

# *Love Street Breezes*



*Are there breezes in the realm of Love Street  
That do not bear the scent of life from Your tresses?*

# Editor's Page

Jai Baba to our dear Readers!

**N**ew Year — new magazine. Thank you all for sticking with us. If you know of a friend who used to get our magazines but did not receive this premier issue of Breezes, tell them to let me know and we will be sure to add them to our mailing list.

Last year was not the easiest one for me, as most of you have heard, but for 2011 – I am looking forward to great things. This month will be my 72nd birthday, and I don't feel Baba could have done anything nicer for me than to give me this magazine. Since I resigned from the previous editing job I had, we had to find a new name for our fledgling magazine. We definitely wanted to continue to hang out on that wonderful street about which my fellow countryman Francis Brabazon wrote so profusely – Love Street – but what else besides the street address?

Then Kendra Crossen, whom we are very happy to welcome to our crew, told us that in Persian poetry, 'breezes' are the winds that bring news of the Beloved. "Love Street Breezes". We all liked the sound of that, so I looked deep into Baba's eyes in the photo I have beside my computer and said out loud "Well Baba, we all like it. How about you?" His response was instant and unmistakable: a lump in my throat, tears in my eyes, and my entire body was flooded with warmth. Wow! What a response! Many years ago, when I was studying Carl Jung, he told us that when one hears a "Truth" you will get a physiological reaction. Well that reaction couldn't have been a clearer answer to my question. So that, dear Readers, is how the name of this magazine came to be.

You will notice that a number of the articles are from six or eight months ago. Normally we do not publish what may seem to be outdated news. However, many of these were written for

the July and October issues of the previous magazine, but then everything fell apart. Our lead story, back then, was the Gulf oil spill. I was horrified, as was everybody else in the States, (and indeed, around the world,) to read the daily updates—millions of barrels of oil spilling into the pristine waters of the Gulf.

"How could Baba let this happen?" I wailed. Cherie, who did the beautiful layout of this, our premier issue, said "Really Dina! Don't you realize that everything that happens, happens by His will?" Yeah, yeah, I know, but I found it hard to swallow, until Marie put together the wonderful story on Meher Baba and the Petroleum Connection, and explained about Indra, whose job it is to...well, just read the article.

A number of you have already sent in donations, for which we are extremely grateful, otherwise we would not have been able to publish this issue, as we were starting out with zero left in the bank account; but for those of you who haven't yet donated, and would like to continue receiving this new magazine, please use the enclosed envelope to send your check.

There has been a shuffling of the Breezes crew, pictured below. It is with great joy (and a huge sigh of relief from Cherie and Tom) that we welcome our third layout person. Welcome aboard Angela Chen from New York! It is to their artistic talents that we owe the beauty of our magazines. I consider us very lucky, not to mention honored, to have the professional eye of Kendra Crossen—author and late editor at Shambala Press—as a contributing editor.

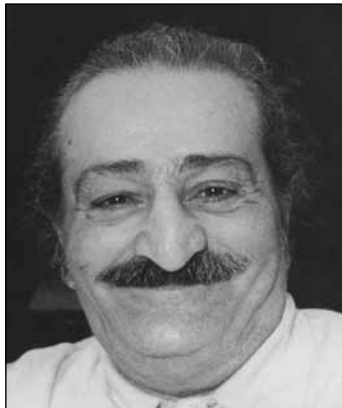
We all hope you enjoy the read and look forward to meeting up with you again in our next issue.

In His love and service, and from the entire crew,  
Dina Snow Gibson

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# Love Street Breezes

## Feel the Breezes!

*Is there a breeze in the realm of love  
That does not bear the scent of life from Your tresses?*  
—Sana'i

*The Love Street Breezes* is dedicated with love to **Avatar Meher Baba**. Its primary purpose is to contribute to a sense of community among all His lovers by providing a place for sharing His remembrance.

All members of the Baba family are invited to contribute to this feast of love. Breezes is mailed (approximately) each January, April, July and October.

### Subscriptions:

Printing and mailing you the magazine costs us over \$25 per person per year (in the States) and \$35 to \$40 overseas, and many times that is for the postage only. *However, you can have the option of receiving the magazine by email in a PDF format.* It is recommended that you have hi-speed Internet access to take advantage of this offer. No one is refused the Breezes due to lack of money. Give what you can and what feels right to you and we will receive it with great appreciation.

Although the Love Street Press is a non profit 501 (c) 3 corporation, please note that to be compliant with IRS rules, a donation of the exact amount of the subscription is not tax deductible. However if you feel moved to help us spread His message of love and truth "to Infinity and beyond" and can donate over and above your own subscription cost, that part is definitely tax deductible. We can accept a charge to Visa, MasterCard, or Discover. If you prefer to send a check please make it out to **Love Street Press** and send to

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If you don't want to put your credit card number in an email, [dinagibson@mac.com](mailto:dinagibson@mac.com), you can fax the number to me at 310 839 BABA (2222) or phone me at 310-837 6419 between 9 & 5 Pacific time.

### Submissions

We seek expressions of Baba's message of love and truth. Your stories, photos, artwork, poetry, letters, articles and humor are all actively solicited, but in digital format only (email please).

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### Features:

Proof of the God Man — Statistically Speaking.....	4
Late Breaking News.....	5
Spiritual Toddlers.....	6
The All Knowing Ignorant One.....	7
A Letter from Meher Baba .....	8
Take a Stand on the Truth .....	8
Meher Baba on Harmony .....	9
Strive with all your heart .....	9
Changing Lives through Baba's Love .....	10
Update from the AMB Heartland Center .....	11
Spiritual Ecology .....	13
A Calling Answered .....	14
The Missing Link .....	16
Reflections on Some Baba Words .....	17
Visit to Pumpkin House .....	18
My Parents and Meher Baba .....	21
Yad Rakh .....	23
Heavens, Angels and Planes Explained .....	32
Baba Warns of the Approaching "Dark Cloud" .....	33
Exciting News from the Meher Baba Archives .....	35
Bowl of Saki .....	37
God is Shy of Strangers .....	38
Greetings from Meherabad Hill Library .....	44
Youth Sahavas .....	48

### Featured Story:

<b>Meher Baba and the Petroleum Connection.....</b>	<b>24</b>
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### Departments:

Editor's Page.....	2
Passings.....	40
John Grant.....	40
Toby Mertens .....	42
Yvonne Judith Andrau .....	43
Announcements .....	36
Humor for Huma.....	39
Know Before you Go .....	46
Worldwide Meher Baba Meetings.....	47





# *Proof of the God Man — Statistically Speaking*

By Merwan Mehta, North Carolina

One day I was having one of those intellectual discussions about Baba when someone who was a little skeptical about the Godman, hinted to me - what if all that Baba claims is a figment of imagination? The thought came to me then that how easy it would have been if Baba had performed some miracles and that way left some compelling evidence that would have enabled us to get over the belief hump, and on to the true business of loving Him.

Baba said that performing miracles disturbs the equilibrium of the cosmos, as the natural order of things is overpowered. Baba had numerous “slips” wherein He performed several miracles that the mandali have experienced, and told us about. One of those that not only was told to us but to which quite a few of us were fortunate enough to witness

firsthand, was the appearance of the image of Baba’s face on a tree trunk outside Mehera’s bedroom window in 1969 after Baba passed away.

There was a small flower garden outside Mehera’s bedroom that she had planted for Baba to enjoy. In the garden and right outside the bedroom window there was a large wild-fig tree, that the Indians call the “umar tree.” This tree was always there and Mehera never really noticed it. After Baba dropped His body on January 31st, 1969, Mehera was grief stricken. The mandali did their best to console her but nothing could fill the void that Baba had left. In July 1969, one day standing at her bedroom window that she shared with Baba’s sister Mani, she was looking out when she felt her eyes being drawn to the umar tree. On the trunk of the tree was an image of Baba’s face looking so lovely

with a crown on His head. The image was such that it seemed to be looking right at Mehera’s window.

Mehera was overjoyed. What a perfect way for Him to show His presence. Mehera called Mani to see the image, who then called the other ladies. Then the men mandali came to see the image and later the whole village of Pimpalgaon came to see it, and then all who visited Meherazad during that time saw it too. Mani took pictures and sent them all over the world. Mehera and Mani revered the special treat Baba had bestowed on them. The umar tree had become precious to Mehera, and she every morning after this incidence placed a marigold on the crown of Baba’s image.

This image stayed for seven years from 1969 to around 1976 till the bark shed, and I was lucky to have witnessed the image.



Photo courtesy of the Photo Archives of Sufism Reoriented  
*Mehera gifting a flower to her Beloved in the Umar Tree*

Being a curious teenager, I had gone quite close to the image to verify that it truly was a natural formation, though nobody was allowed to touch it. I was awestruck by its detail and perfect positioning with respect to Mehera's window. If you went in to Mehera's quarters, you could see Baba's face from Mehera's bedroom door, such that it was right in the center of the window.

As I look back at it now, I began to wonder if this was a small miracle that Baba had performed for His beloved, or was it a chance happening. Being statistically inclined, I began to wonder what the probability would be of this happening without any external intervention.

There are two assumptions that we make before embarking on calculating the probability of this happening: The first is that only this tree has the potential of Baba's face appearing on it, and the other assumption is that this umar-tree has figured out a way to mold its bark such that it carves out images from it. How this can be done and what makes the tree do something like this, I believe is not in the knowledge of present day science.

I would like to request the statistically challenged amongst us to bear with me for a while, and I promise to not attempt to lose you in the discussion.

The umar tree is around 20 inches in diameter and is around 40 feet tall. The total surface area of the tree then is around 150,700 square inches. The image which is around 8 inches in diameter and hence 50 square inches in area, could have come out anywhere on the tree's 150,700 square inches. Hence, the probability of

this happening is 50 divided by 150,700, or 1 in 3000.

The image was seen for seven years. We make another assumption here and that is this could have been any seven years in a human's maximum life-span of a hundred years. Also, say the past 100 years is when we had the means to photograph and document such happenings and hence we use a 100 year span. Hence, the probability of this happening is 7 divided by 100, or 1 in 14.

The image could have been rotated such that the face could have been upside down, or at any other rotated angle. Say the rotation can occur in 15 degree increments. Hence, the probability of this happening is 15 divided by 360 degrees in a circle, or 1 in 24.

Hence, the total probability of this happening is the product of the three probabilities that we calculated, 1 in 3000, 1 in 14, and 1 in 24. This comes to a probability of 1 in 1,008,000. Hence, the chance of this happening, is a one in a million chance.

