasiness, an uneasiness that comes to mind when life is perfectly beautiful, to remind me that I am still on earth, and it would be against the nature of things down here for happiness to last forever.

I think I would be speaking for all Daheshists were I to say that when we were with him, we tried to avoid facing the eventuality of his final departure. In the back of our minds, we refused to acknowledge that such an eventuality was possible. Or, did his presence become so essential to our souls—like air is to life—that it was unthinkable not to have him around? Now we know better. Regardless of our refusal to accept the idea of his final departure, he did leave us too soon. Now we have to continue the road alone. But we are equipped with what is needed to reach the goals he spent a lifetime outlining for us, that he guided us toward, patiently, in spite of our propensity for straying from the path.

The mere thought of finding myself alone is enough to induce the greatest apprehension in me. His presence was so overwhelming that I took it for granted. Now I find myself rummaging in my mind for the joys that were, sifting through the mementos of my life for all these moments I shared with him. They are the only moments that brought real happiness into my life. How not to, when he was everything to me? He was the light that gave me back my life and introduced me to the love of God and Truth. All who were with him would say the same.

If I am to describe my feelings about this dream of a man, Doctor

Dahesh, I have these words to say: Let your wildest and happiest dream ever depict to you everything a father, a brother, a friend, a mentor, and a teacher can be in their purest and most sublime form. He was all of them to me. For if they stand for everything we seek in the people we admire, love, and care for all our life through, he was, still is, and shall always be the only life for me.

Yes, he left me alone, but he left me with the breath of life I need to keep moving on. Though I can no longer touch him and see him now in real life, still he never leaves me. His gentle whisper is always with me, encouraging me to go on. Everywhere I go, his face is in front of me. Everything I do, I wonder whether he approves of me or not. Before going to sleep, I pray God to let my soul be in his presence in my dreams. Dreams are now my only means of touching him and seeing him. And when I do find myself in his presence, my joy is beyond compare.

What is most amazing to me is that, though great is the void he left behind when he left, still, he made it so I could bear my pain, thanks to the strength of my love for him. Thus, his beauty lies not only in what he really is but also in the feeling of contentment he creates in me. And it is a feeling that seems never to wane. (He kindles such a hope in me that I keep wanting to rejoin him, in his own world, though I am aware that my chances of doing so are slim, or nonexistent.) What a joy to know that such a man walked the valley of my life.

I would do his memory wrong were I to claim he only left me memories to live by. He left me much more than that. But these matters are hard to talk about because they are so close to my heart. And because they are also very hard to believe. These are phenomena utterly at variance with what we usually think of as natural or possible. The everyday world would not hesitate to term them fictional, inconceivable, far-fetched. One thing is certain: any reader of my book is bound to reach a point where he will exclaim out loud, "This can't be true." Still, my dear reader, just humor me. And know that I, myself, reached a point in my book where I said to myself, "Oh no, they will never believe it." So, we are equals in the way these matters sound to us, in the context of reality. But things

are what they are, however unbelievable they may sound. And I hope you will not expect me to ignore anything because of its incredible nature, or to feel guilty that these things happened to me in particular.

Due to the odd nature of my assertions, I often feel out of place. If I were to describe how I feel right now, I would say I feel as though I witnessed the landing of a Space Ship—or a Chariot Of Fire, to use the words of the Bible when Elijah was taken away from our earth—with nobody there to report the fact with me. Out of that Ship came a figure vaguely resembling the shape of a human being. I say vaguely, because the light emanating from the body of this apparition was too overwhelming to allow me to describe it with precision. And while I was all in stupor and amazement, fearing the worst because of all the stories I had read concerning aliens, I heard the apparition speak to me as though he was reading my mind.

“No, I did not come to conquer your world,” he said in a calm, gentle voice, “for there is nothing in your world worth conquering.” And before I could find an adequate reply, he went on to say, “I came to entrust you with a message that I want you to convey to your people. Tell the people of the Earth that there is a God; that He is love, but there is justice in His love.”

Having said this, he went back to his Space Ship and took off, leaving me behind to ponder the vision, the message, and—especially—the reason he picked me.

The vision I witnessed in Dahesh took more than a few minutes: it spanned twenty wonderful years. The span went from the first moment I saw Doctor Dahesh, in 1964, until the day he left our Earth in 1984. But Lord, how fast time went. As to the message of my story, it is the same, simple and direct. And as to my feelings after he left, I wish he had taken me along with him. But that was not to be. There is a time for everything, and there is a reason too. We all have a role in this life, and I have yet to find mine. There is a time for joy and a time to earn the reward

of a different joy still to come, the one that lasts forever. I hope that these first shy steps I am taking right now are steps in the right direction.

Whether or not my life can be of importance to anyone apart from myself is irrelevant. What is important is that I relate what I saw and felt, and let each reader decide what to believe. For my part, what is really important and what I shall cherish all my life is that I was one of those he chose to walk with him, at a certain period of his life. This joy is mine to keep, and no one—no one—can take it away from me. I do not claim that my bearing witness of him will matter in the larger scheme of things, for, to use the words of John the Baptist: “I am not worthy to carry the sandals” of this man, this great Prophet. The deeds, words, and creed of Doctor Dahesh can rightly speak for him. I do not come to tell you to accept him for what he is. No, I just came to tell you that he is.

He is, was, and shall always be the Dearly Beloved of God.

There is no doubt in my mind that in time people will scurry to make a Myth out of him, as they did with Jesus and Buddha. But to me, Dahesh is not a myth. He is too important and indispensable, too present in our life and in our future, to be reduced to a Myth. A Myth belongs to the past, Dahesh is a beacon to the future. I am aware that what I will claim will be hard to believe. It will mean re-evaluating values and verities, to say nothing of re-evaluating all the beliefs that took centuries to establish. And I know that the last thing people need right now is to question their belief, for questioning will entail redefining priorities and their reason for being.

The real problem is not to find a natural ground where the actual and the imaginary can meet, but to find ground where the actual is credible. This is in the hand of every one of us, and no one else’s.

Whatever we may think, ours is not to choose the men of light, but to believe in them. We can choose our leaders, our teachers, because they are the reflection of what we are. Not so with our Prophets. Prophets are the reflection of the sublime World Above, something to which our world cannot relate; hence the ambiguity of our choice, and the beauty

of the vision. Yet believing in a prophet does not mean making him greater than he is, for he is what God made him, and truth cannot be altered, whether we accept it or not.

To believe in a truth that goes against the tide when, and because, everyone believes in it is not that much of a feat. The real exploit, in my view, is to believe in it when deep in our heart we know we are facing a revelation, though the whole world might think otherwise. When my time came to choose what to believe, I chose not to close my eyes to the obvious, and it turned out to be my life. And here I am now, lifting my voice as one who was touched, to relate what I witnessed and what I felt. I come also to relate the very instances he cared to share with me, because to live them again and again is a joy in itself.

In his book *Words*, Doctor Dahesh says: “My word is part of my heart, shard of my soul, essence of my whole.” That is how I meant my words to be. I know they are not perfect, but they are true to form—my form, or soul.