Now bear in mind this one in a million chance is with the assumption that the image can only be seen on this particular tree. If it could be seen on any tree in the world, you will have to multiply the probability of 1 in 1,008,000 by 1 divided by the number of trees in the world, which could make the probability of this happening in maybe 1 in a 100 trillion. (Assumption is that the world has a 100 trillion trees).

The other assumption that the tree has within its means to come up with an image of that kind, is much more complex and farfetched. What would give the tree

the means and knowhow to do so? This further reduces the probability of a chance happening to an even smaller probability of it occurring. One in a million chance is good enough for me to be convinced that Baba had to have performed a miracle for His only beloved, showing the image of His face on the tree trunk outside her window. Hence, this event was not only an event for Mehera that helped her reduce the pain of losing Baba, but also can serve to the rest of us who seek proof of His claim as the Godman.

Ed note: In fact, the story goes back farther than 1969. Several years before that, one day Baba happened to be strolling through the garden with some visitors. Mehera at the time was inside her room. Baba stopped by the umar tree and placed His hand on the bark of its trunk. He gestured, "I like this tree very much." Peeking out from her window, Mehera saw Baba and heard His comment about the tree. She was curious as to why Baba would express a special liking for this particular tree, when there were many other trees in the garden that she felt were more beautiful.

But after Baba dropped His body, the answer was revealed to her when His face appeared in the bark at the very spot where His hand had lovingly touched it. Thus an episode—which seemed at the time to carry no special significance—emerged later as a sign of Baba's foreknowledge and special care for His beloved Mehera at the moment when she needed it the most.



## Late Breaking News

We have just heard of the passing of two dear friends who were both very close to Baba. We will be doing a full memorial to them both in the next issue of Breezes, so please do send us remembrances & photos you have of them. Please get your stories to us by June 31st.



*Don Stevens*—At 6:15am [London time], April 26, 2011, Don passed away peacefully into Baba's arms. He was in hospital and had friends by his side to say the prayers and whisper Baba's name as he slipped away.

*Dr. G.S.N. Moorthy*—Scholar and Disciple of Meher Baba passed away on 28th April 2011 at Gwalior India. He had a long time association with Meher Baba and also wrote a Book "Wonders of Silence". Dr. Moorthy was an excellent orator and philosopher, well received at the various Baba centers in the West.

Baba lovingly called him the "Talkative Disciple of a Silent Master".





# Spiritual Toddlers

Michael Da Costa, England



I recently had a visit from my daughter Poppy, her husband Zim and my granddaughter Juno, who, at 13 months old, has recently learned to toddle. Whenever she is put down, off she goes to investigate anything and everything. Poppy or Zim keep a constant eye on her and follow quietly and unobtrusively wherever she toddles, ready to intervene if Juno risks falling or getting into something she shouldn't; otherwise she is given her head.

It occurs to me that this is how Baba is with us. We are all spiritual toddlers, bumbling around, not sure where we are going most of the time, bumping into things, falling down,

reaching out to grab shiny objects and squealing when we can't have them. Yet Baba is right there with us, silently letting us roam freely without intervening, except when He quietly steers us away from a danger we cannot see, or when He lets things happen so that we can learn. However, when we fall, He always picks us up and comforts us, until we insist on toddling off once again.

I guess we have a long way to go before we become Spiritual adults, but it is good to know that our Beloved Baba—as spiritual mother and father—is right there with us all the way, making our growth steady and sure. How blessed we are.

*Send us your caption for the awesome photograph below and you could win a year's subscription to the Breezes. Email or snail mail, or even phone it in to me. We were thinking ... "Facing the Infinite". What can you come up with? The winner will be announced in the next issue.*



# The All-Knowing, Ignorant One

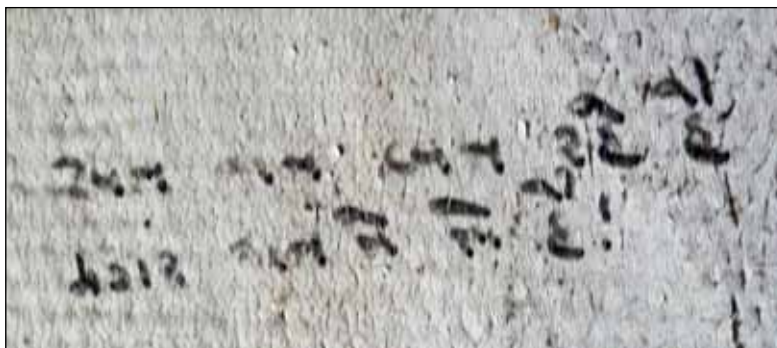
Ward Parks, Meherabad

Over the decades many pilgrims to Meherabad have noticed, or perhaps have had pointed out to them, an odd little handwritten notation on the asbestos wall of the Manonash cabin, Eruch's bedroom, above the lamp beside Eruch's bed. There is a beautiful story connected with this notation, a story that, for me personally, has grown greatly in meaning over the years. Many of you will already be familiar with it, but for those who are not, I would like to tell it here. The story takes us back to the final months of Meher Baba's physical lifetime. Baba's health had greatly deteriorated, and all His mandali were living on tenterhooks. One of Eruch's longstanding duties had been to attend to Baba's English-language correspondence.

Previously, Baba used to have the correspondence read out to Him and then would dictate points, which Eruch would write up in the form of a reply. But more recently, under the pressure of His universal work and poor health, Baba had told Eruch to answer the letters himself, without Baba's having heard them at all! Naturally this order transferred a certain amount of pressure to Eruch, on whom the burden fell of having to answer letters on the God-Man's behalf. What is more, the intensity of life around Baba often compelled Eruch to do this work in a hurry. Nonetheless, as Eruch knew only too well, it had to be done most scrupulously, with meticulous attention to the smallest detail.

One day Baba had retired to His room, and Eruch, sitting on his bed in the Manonash Cabin, was working his way through the pile of correspondence beside him. The boy who carried the mail to Ahmednagar was waiting for him, and naturally he wanted to finish up and put the task to rest.

Just at that moment Dr. Goher appeared at his door. "I have a message to you from Baba," she said. Eruch put his pen down and gave Goher his full attention. And what was the message?



Photos Bif Soper

It took the form of a couplet in Hindi. Transliterated into the roman alphabet, it reads:

*Anjaan ban rahe hai,  
magar jaante to hai!*

Because the Hindi here is so idiomatic, it does not easily translate. Literally, in its bare bones, it means something like, "Assuming ignorance, yet you really do know!" Eruch sometimes used to express it somewhat more fully as, "Although I appear to be not-knowing, know that I know everything."

What Baba was referring to, of course, was the state of the Avatar, who is both Knowledge and Ignorance Personified. As He has explained, the Avatar takes

ignorance upon Himself and actually becomes ignorant. Yet at the same time, His All-Knowingness shines through undiminished.

Now consider for a moment the exquisite humor of this situation. Of all the souls in creation, few would have been in a better position to understand this idea than Eruch Jessawala. After all, he had been the one to read out Baba's gestures when He gave to the public His great declarations of Avatarhood in the 1950s. Eruch had taken down Baba's dictation and written up the original draft of God Speaks. On top of that, for thirty years he had been Baba's personal attendant and had experienced intimately Baba's divine humanity in so many life spheres. Yet just now, he was working intently on the task that Baba had assigned to him, a task that Baba would want him to complete promptly.

And this was the moment that Baba selected to give him, through Goher, a discourse on the Avatar's inexplicable dual role in creation. Naturally Eruch listened to Goher with the complete focus and one-pointed attention that was so characteristic of him; when she was gone, he resumed work with the correspondence. Ten minutes later there she was at his door again, conveying, once more, the same message from

Baba:

*Anjaan ban rahe hai,  
magar jaante to hai!*

Once again Eruch stopped his work listened carefully, and acknowledged he had heard and understood what Baba wanted to say.

But that was not the end of it. A few minutes later Eruch was interrupted a third time, once more by Goher.

"Baba has asked me to repeat the message," she said. "Hear it again." Naturally Eruch always showed the highest respect to anything that came to him from Baba; but at this juncture, with the pressure of unfinished business

*continued on pg 9*

# A Letter From Meher Baba

My Dear Workers,

In spite of telling you very often that I will not give you any more messages or discourses, I find Myself doing just this thing which is what I do not want to do. This is because most of you do things which I do not like you doing.

I had to give you a message yesterday because you expected one; and the theme of the message was on your being My children, because despite much talk about a Baba-family there is more a semblance than a reality of kinship among you who are the children of One Father.

True children of One Father do not greet one another with smiles and embraces and at the same time harbour grudges and ill-feelings, but they have an active concern in their hearts for the well-being of one another and make sacrifices for that well-being.

If you make Me your real Father, all differences and contentions between you, and all personal problems in connection with your lives, will become dissolved in the Ocean of My Love.

You are all keen on spreading My message of Love and Truth and many of you in the East and West have laboured hard in this work; publishing magazines and other literature, organizing meetings, sacrificing your vacations in travelling, building halls and having statues made

of Me. But I wonder how much of My love and truth has been in your work of spreading My Message of Love and Truth!

Unless there is brotherly feelings in your hearts all the words that you speak or print in My name are hollow; all the miles that you travel in My cause are zero; all organizations for My work are but an appearance of activity; all buildings that contain Me are empty places and all statues that you make to embody Me are of someone else.

I have been patient and indulgent over the way you have been doing these things, because you have been very young children in My love, and children must have some sort of games to play. But now you are older and are beginning to realize that there is a greater work ahead of you than what you have been doing. And you have been searching your minds and hearts as to what this work might be.

It is not a different work to what you have been already doing — it is the same work done in a different way. And that way is the way of effacement, which means the more you work for Me the less important you feel in yourself. You must always remember that I alone do My work.

Although only the one who has become One with God can serve and work for all, I allow you to work for Me so that you have the opportunity to use your talents and capacities selflessly and to draw closer to Me. You should never think that in your work for Me you are benefiting others, for by being instrumental in bringing others to Me you are benefiting yourself.

My work is your opportunity. But when you allow yourself to intervene between you and My work, you are allowing the work to take you away from Me. When you put My work before yourself the work will go right, although not necessarily smoothly. And when the work does not go right it means you have put yourself between it and its accomplishment.

The way of My Work is the way of effacement, which is the way of strength, not of weakness and through it you become mature in My love. At this stage you cannot know what real love is, but through working for Me as you should work for Me, you will arrive at that ripeness where, in a moment, I can give you that for which you have been millions of years seeking.

“The 1962 East-West Gathering”, pp. 4-9 1962 © AMBPPCT

*Gatherings and meetings in my name should be a channel for the expression of my love. To give them any other importance is to misunderstand my cause. Avatar Meher Baba*

## Take a Stand on the Truth

by Rustom B. Falahati

On one occasion, when I had lost my temper on someone and Eruch noticed, he came up to us and lovingly tried to resolve the fight. Eruch did it in such a tactful way that the issue was resolved immediately. I was impressed as I had not expected the issue to be settled, which is why I had lost my temper.

I was sitting quietly with Eruch and my heart prompted me to ask him the following, “Eruch, I am sorry about losing my temper, but tell me, isn’t taking

a stand against injustice, against something that is wrong, isn’t that what Baba would want us to do? Doesn’t Baba want us to take a stand on righteousness?”

“No,” Eruch replied. “He wants us to take a stand on Truth and not on righteousness.”

“What’s the difference?” I asked.

*“When you take a stand on righteousness, your ego asserts itself and you get bound in the*

*falseness of illusion. But when you take a stand on the Truth, you have to be prepared to undergo all kinds of humiliations without reacting. If you can do that, the ego will diminish and gradually die out. When the ego dies completely, you experience the Truth.”*



I was trying to take in this profound message that Eruch was conveying with loving compassion and yet something within me was resisting. I said, "How do you deal with injustice?"

Eruch said, "Use injustice as an opportunity sent by Baba to undergo humiliation and to increase your dependence on Him."

I protested, "What would happen to the world if everyone followed your advice and refused to fight injustice?"

"It is not for everyone," Eruch explained, "to take a stand on Truth. It is meant only for those few who are prepared for total destruction - for those who dare to love and want Baba."

*The Real Treasure II, pp.88-90*

## Meher Baba on Harmony

Meher Baba gave this talk to His Western lovers in the Nasik Ashram, 1937.  
*Lord Meher, Vol 6, p 2087*

Baba arrived in Nasik on January 29th at 8:00 p.m. The next day in the afternoon, he held a meeting at which He stated He wished to discuss a matter of great importance: "Take all that I say seriously. It is vital. I have not yet started to work on you. I wanted to see how everything went on here during the first month. Now, today, certain things have to be decided. Be honest in your replies."

During the past month that you have been living here together, there has not been the harmony among you that I had hoped to see. As things stand at present, I cannot carry out the work I intend doing. Either you must live harmoniously together and help me in my work, or the ashram must be disbanded and I will have to do my work alone.

Are you all prepared to live here for five years? And harmoniously? I would definitely prefer you to stay and help me, but if you really think you cannot stay, or that there cannot be real harmony, then it had better be goodbye.

I have not yet started the work. The thorns are waiting to prick you. I am talking plainly to you, so do not answer without thinking. Do not let sentiment and temporary enthusiasm sway you. Once agreed and spoken, your promise must be adhered to. ....

There are bound to be differences, but one or the other of you must give

in. One of you must give in. That means all of you who stay must be prepared to give in. I do not mind crises, I do not mind chaos, but I do mind disharmony. At present, I have to spend my time patching up things, drawing both persons together on common ground, instead of spending it for the work and pushing you forward.

I tolerate everything. So, you must do the same. Be tolerant with everyone and when you feel like rising up in a fury and having an argument with your adversary, say: "I am here for Baba, and Baba wants above all else - harmony."

*Baba urged the Westerners, "Harmony is the basis of life, living in a group, working for and living with me and helping in my work. By following our personal feelings of likes and dislikes, the atmosphere is spoiled and hence the work suffers."*

## Strive with All Your Heart

Adi K. Irani

There is a ghazal by Seemab which, upon hearing some of the lines, Baba gave the poet liberation. Seemab was out of the body at the time. I would like to share some of the lines from this ghazal with you:

"Either peel off the layers of wounds of the heart and throw them out of sight, or accept the wounds (of separation from the Beloved) as positive indications of love."

My dears, what else is there to do but accept every situation as given by Him, and allow yourself to be ground to dust cheerfully? There is another ghazal that says that this life has been forced upon me, so why not keep happy?

Welcome the gifts of effacement of the false self that He offers even though it hurts. In coming to Him, everything dear to us — our friends, our concept of the spiritual path, everything — has to be taken away leaving only Him. Believe me, nothing that anyone has done to you has been done with malice. Each thing done by those who seemed to have hurt

you were done out of the sincerity of their perspective of how to serve Baba, no matter how limited that perspective might be.

This doesn't mean that your feelings of being hurt are not genuine. It is just that we have to grant the sincerity of the motive of others. The nature of the spiritual path is that two people who disagree can both be right. You see, only He is right and everyone else at best has only partial glimpses of the Truth.

You have been blessed because in the pain of what you have experienced, a new enthusiasm to reach Him and fall only at His feet has been born in you. This is what is important. Don't dwell on the past, don't be bitter about what has happened, but strive with all your heart to be His. Give yourself completely to Him. He is responsible for your spiritual welfare, don't be concerned about anything else. Remember Him, and automatically you forget yourself."

*Letters From the Mandali pp. 92-93, ed. Jim Mistry Copyright 1981 AMBPPCT*



*All Knowing continued from pg 7*

on his head, it was only human to start to feel exasperated. "All right, all right!" he said. "Tell Baba I won't forget. Look, I'm writing it down on the wall!" And with that, he stood up on his bed and scrawled out on the asbestos the two lines in Hindi that you can still see in that spot today.

How sublime are Baba's ways! Ostensibly, Baba was acting out of an old habit of His, repeating and repeating the same thing in a maddening way that tested the patience of those around Him. In the ordinary human sense, how could Eruch fail to have heard and understood Baba's message when it had been delivered to him three times in the last half hour? Yet by these means, Baba got that couplet written up on the wall of the Manonash Cabin at Meherazad—one of the significant sites of this Avataric Advent—where it stands for all posterity and all humanity. And the beauty of it is that the story itself illustrates what the couplet says. As Eruch used to observe, Baba's ignorance is His greatest weapon. By seeming not to know, He showers His mercy and confers His love in secret. His seeming ignorance is His pass of entry into His lovers' hearts.

# Changing Lives Through Baba's Love

Wayne Galler for Touch of Love Foundation

It has been a long and difficult year. It started with the attack on my cousins Erico and Heather, and ends now with my having open heart surgery and recovering my strength. I feel like Baba takes over in the difficult times and, more than helping, does the work for me. We have actually grown and blossomed as a Foundation and brought more of Baba's Love to those who have lost hope. Only Meher Baba carrying me could do this. Even to say this is a miracle seems to diminish the effect on Vicki and me. His strength just never leaves.

Over the past 14 months we have added two more orphanages to our care. We are at one right now in the Dominican Republic with 17 boys. We supply the food each month and each visit here we fill in with anything missing: a washing machine, coffee maker, underwear for all the kids as needed, brooms, mops, books, school supplies, and the always welcomed pizza party. In the Dominican Republic we also help a school with over 100 Haitian children and another 128 local poor children. Today Vicki and I are finishing a new classroom, their third, and we'll pay for doors, windows, a cement floor and plaster skim coat and paint on the walls. We have to finish before 17 August when school starts. This will allow 70 more children on the waiting list to attend; half in the morning session and half in the afternoon session. Imagine if your children never went to school and now could go for \$1.36 a month! Add to that having fled Haiti and the pain there.

The other orphanage that is new to us is in Ghana. We added it in January on our trip there as their funding had been cut off by another organization that ran out of money. Only Baba hears every cry out in the night and finds a way for a couple from California to somehow be drawn to rural Ghana to help.

The whole story of how we happened to go there was another miracle. I guess we should just expect them now and not be surprised.

India as always keeps to the center of my heart. A Touch of Love Foundation supports over 80 children in hostels, 55 in a study center, 17 in a nursery school and 250 for education in India. We also have two free medical clinics a month for the whole village, feed over 500 a school day at least one meal and have a forest replanting project in Ahmednagar district. We added eight orphans to our orphanage this year in South India and now have four children sponsored for college, including room, board and tuition. Three of the college students are from our original tsunami kids we found in February 2005. They had lost their homes and all possessions, some lost family members, and had nothing. What did Baba say about the nothing and the everything and how they

are connected? Now two will be in nursing, one an electrician and one a mechanic. The greatest miracle it seems to me is when Baba repairs the heart emotionally and spiritually.

As many of you know, A Touch of Love Foundation is all volunteer and all the money goes to the children and families in need. If you would like to be a part of this work for Baba,



*Children in India*

or to sponsor a child for \$18 a month, please call us at 1-877-273-2549 or go to our website at

**[www.atouchoflove.org](http://www.atouchoflove.org)**

Baba's Grace comes in so many forms and this is one of them.



*Children in Ahmednagar district in need of sponsorship*



*Children in Ghana*



# Update from the AMB Heartland Center

By Angela Lee Chen, New York

The Avatar Meher Baba Heartland Center (AMBHC) is dedicated to Meher Baba as an oasis of His remembrance. It is a place for information, overnight retreat, prayer, pilgrimage and study of Baba's unifying message of divine love. Based in the home of Dr. Ned Burleson, who treated Meher Baba after His 1952 accident, the AMBHC caretaker(s) also serves as guide to the accident site and hospital room where Baba stayed for 12 days.

Pilgrimage to these sites is a very powerful experience for most Baba lovers. Many report that it feels like

the Samadhi at these sacred sites. Baba lovers have been coming here ever since 1952, but now that we have a Center with overnight facilities, it is so much easier. Every Baba lover should take advantage of this richness Baba provides!

## Recent Board Retreat and Commemoration at the Site

The Heartland Center Board meets for an annual retreat around the anniversary of the accident. In 2010 we hosted an Open House and a commemorative visit to the accident site. We were joined by Baba lovers from Chicago who spent several nights with us, as well as Oklahoma Baba lovers who drove in for the day. Several members of the Prague community also showed up to see what we are about. In all, 20 people came to tea on May 24, 2010!

Our upcoming Board retreat will be combined with a work retreat to get the Morrison House together, and perform maintenance on the Burleson House, see below. Join us for a commemorative visit to the accident site on May 24, 2011, but we will only be able to accommodate day visitors this year: we can get you a list of nearby hotels.

## Morrison House

Thanks to generous donations from numerous Baba lovers, we were able to purchase the house immediately



The Burleson House Heartland Center 1319 Barta Avenue, Prague, OK

adjacent to the Burleson House, named the Morrison House after its previous owners. This increased our potential space for overnight pilgrims. Last May, Peter Nordeen led several volunteers in updating the electrical and air conditioning systems as well as shoring up the foundation (for more information and pictures, please see the 2009 AMBHC HeartBeat, and check out our Facebook page/see next page).

## Work Week Planned

The goal this year is to get the Morrison House as livable as possible, with the hope that the caretaker will be able to live there. This will free up the Burleson House to be dedicated solely to pilgrim retreats. We plan a volunteer work week for May 18-29, 2011, in order to strip and paint the walls, deep clean the attic and basement, demolish the current kitchen and replace with functional new cabinetry and appliances. We ask if there are any skilled workers who wish to donate their expertise and time to the AMBHC to email us (see next page for contact information).

## New Caretaker Found!

The 3-year term for our hard-working current caretakers, Ron Lansing and Miriam Rose, ends this year. We are extremely grateful for all they have given to the Center with their love, energy

and presence. They plan on returning to Oregon, and we wish them all the best in their renewed life there.

By Baba's Grace and with all the hallmarks of Baba turning the key (big time!), and as always just in the nick of time, we have a new caretaker lined up! Ginna Borisseau will be stepping into the role by May. An Ayurvedic healer, she plans on starting an herbal garden in the backyard, volunteering at the Hospital, and helping us update the Morrison House.

## 60th Anniversary Sahavas

It seems like a long time in the future to be planning ahead, but mark your calendars now for May 17-20, 2012 as the 60<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Sahavas, marking 60 years since Baba's accident. We plan for the Sahavas to be held at St Crispin's again, the same location as the 2005 Dedication Sahavas. The retreat facility can hold about 100 people, with newly renovated facilities, a pool, a lake, canoeing and hiking. Sahavas arrangements will include a visit to the accident site and Baba's hospital room, a tour of the Morrison House and Tea and Open House at the Burleson House. Everything depends upon enough volunteers! If interested in being on the organizational team please contact us.

## 2012 Pilgrimage Caravan

In addition, plans are afoot for a pilgrimage by rented vans and private cars from Myrtle Beach, following the roads Baba took in 1952 from the Meher Spiritual Center to near Prague, OK (attending the Sahavas) then following His trail back to Myrtle Beach. Dates will not be exactly corresponding to Baba's dates, but otherwise we will try to keep closely to His 1952 timeline. It looks good that we will have at least one, maybe even two, "tour guides" who knows the route and the Baba stories very well.

Check in occasionally to the Facebook page (see below) to see the most current





*Attendees of the tea party/open house included minister of the Methodist church, a couple of neighbors, local Oklahoma Baba lovers, two who drove down from Chicago, and the members of the board. In all, 22 attended the tea party!*

developments in this planning process. Please comment on the Pilgrimage Road Trip page regarding your interest, so that we can have some preliminary idea how many to plan for.

### **Prague Municipal Hospital Update**

The old part of the Hospital, where Baba was brought in 1952, is still intact. A newer larger wing was added later and the old hospital is now mostly administrative offices. However, the whole building is aging and the company running the hospital is having trouble keeping up with modern medical needs in the old infrastructure. As a result, they are breaking ground on a brand new facility. If they succeed in finishing the project, the current hospital building will be empty in as soon as a year! The building is owned by the City of Prague, whose plans for it are undecided as of now. The AMBHC is committed to making sure the original hospital building is preserved, but we do not know yet the logistics of how that will come about. Contact us if you wish to be involved in the Hospital Preservation Committee.

### **Accident Site**

The commitment of the AMBHC is to seek land immediately adjacent or across the highway from the accident site. So far we have not been successful

in either attempt. However, there are plots of land that have come up for sale nearby. Perhaps there are Baba lovers who would consider a private or group investment in Prague, OK... We would be pleased to coordinate such an effort if so desired, but because our caretakers are stretched just maintaining our two

houses and their yards, we cannot be responsible for any more land outside our primary commitment. Let us know if you are interested!

### **How to Contact Us**

Homeland Center contact information for events, volunteering, or??? at: [ambhc1952@gmail.com](mailto:ambhc1952@gmail.com)

### **New Facebook Page**

In addition to our regular website at [ambhc.org](http://ambhc.org), become a fan of our new FB page! Search under "Avatar Meher Baba Heartland Center." Since FB allows us to be more spontaneous in our updates, check in regularly for updated and detailed event information, photos from past events, links to other sites of interest, etc!

### **In Conclusion**

Baba has done some very important work in the area of Prague. We can only guess the meaning, but the past several years have shown that He has not forgotten about this place. He has turned the key to create a pilgrim center dedicated to Him, we are continually surprised at how active He is in maintaining the Center. And now we stand poised to hear His word on what will unfold next in His Heartland!



*Below: Jim Watson, Miriam Rose, Julia Margaret Burleson Brigham, Debbie Nordeen, Ron Lansing, Angela Lee Chen and John Poag*





# Spiritual Ecology

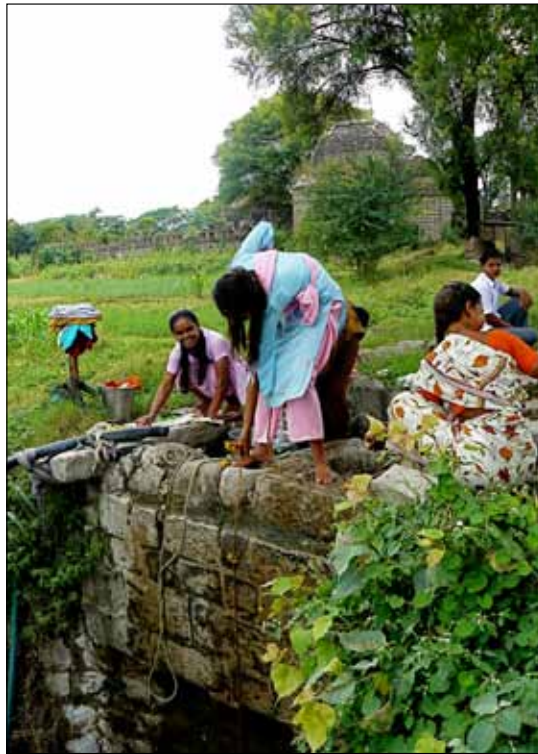
## Indian Villagers: Some Living Examples of Spiritual Ecology

Krishna Kant Shukla, Ph.D.

This is an excerpt from a radio interview with Dr. Krishna Kant Shukla. It was transcribed and lightly edited by Kendra Crossen Burroughs. Dr. Shukla is a musician, scientist, poet, and writer.

I was going to Indian villages to study their music. I had gone with a couple of my American friends to a small village called Devipuram in Andhra Pradesh. It was very hot and it was near the tribal forest, and there was a tribal lady who was selling green coconuts on the side of the road. You could see that she was economically very poor, she was wearing very clean clothes but her sari was torn, yet she has that dignity and that glow in her eyes, a very relaxed attitude and a beautiful smile. So I went and said “Can you give me a coconut?” She picked it up but was very iffy about it; she picked it up and put it down and said, “I’m sorry, I can’t sell you this coconut.” I said, “But I’ll give you money,” and I showed her the money. So she picked up the coconut and put it down again and said, “I’m sorry, just please buy from someone else.” I asked her, “Why are you doing this? Why are you not selling to me?” So she smiled and said, “I’m sorry, I should have explained. You see, before you, one customer after another came in the last half hour and bought coconuts from me. Now, you see that other lady sitting over there?” About 20 yards from her there was another woman with a similar shop on the ground. She said, “That lady should also sell some coconuts, otherwise it’s not good, so you go and buy from her.”

As I walked away from her, I had a realization that this woman has a principle; she knows something that the professors of economics at the London School of Economics, at the Delhi School of Economics, at the Harvard School of Economics don’t know. If only we can put this into the equation what this poor, illiterate Indian woman has done: you see, for her, profit is not an absolute god; the GNP or the upward flow of the chart



Lifting water from the well

is not an absolute god. She puts human feelings first, she has a code of honor in her business, and this is one of the many things that modern human beings can learn, because we have destroyed our God and destroyed our mythology, but we still have a god: we have made profit into our god and many other things that shouldn’t be a god.

Another example: I was roaming around the villages in the Himalayas and there was a goatherd, a man who had these beautiful Himalayan goats, and so I said, “Can I buy some goat milk from you?” And he said, “No, I’m sorry, I don’t sell the goat milk.” But he had like a hundred goats! I said, “They look really good. I’ll give you 50 rupees for just a little glass of milk,” which was a lot of money. But he said, “No, I’m sorry, we don’t sell the goat milk.” I said, “Why? Do you have a very large family, is that it?” He said, “No. We don’t sell the goat milk, we don’t drink the goat milk—we just let it go to waste.” I said, “Why do you do that? Goat milk has so much nutrition.” He explained, “We like to eat goat meat. That’s why we don’t drink the goat’s milk. Because the day we drink the milk of the goat, she becomes the Mother and we will no longer eat her meat.”

So this is another of many examples—the villagers have a code of honor by which they stand, and it doesn’t matter if they lose a huge amount of money. They honor and affirm the things they believe in, and they live for that rather than the profit.

[www.krishnakantshukla.com/](http://www.krishnakantshukla.com/)

Harvesting Green Beans, Meherabad

Photos by Bif Soper, Meherabad





# A Calling Answered



Leslie Bridger

Each has his own personal tale to tell of how he came to Meher Baba or in truth how Meher Baba came to him. Mine is simple. In 2002, on browsing through the small ads in *Caduceus*, a British metaphysical journal, I came across a somewhat familiar face. The ad was placed by the U.K. Meher Baba Association and the face was Meher Baba's. The quote beneath said more to me than all the literature that I had read to date on a 10-year spiritual quest. This was an answer to my inner searching that spoke directly to the heart. What it said is long forgotten but what it contained embedded in me a spark that changed my life beyond recognition. It was as if I were inverted, held aloft by my ankles and shaken vigorously from a life that although once secure, held no meaning.

Ill health had triggered my search and desperation had cracked my shell to the point of being ready to surrender my all to the Avatar.

The way forward continues to this day as the latest leap of faith, under the Master's guidance, has opened the doors for my family to leave behind our heritage and to embark on our own personal new life.

Our U.S. adventure that would link our destiny to Meher Mount began with a California road trip in August 2009. Our intent was to find a suitable place in which to relocate and set up home. U.K. born and bred, this island no longer held our soul's ambition. With karmic constraints addressed, our thirsty roots craved the fertile soil of pastures new.

We had made this decision one year earlier on an intuitive directive to emigrate with an intention of finding and creating "a space of love" in which to grow and serve.

On Sunday the 23<sup>rd</sup> of August, we took a welcome break from our quest and headed to Meher Mount as day pilgrims and picnickers. A sweltering summer was taking its toll on the Southern California foothills with parched tinder dry land laid bare to the scorching 100 degree mid-day sun.



Samantha and Leslie Bridger

As we ascended Sulphur Mountain and drove through Meher Mount's open gateway to an empty car park, we felt at last we could let down the guard that had protected us from the deluded impression that we were an alien species in an alien land. Here was somewhere that we knew instantly was very special: an oasis rising above the chaotic turmoil of twenty-first century America, a sacred space that spoke in silence those immortal words, "welcome home." This was Baba's turf and this familiarity was heaven sent.

On foot, we continued through the second gateway with yet more reassurance, individual and personal to each. For my wife Samantha, it was the smell of roses --Samadhi after morning arti. For me, it was Meherabad Hill's essence beyond expression. For our daughters, Rebecca and Georgina, this was a great spot to picnic and catch some sun.

We met Ray Johnston, the current manager/caretaker. He was comfortable and casual in his meet-and-greet role with seven years karma yoga experience on the mountain. To us, a question: "So what brought you to America?" From me an instant heartfelt reply: "Meher Mount!" This was news to me, but as so often is the case, the mind is oblivious to that which the heart has acted upon.

Ray directed us towards Baba's tree as the ideal spot

to picnic, a commanding and ancient Coast Live Oak under which Meher Baba had sat on a bed of leaves and consecrated this sacred land on his visit on August 2, 1956. Meher Baba had remarked "This land is very old, I have been here before." For us, the shaded branches of its majestic canopy were most welcome and a pilgrim's feast prepared at Jersey Mike's Subs in Ojai was enjoyed.

After taking in the heat-hazed vistas and exploring as much as the body was willing to allow, we retreated to the cooling fans of the Meher Mount Visitor's Center full of Meher Baba memorabilia, books, mission statements, and a 3D slide projector that worked somewhat sporadically. We browsed respectfully while waiting for Ray to reemerge before departing. When he did, we thanked him for allowing us access and asked if we could return on the last day of our vacation, with guitar, and play a devotional song or two under the tree. This would be fine, but Ray would be absent.

The following Wednesday, we phoned Meher Mount and put in our request, speaking briefly to a lady who was covering for Ray. Her name was Margaret Magnus and having asked if we had been before, she said that we were most welcome.

We made the now familiar ascent on Sulphur Mountain Road followed all the way by a large white sedan. It stuck to our tail like glue and if there had been a suitable place to pull in and allow it to pass I would have willingly conceded.







*Sulphur Mountain*

On entering Meher Mount the sedan followed, and on parking our vehicle it pulled alongside. A window came down and we were greeted by a smiling, rather familiar face with a warm expression which appeared to be of expectation. Unknown to us, it was Sam Ervin, chairman of the board and Margaret's husband. He welcomed us and directed us to the center.

Once in, we spoke of our journey, our connection to Meher Baba, and our intention now to relocate to Ojai, a sanctuary nestled securely in the motherland that seemed to align with all of our new life's needs. Then, in conversation, as if orchestrated by the unseen hand of destiny, Sam mentioned that Ray would be standing down as caretaker in June 2010 and that they were just about to start the process of recruiting a suitable replacement. With Margaret focused on preparing the recruitment notice and Sam cheerfully engaging us in conversation, I acted: "I'll do it!" Sam stepped back and his face dropped. "No" was his reply. "We're looking for a couple." I quickly glanced towards Samantha's somewhat stunned face and declared "We'll do it!"

Following Baba's guidance, we had experienced two weeks of busy roads, forest fires and fruitless searches only to be presented on the last day with this – a chance to truly serve in His name.

Sam gave us an impromptu tour of Meher Mount which became an interview of sorts, and returned to the center to tell a somewhat skeptical Margaret

that they may have found the right couple. We returned to Baba's tree and played some rather excitable devotional songs and laid our fears at His feet. The process had begun and many initiations followed, but finally and with His Grace, we are here.

For me, the caretaker/manager's role for Meher Mount is one of guardianship, surrendering to Meher Baba's will in service, and to spare no effort to hold secure this sacred site in His divine name. The solid foundation laid by Agnes Baron's legacy of nearly fifty years of devoted work and service are to be built upon by each successive caretaker with great care and respect for all that has gone before. When Agnes met Baba in 1952 at Myrtle Beach, Baba said: "I want Agni to know that only Agni, God and Baba know what she has gone through in these six years to hold Meher Mount for me."

Situated atop of Sulphur Mountain at 2600 foot level, Meher Mount is 173 acres overlooking the beautiful Ojai Valley on the north. To the southwest is the Pacific Ocean and the Channel Islands. Topa Topa Mountain in the Los Padres National Forest is to the northeast. Who wouldn't be humbled by the opportunity to visit such a sight, long held sacred by the early Chumash inhabitants, and walk in the footsteps of the Ancient One?

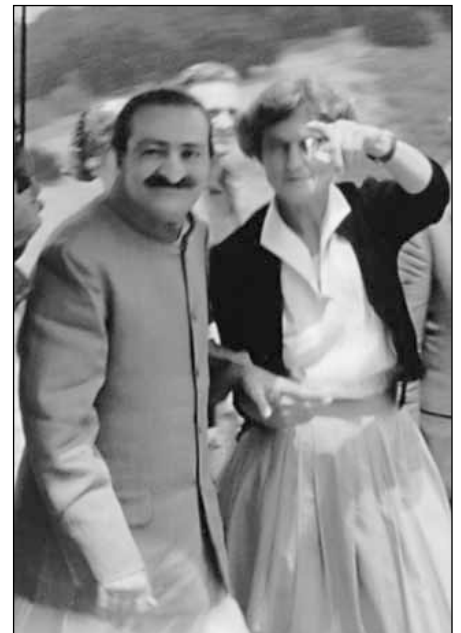
Today, nature's divine beauty that pervades Meher Mount is offered to day-pilgrims. The veil is thin here and one can replenish a soul's thirst from its sacred well. On His visit, Baba gave no discourse but told His followers they should laugh,

feel relaxed, and be happy here. He bade them: "Now go out and see the view and try to love Baba through nature. This is all due to my love. This whole creation, this nature, all the beauty you see, all came out of me."

With a new era unfolding under Meher Baba's advent, responsibilities and opportunities for all who choose to serve are immense. With the Meher Mount master plan in place, exciting times lay ahead. We are eager to play our roles in achieving its fruition.

My background in engineering, forestry and spiritual healing will hopefully give me many of the necessary tools to accomplish the mission (duty) that Meher Baba has laid before me. The contemplative, quiet times will provide me with the opportunity to pursue my passion as a writer of poetry and song. Samantha's experience in complementary therapies and her innate ability to assess and respond to the needs of others will, no doubt, assist her in the role that she has taken on.

Our own awakening process has been intimate and profound. As we commit to God, we commit to each other, and as we commit to each other, we commit to Meher Mount. To echo the words of Meher Baba: "I love Meher Mount very much and feel happy here."



*Meher Baba with Agnes Baron at Meher Mount*

**Meher Mount, 9902 Sulphur Mountain Road, Ojai CA 93023, 805-640-0000  
info@mehermount.org  
www.mehermount.com**

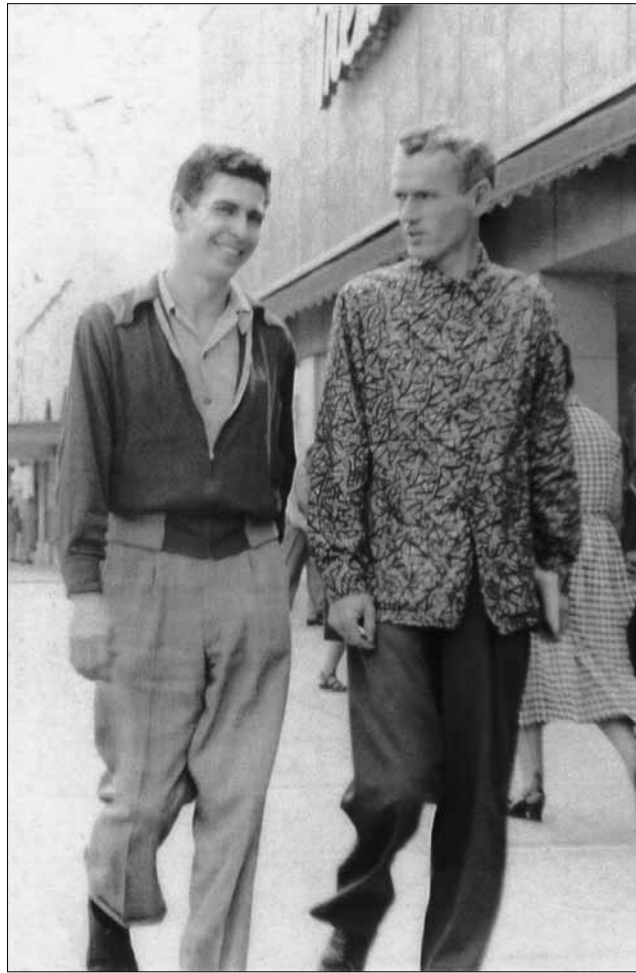
# The Missing Link

Craig Smith, Myrtle Beach, SC

As an amateur historian, I am fascinated by the seemingly coincidental chains of connection between Baba lovers — how we all met one another and found out about Meher Baba from each other. And for years the question burned within me: Who is the man who linked Ralph Hernandez to George McCuen? Only recently did I discover that that man was Jim Bryan (see photo). Jim Bryan is the Missing Link! Let me explain.

George was my friend when we both were living in North Myrtle Beach in the 1970s. In fact, George worked for me when I had a tree surgeon business here then. I call this story “The Missing Link” because even George himself doesn’t give the name of his Baba contact when being interviewed in the film *God Man*, an Australian film of the 1976 *Amartithi* in India. This is the film that features Peter Townshend singing, but before that we see George’s face filling the whole frame. With a wide grin, full of enthusiasm, George says he had to find that purple light which he saw from a high vantage point overlooking L.A. at night.

George’s job was making deliveries. He was a delivery man. When he found the purple light, he tells me, “it was on a very tall tower above a movie theater. There was a small group of buildings all together — all little shops along with the theater in the middle of a residential area. It wasn’t Jim’s light. But when I checked out the group of stores, I saw Jim’s place done up in the same colors. The sign said, “Café Metaphysics, Where Truth Is a Regular Diet.” I came back the next day while doing my deliveries. It was closed, so I knocked on the door, and Jim came and invited me in.” Jim had a small 5 x 7 inch picture of Baba (“in a dazed state” in the early 1920s; see vol. 1, p. 222, of *Lord Meher*) when Baba was still not quite back to gross consciousness after being God-realized.



Ralph Hernandez, L. and Jim Bryan, R. in Tampa, FL in the early 1950’s.

Here I must insert that George told me over the phone that at this point (1963) he was already a seeker. He had been to the Yogananda Center in L.A. He was looking for a Master. When he saw this photo of Baba, he was thrilled because he knew he had found his Master. He writes, “I repeated what Jim said after each of my questions.” George said, “Who’s that?” Jim said, “That’s Meher Baba.” George said, “That’s Meher Baba! Who’s Meher Baba?” Jim says, “He’s the Avatar.” George says, “He’s the Avatar. What’s an Avatar?” We don’t know Jim’s answer, but it was probably, “God in human form.” George writes, “Three questions, three answers.”

Now, generations of Baba lovers have seen the film *God Man*, but I bet not one in a hundred knows that it was Jim Bryan who told George about Baba. Jim Bryan was a close friend of Ralph Hernandez’s

in Tampa. The story of Ralph and Jim’s friendship will be written elsewhere. Suffice it to say that Jim Bryan met Baba in 1956 and 1958 when he traveled from Tampa to the Meher Spiritual Center Myrtle Beach with Ralph and Stella. Jim’s wife did not go with them in 1958 because she did not become a Baba lover. Later Jim split up with his wife and moved to L.A. He set up his shop near the purple light with the express purpose of telling people about Baba. Yet George was his only “convert” — the only one who became a Baba lover.

Jim gave George some books, one of which had Filis Frederick’s name and address in it. George went to meetings at Jim’s café every evening. Sometimes he was the only one there. George brought his friend Stanley to meet Jim. One day Stanley said to Jim, “Well, if George is the only one coming, then your store is a failure.” Jim said, “No — it’s a success because of him,” and he pointed to George. George says that later Jim “disappeared.”

Now, to pick up Jim’s story from Ralph Hernandez: Ralph tells me that Jim moved to Las Vegas; it must’ve been by at least 1969 because Ralph got a call from Jim, who was very upset when he heard Baba had died. Later Jim wanted Ralph and Stella to move to Las Vegas and open a restaurant with him. But by 1973 Ralph and Stella had moved from Tampa to North Myrtle Beach and they wanted to stay there, not go to Las Vegas. Jim Bryan died soon after that.

George was directed to meet the L.A. Baba people and a short time later got married to Adele Wolkin. George tells me he was married to Adele for eight years (1965-1973). They officially divorced in 1974 but separated in 1973 soon after they moved to North Myrtle Beach from N.Y.C. George and Adele were among the founders of Baba House, which first

opened on Barrow Street in Greenwich Village about 1970 (after Fred and Ella Winterfeldt, by Baba's direction, had stopped holding their Monday Night meetings in New York and retired to Myrtle Beach).

In 1968 I was in a café in lower Manhattan having coffee while waiting to go to Defender Industries to buy equipment for my sailboat to sail around the world (before I heard about the 1969 Darshan) when a van stopped for a red light at that corner. The van had a big poster of Meher Baba on its side. It was George's van that he used in his business making deliveries in N.Y.C.! Needless to say, I was blown away by this "coincidence." I hadn't met George yet because we (my wife Louise and daughter Shelley and I) lived in North Carolina (along with the Gunns and the Appleys; see Golden Thread, Barbara Scott's marvelous history of the Chapel Hill Baba group) until August 1968, when we moved in with my aunt in Sea Cliff, Long Island. I got a job as a tree climber in order to have income to outfit our boat. But soon this income would go for three plane tickets to India for me, Louise, and Shelley (our younger daughter, Laura Smith Mini, wasn't born yet). By 1975 I had a tree business in Myrtle Beach, and later hired many Baba guys (often sent to me by Kitty) to help me with tree work. George had a problem with alcohol until Ed Luck patiently persuaded him to quit. In fact, both George and Ed were my ground crew on several tree jobs so they could earn money to go to India in 1976. And that is how George got into the film *God Man*.

My main reason for writing this story is so that people will know that the chain or "genealogy" of Baba contacts to George was as follows: After the Three Incredible Weeks in 1954, Dana Field came to Tampa (again, specifically to tell people about Baba) and told Ralph Hernandez in 1955. Then Dana, Ralph, and Stella and Jim Bryan and his wife met Baba in Myrtle Beach in 1956. Jim split up with his wife and moved to L.A. in the early '60s. Then George heard of Baba from Jim in 1963.

A lot more could (and probably will) be written about all these Baba lovers, but that can wait for other (better) writers than me. I do this only to restore George and Jim to the "known" Baba world.



# Reflections on Some Baba Words

Ross Keating, Sydney, Australia

There are many words in the English language that Meher Baba has breathed new life into and put into His service. For instance, the way Baba has defined such key terms as mind, heart, consciousness, and soul in *God Speaks* means that we can now all be on the same page when discussing ideas for which these terms are integral. Another of the great gifts of *God Speaks* is that it demonstrates the underlying unity in Sufi, Vedantic, and mystic Christian terminology: bringing diverse theological beads together on one string. This is something that inter-religious dialogue can only dream of achieving. If and when *God Speaks* becomes universally accepted as authoritative, then many of the metaphysical questions that have haunted Western thought since Plato will not only be solved but transcended because the terms associated with these questions will be seen in a new and revealing light. One is reminded here of Plato's own admonition to his students before they entered into discussion: "Define your terms."

But more important, I think, are those words that Baba has vitalised by using them to define His own actions. Words like 'companionship,' which for me is now such a strong Baba-word because of its association with the New Life and all that this period in Baba's advent embodies. Other words such as love, obedience, and surrender have come to new life because their meaning is now grounded in the stories I've heard of the lives of Baba's mandali, which tell of how they lived solely for Him. And the way that Baba has used these words in His messages has given them a sort of resurrected presence for this age. Who cannot but be deeply moved by Baba's simple but monumental statement, *Gifts of Love*?

*Love is a gift from God to man.*

*Obedience is a gift from Master to man.*

*Surrender is a gift from man to Master.*

*One who loves desires the will of the Beloved.*

*One who obeys does the will of the Beloved.*

*One who surrenders knows nothing but the will of the Beloved.*

*Love seeks union with the Beloved.*

*Obedience seeks the pleasure of the Beloved.*

*Surrender seeks nothing.*

*One who loves is the lover of the Beloved.*

*One who obeys is the beloved of the Beloved.*

*One who surrenders has no existence other than the Beloved.*

*Greater than love is obedience.*

*Greater than obedience is surrender.*

*All three arise out of, and remain contained in, the Ocean of Divine Love.*

*The Everything and the Nothing, p. 5*

But, from another angle, this statement could easily be read as just another brand of "opiate for the people" — "Surrender seeks nothing." Undoubtedly, this interpretation of Baba's words will happen in the future. But what can one say in response? In a real sense this is Baba's "problem": if He doesn't choose to speak His words directly into a person's heart, then they won't be understood, for ultimately it is Baba who gives them life. There's certainly no logic to peruse in a lot of what Baba says, and so no one can be convinced of their validity through reasoning. In the end, a person can only be awakened to their truth.

A similar interpretation could be given to Baba's statement, of which there are many variations, "Above all else be content with your lot, rich or poor, happy or miserable. Understand that God has designed it for your own good, and be resigned to His will" (*Listen, Humanity*, p. 184). Is this a recipe for inaction, for passivity, a formula for turning one's life into a doormat, for laying oneself open

*continued on page 23*



# A Visit to Pumpkin House

by Robin Shearer

**M**y first trip to Meherabad in February was everything I hoped for and expected and more. I met so many wonderful people who share love for Baba, seeing Meherazad, and visiting Baba's Samadhi everyday, all were wonderful life changing experiences for me. But I'm writing to share a particular experience with you that powerfully affected me, my visit to Pumpkin House for Children, an orphanage near Meherabad. At home, I am a juvenile court judge in Georgia. All of my work is focused on children and families. A large part of this work consists of deciding cases involving children who have been abused or neglected by their parents and have to

enter foster care. The ultimate goal is to reunite children with their families, but it's unfortunately not always possible. I frequently review all the cases and have intimate knowledge of the children and their circumstances, the trauma they have experienced and the harmful affects of both losing their parents and the foster care system. Imagine my delight to visit Pumpkin House and see 64 beautiful, smiling faces, all of whom had experienced the same things I see in my daily work life, being cared for with such love by the amazing adults in their lives.

On my first visit, Charlie Gard'ner, Mark Hodges and I took a rickshaw from the pilgrim retreat to this building right on the side of the road. I was still absorbing everything about local life, and was fascinated by the homes. The gate was right next to the road, and we were warmly greeted by Stella Manuel and one of her sons and ushered inside.

Stella is the principal of the Meher English School at Meherabad. She runs the orphanage, and her whole family is involved. She has 64 children — boys and girls. She accepts children as young as 18 months, and prefers to take them before they are old enough to comprehend too much about the circumstances they were born into. Many of them were



Robin plays happily with the children

photo Mark Hodges

born to prostitutes who have HIV. Others have horrible tales of trauma. She pointed out a boy whose mother left and then the father hung himself. A brother and a sister were hung by the neck by their father, and the villagers cut them down and took them to the orphanage. Many others had similar tales.

The children and the adults had obviously been working very hard for an upcoming environmental program Stella was planning to host for all the local school children. The first thing I saw as I approached the house was a large model of an arctic environment with penguins and polar bears and other arctic life on a large glacier that had been made by the children. The entry of the home had been transformed into a jungle with vines and trees. A recording of jungle sounds was playing and stuffed animals like monkeys and tigers were strategically placed about.

Passing through the "jungle", we saw the children all lined up and ready to greet us. Their faces were all smiling, and they displayed impeccable manners. Stella made a point of telling the children that I was a judge, and she had me sit in a chair while the children lined up. Each of the children introduced themselves. Some shook my hand. Some gave me

hugs. But all were polite and charming. I couldn't help but be impressed, knowing some of the stories of these children and the trauma they had experienced. Not one of them was misbehaving or acting out, or reluctant to participate. They all looked me in the eye and proudly said their names and greeted me as Miss. My experience in the US with children in these same circumstances is quite different. More often than not, they are diagnosed with behavior and personalities disorders. They are often medicated with psychotropic medications. I was quite impressed to say the least.

After greeting us, Stella had the children gather together

and sing for us. They gave a delightful performance. And we stayed and visited for quite a while. I felt an immediate friendship with Stella. We shared stories about our contacts with children who had suffered at the hands of their parents and others and who have endured so much at such young ages. It is the same for children in the US and India or wherever they are. The pain of children as helpless individuals brought into this world under circumstances that lead to suffering is universal.

I was so impressed with these beautiful and seemingly well-adapted children that I couldn't help talking about it later at the Retreat Center. My roommate was very interested, and wanted to visit Pumpkin House. The next day, three of us bought candy and treats and made an impromptu visit. We were not expected, and I was apprehensive about dropping in unannounced. But I was pleased to see that the children were playing and everything was in very good order when we arrived. We were welcomed warmly and my friends were as charmed by the children as I was. They were very busy getting ready for their program.

Stella had planned a big environmental festival, and had invited local

*continued on p 20*



# Summer Picnic for the Pumpkin House Children

Stella Manuel

We take our children out during for their Summer and Diwali vacation. On 18th May 2010 we had taken them to the outskirts of Lonavala near Pune. It was a fun trip with all our kids and the volunteers. We needed a break from our daily routine and so did the children, and so the trip. The children enjoyed it a lot and it was very refreshing. They had lots of sweets and cookies and cheese and butter toast! They are also very proud to talk about their trip when school starts. It's a happy feeling to hear them talk about their family picnic.

The year before last, we had visited Pimpalgaon [Meherazad]. Last year we had an Environment Day project for 500 children at Pumpkin House itself.



Environmental Day focussed on saving the environment. The children created scenes of wild animal habitats for the festival.







"Stella and family of helpers with her children"

photo Mark Hodges

dignitaries. The Mayor of Ahmednagar and the environmental minister of Maharashtra were present, and students and teachers from many of the local schools. We attended the festival, where a large tent was set up, and I was amazed at how much had been accomplished in the last couple of days since I had been there. It seemed at least two hundred people were there. Students and teachers, invited guests and dignitaries all joined together to celebrate the children, the environment, and to discuss concerns. The children were gathered in groups by the school they attended, and I loved all the brightly colored uniforms. They worked very seriously on competitions to make posters and art projects that Stella had ready for them. It was a very successful day.

My final visit was for the birthday of my good friend and one of the founders of the Pumpkin House, Charlie Gard'ner. They had made a massive meal, which we shared. Stella's husband works all day at his job and then cooks for the whole house every night. It was the largest amount of food I had ever seen prepared at one time. It was wholesome and delicious, though, and prepared with love, and who can ask for more than that. All of the children know Charlie and look forward to celebrating his birthday every year. After dinner there was much celebration, singing, dancing, and of course, birthday cake. It warmed my heart to see the relationships between the children and so many caring adults who work so hard to see to their welfare. Without the

work of these individuals, these 64 children would be left to the streets. Many of them would already be involved in illegal trades like drugs and prostitution. Some of them might not even be alive today without Pumpkin House.

I learned a lot about life and love and service from my visit to Pumpkin House. I shared so much with Stella, but I have much to learn from her as well. She impressed me with the devotion she has to all the children. She has sacrificed her own personal comfort, and her family for them. Each member of the family sleeps, eats and lives with the children all day, and throughout, provides the education, discipline, love, and opportunity for enrichment that children need to thrive. Stella was also very interested in my own profession and the stories I hear in the courtroom each day about youth lost to drugs, family violence, apathy, or gangs. She gave me one piece of advice I will never forget. I think about this each day as I sit on the bench. She said "look them in the eye and show them love. Use love as the basis for deciding each case. Love can break through everything." When I see the happy faces at Pumpkin House, I know how true her words are, and through that love we can all make

a difference in the suffering of others, especially children.

A quote from Meher Baba just happened to arrive in my email as I am writing, and I can't think of any better words to express my sentiments towards Stella, her family and their work on behalf of these children.

"Selfless work, as you all know, has many aspects in the social and political field. Each aspect thereof, though tinged with a particular cultural background, has its own merit and consequential reward. But the work relating to the welfare of babies is in a class by itself. Babies and infants everywhere in the world are the very epitome of God's purity and innocence. They are guileless and helpless and yet they desire and expect nothing. Why do men see and recognize the enemy and the criminal outside? Because the so-called enemy and the criminal are already within them. Babies have no criminal or enemy within and therefore see none outside. I am also called "Baba," which means a baby. And in fact all God realized souls are unsophisticated like babies. I, therefore see and enjoy my purity and colorlessness in the unselfconscious ones, the babies. This is what is called real selfless service, when you are serving the little ones, and this is tantamount to rendering service directly unto God. The Biblical statement "and whosoever shall receive one such little child in my name, receiveth Me" bears out what I have said." *Glimpses of the God-Man*, Vol. I, pp 394-395, Bal Natu, Copyright 1977 by Bal Natu.

I can't think of a better example of these words of Baba's in action than those loving individuals at Pumpkin house. Note the Pumpkin House girls in traditional Indian dress next to Stella.

The children at an art exhibit at Meherabad





# *My Parents and Meher Baba*

Max Reif, California

The title of this piece is rather presumptuous, since what do I really know about my parents' spiritual state or relationship with God? But, as both of them, Irwin and Corinne Reif, are "gone" now, I would like to share a remarkable story I have witnessed that I feel deeply attests to Beloved Baba's Infinite Love.

When I "came to Baba" in the Chicago advertising office of my college friend Ellis Pines, in the upper floors of the Prudential Building in 1971, I was naturally thrilled. I was thrilled perhaps even more than some, for at a point not much before that, I had not seen any way through life for me at all, since the combination of psychedelics and a psyche made especially delicate by some un-integrated childhood trauma (karma) seemed to have messed up my brain beyond repair.

I had been taking unusually strong antidepressant pills, even to get out of the house to get to what in retrospect I realize was my "appointment with God." The pills had been a kind of pseudo-spiritual experience (I stopped taking them not long after coming to Baba — and then had to pay a price, but that's another story.) Baba was a REAL spiritual experience, a taste of the goal of union, at least in terms I could assimilate without burning up! It was enough of a stimulus, along with several other powerful experiences, to keep me going inwardly even in times of prolonged spiritual drought, to this day. Not long after that experience, I hitchhiked to South Bend, Indiana, to visit some friends from a commune I'd lived on for a while in New York State. I told them about Baba, of course, and showed them Pete Townshend's cover story in Rolling Stone and the cover photo of Baba; the issue happened to come out that week (November 26, 1970).

A couple days after that, on a Sunday, I think, I phoned my folks. Collect, if memory serves. "Mom, I've found God!" was all I exclaimed when she answered. I felt that my quest was for our whole family, would benefit our whole family. How could anyone respond differently than I had, to the greatest boon anyone or any family could possibly receive?

As you may have guessed, Mom did not exactly get right on the bandwagon.

What greeted me on the other end of the line was a profound silence . . . which lasted for about the next fifteen years.

There seemed to be no possible bridge in the universe to get across to my parents the simple good news — of love — that was all I ever wanted to share. I know many Baba-lovers have had similar experiences when attempting to share Baba with their families.

Instead of the joyful reaction I'd hoped for, there were questions: "Why couldn't you find God in Judaism?" . . . demands: "Now, come back and find God in Judaism!" . . . inaccurate statements: "Meher Baba never did a day's work in his life!" . . . more questions . . . "If he was really God, wouldn't he be much more handsome?" (I guess Dad hadn't seen many photos of Baba) . . . descriptions of my new path, made by my father to his friends, that I had to listen to: "They don't eat meat, they don't have sex" [which in my case, though it may not have pleased Baba, was not true, for I'd met a young woman and we felt "married in God's eyes"] . . . Baba's Way was defined exclusively by things one could NOT do, as though loving God meant not living at all!

And that was how it remained for a number of years. I went through some additional extreme ups and downs that involved my family by definition of their connection with me, and had them tearing their hair in helplessness. The trend of these ups and downs was upward, though. I underwent a long, multilayered healing, as Baba in stages would give me joy and then take me to a deeper buried layer that I had to face, and that was impossible to face without His help.

During this time I was introduced to a new way of life during my many visits to the Meher Spiritual Center in Myrtle Beach, as well as during a couple of periods when I lived in the city. Little by little, my sense of being a "shattered mirror," — an image I saw inwardly one time while bowing in front of Baba's chair in the Lagoon Cabin — yielded to a greater sense of wholeness.

I also received personal "fathering" from the American spiritual teacher Ram Dass, also known as Richard Alpert (who, although not a Baba-lover, corresponded

with Meher Baba, and Baba is reported to have said about him, "He is Mine". For some six months, Ram Dass helped me get through issues that were so personal I did not feel I could share them with Kitty or the other ladies at the Center. This all happened purely, I feel, by Baba's hand and, again, is quite a story in itself.

My parents remained utterly baffled by Meher Baba and the life of the son they had "put their money on" to be some kind of big success in the world. All this surely challenged them to their cores; but I have to say they continued loving me, all through the darkest periods. But they also, my dad especially, felt Baba had "taken me away" from them, as well as from any desire or capacity to lead any kind of life that made sense to them.

One time I was at my folks' house when a friend was coming over, and I wanted some privacy to talk with him. Dad was sitting out on the patio, where my friend was coming to join me. I went and got a picture of Baba and put it up on an easel that was sitting out there, and Dad got up and left. I knew he would; the disconnect was that profound. I don't say this was the most loving thing for me to do, but the story makes its point.

Dad asked me once, "Why is it that you have so many father figures?" Indeed, I'd been fortunate to have had close relationships with Lyn Ott and Edward and Irwin Luck during these years, as well as with Ram Dass. I couldn't explain very well to Dad about this new way of life that required dimensions of understanding that he wasn't conversant with. He remained, and remains, one of the closest human "personifications" of Baba's Love that I've ever known, in the wonderful, beaming love he gave me, particularly during my first decade on earth.

The dire family fragmentation and misunderstanding began to heal in the late '70s. The conditions for that beginning had to be especially "manufactured" by Baba, it seems to me. Here is how that happened:

My mother's brother was at that time a physician. He and his wife, also a doctor, lived in Cincinnati, Ohio. One summer they went on vacation to Charleston,

South Carolina, and liked the nearby Isle of Palms so much that they bought a vacation home there. A year or two after that, they invited my mom to visit them there.

After spending time with her brother and sister-in-law, Mom got the thought: “That place Max goes to is less than a hundred miles up the coast, in Myrtle Beach. I could easily go visit there from here!” So my 57-year-old, rather proper mother, averse to new things as she always professed she was, made a reservation at the Center, got on a Greyhound bus, and went on up there, all on her own.

Keep in mind that she and my dad both believed that “Meher Spiritual Center” was probably a wildlife preserve with a bunch of caves where these Baba-lovers lived. She likely had no expectation of finding any “civilization” there. I enormously admire her courage in going.

And, as Baba rewards such courage, Mother was not met by cave-dwelling fakirs, but by Elizabeth Patterson, Kitty Davy, and Jane Haynes, ladies of “the old school” who completely charmed her. She even, on returning to St. Louis, saw and bought a teakwood screen exactly like one Kitty had in her office!

It so happened that Adi K. Irani, Baba’s secretary, was also visiting Myrtle Beach that week. I remember being stunned when Mom casually told me over the phone one evening, after she’d let me know where she was, “I have to go now. Who is Adi? He and Charles Haynes are coming to pick me up and take me to a party.”

There were even other coincidences: Mom knew even before I did that Michael and Cynthia Shepard were moving to St. Louis to start the city’s first Baba group. She also shared a cabin at the Center with someone who had been through emotional hurdles that bore some resemblance to those I had gone through. In commiserating with this young lady, she came away with a significantly increased understanding of her son.

My parents came to the Center together a couple of years after Mom’s solo visit, during a heavenly year in my life when I was working daily for Lyn Ott, helping him to write and edit a novel about the artist Vermeer (a manuscript Lyn never completed). It was a joyful time, sitting in the Otts’ living room, listening to Dad tell jokes to Lyn and Phyllis, everyone feeling relaxed and comfort-

able. So that was the first breakthrough — that and my own progressive healing.

A humorous incident from that period comes to mind, after that first corner was turned. Before my second trip to India, in 1983, my parents began to join in my preparations. They tried to help by buying me what seemed to them the appropriate clothing: tons of khaki-colored safari clothes — including even, I seem to remember, a pith helmet.

I began to feel myself in a bind. On the one hand, I didn’t want to hurt their feelings. On the other, I was beginning to feel burdened by the sanskaras of their wishes and their concept of my pilgrimage, which took the form of all these clothes. It got to the point where I was in danger of missing my flight as I struggled to stuff everything into my duffel bag. Finally realizing I had to draw a line, I pulled a bunch of the stuff out of the bag and said to myself, “I’m sorry, but Baba has to come first. I need to get to His Samadhi, and I never will, this way!” I made it, but only because I limited the number of “parental sanskaras” I took along (to give to Baba) on that trip.

The next big development in this familial saga was one that some in the St. Louis Baba family may be familiar with. It took place in 1994. I was living in Myrtle Beach at the time of Beloved Baba’s 100th Birthday celebration. I was fortunate to play the role of Sai Baba of Shirdi in the play that was presented in a big white tent erected on the Center parking lot. It was a speaking part only a paragraph in length, but it brought with it the perk of “being” Sai Baba: looking like him, and imaginatively feeling like him, that wonderful afternoon walking around the Center in a white skirt and head scarf, bearded and barefoot (the bronchitis I contracted was a small price to pay for the experience). I don’t think I mentioned Baba’s 100th to Mom and Dad. And so I was floored, during a phone call with Mother soon after, to hear her say, “Dad and I went to Baba’s 100th Birthday Party in St. Louis!” In St. Louis? So far as I’d known, there hadn’t even been a Baba group in St. Louis for at least the past five years! What was she talking about?

“We were looking through the Riverfront Times [a big semi-alternative newspaper],” Mom explained, “and we saw an ad for Meher Baba’s 100th Birthday Party, at the Focal Point in Webster Groves. And I said to Dad, ‘That’s Max’s family; so it’s our family, too!’ So we

went. We were the first ones there, and we met the most wonderful lady there, Janice Rieman, and we both just fell in love with her. We stayed for the whole party, and even stayed to clean up with Janice afterward.”

I nearly burst into tears just now, writing this. My parents found their way to Baba by themselves! The rest is history. They both became regular attendees at St. Louis Baba events, with many of you — Carl and Elizabeth, Linda, Gilda, Mike and Lulu, Steve and Maude, Bob Traver. Dad would reel off his one-liners, like “Thank God I’m an atheist” (a joke that most likely everyone had heard before), and people would laugh. To be fair, Dad could also be very, very original in his humor. He was also an old film buff, and loved the fact that Mike Steinberg was raising money for, and then made and released, a feature-length movie.

When Dad was dying in 2001, Janice came to the hospital with some dhuni ash from India, and rubbed it on his forehead. My wife, Barbara, and I said the Master’s Prayer in his room, shortly after he passed. And recently for my mother, I also had the opportunity to say Baba’s Name, sing His songs, and whisper all sorts of “sweet nothings” to Mom during the nights of her final illness, while she slept, when I was staying with her.

Mother, with Janice as intermediary, hosted Freiny Irani, Adi Jr.’s wife, for lunch when Freiny visited St. Louis to see Janice some years back, and she subsequently corresponded with Freiny. In short, what began as an impenetrable “family fracture” typical of the generation gap of the 1960s yielded gradually over the decades to a harmonious, all-inclusive sense that Baba is “OK,” and an enormous affection for many of His lovers, and a proclivity for their company, on the part of both Mom and Dad — whether I was around or not.

To me, that is more than progress. Considering what I saw, felt, and suffered over, in regard to the prospects of ever finding any mutual understanding or harmony, those first years, it indeed seems to me a Baba miracle for which I am deeply grateful. Maybe not a miracle with a fanfare of trumpets, but with quieter, more genuinely impressive qualities, like persistence in love, and silent divine grace.



# “Yad Rakh”

Michael Da Costa, England



Meher Baba's bedroom in Meherabad

During my recent Pilgrimage to Meherabad I spent a lot of time sitting in Samadhi, and when at Meherabad I did little more than sit in Baba's bedroom, absorbed in Baba's presence and the fragrance of His love. On one occasion, as I sat there, in that blessed bedroom, I suddenly became aware that although the room is full of wonderful pictures of Baba, I had not looked at one of them. Furthermore I realised, with a shock, that throughout my Pilgrimage thus far I had not been focussing on Baba's image at all, not even in Samadhi; all those hours spent in there without a glance at the Lord!

I did a sort of mental replay of my pilgrimage so far, and yes, it was clear, I had not once focussed my attention on Baba Himself. The more I thought about it the more I began to see that what seemed to be happening was that my consciousness was being shifted away from Baba's form towards His divine loving presence, which was everywhere and in everything; especially at Meherabad where the veil is so thin. Could this really be so? The more I reflected, the more the answer was yes.

As I sat there in the bedroom, engrossed in these thoughts, I suddenly found myself almost floating out of the chair and kneeling with my head on Baba's bed. As you probably know there is a photo of Baba on the bed, so I thought I had better have a good look at it. As I raised my head and fixed my gaze

on Baba's image, so these words instantly flashed into my mind: 'YAD RAKH, I AM NOT THIS BODY'. Now you may recall that very shortly before Baba dropped the body He had said audibly the words 'yad rakh' which mean 'remember this', and then gestured 'I am not this body'; and it was exactly here in this bedroom that He had said it.

Back home I still have Baba's picture all over my flat, and I still look at them with love and gratitude, but now I see them more as Icons of light in illusion's night; as windows into Reality, beyond the form, leading to the eternal Beloved, the Real Baba which is all and everything.

Avatar Meher Baba Ki Jai



## Reflections continued from page 17

to being manipulated and even exploited by those in power? How should one interpret these words? Even in the so-called Baba world this creates confusion, for many people are unclear about how to relate to each other: "Well, Tom has put me down in front of others, and so should I think that Baba is acting through Tom and therefore just accept it (maybe Baba wants me to learn humility), or is Tom playing a power game and I need to stand up to him. — How should I act?"

Recently, I came across an instance of Baba's using the word poise. It is recorded in Kitty Davy's book *Love Alone Prevails*. Kitty writes, "A few days later [in April 1940] Baba gave a wonderful talk on 'What is Spirituality?':

"It is the undoing of what you have been doing since ages. You always thought of selfish motives of eating, preserving your life, and for that every need, attending to it with zeal. All these lives you have made a habit of looking to yourself. If the slightest thing goes against

your habit you are upset. Now, to undo all these selfish bindings you have to do what you have not been doing, or not to do what you have been doing. What you have been doing is thinking of yourself; so now you must not think of yourself but think of others. This is what is called **love**. But it needs character, poise, and perseverance. **Poise** — what is **Poise**? It is that state of mind where nothing excites you, nothing upsets you; only then can you help others, only then can you make others happy. That means **love**. **Thinking not of yourself, but of others**.

"If you are in the Sahara and for four days you have no water to drink and all of a sudden one bottle of water appears, how do you react? If you have poise you will let your companion drink and not mind dying and letting her live. But if you fight and grab for it you lack poise and spirituality. It is this poise that makes you sacrifice and makes others happy. For example, I always say: Make the most of everything. Here you have food, swimming, boating. Make the most of it and feel happy. Do not say it is not spiritual to enjoy innocent pleasures. But when we are driving on tour and there is dust and we feel hunger, thirst, and feel sick, then feel as happy as you do now. This is poise. If you do not feel happy, it is not easy to feel happy then (under these conditions), you are not spiritual in enjoying this swimming, boating etc., . . . is this clear? I do not mean making a show of being happy, but to really **feel happy**.

"For you — My Circle — it is all right. You live with Me, leave all to Me, so you are serving the universe.

"But for those who are not living here near Me, this Poise is 100% essential for spirituality.

**"Again, what is spirituality? Poise, Perfect Poise. Make the Most of every perfect situation."** (pp. 285-286)

This is like a contemporary parable, a teaching story, in which the thing to be understood is explained in relationship to lived experience, never in the abstract. Poise, I think, is the real challenge today, the new virtue of Baba's advent. The word virtue comes from the Latin *vir*, meaning power. To have virtue is to have a spiritual power. Poise, like any virtue, is not a thought or a feeling, but a power that one can rest in, deepen in oneself, and gradually realize in experience. It begins as a matter of choice. To have

continued on pg 32



# Meher Baba and the Petroleum Connection

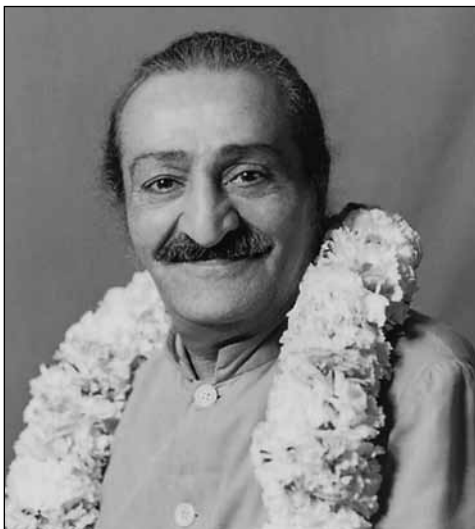
by M. Concannon

*“The greatest scientists themselves are becoming dismayed at the areas of knowledge still beyond them and appalled at what their discoveries may unleash. It will not be long now before they admit complete bafflement and affirm the existence of this Eternal Reality which men call ‘GOD,’ and Who is that which is unapproachable through the intellect.”*

—Meher Baba, 1962  
(Lord Meher, p. 5894)

Since the Deepwater Horizon explosion and resulting oil spill in the Gulf of Mexico, the media has issued continuing reports of environmental damage caused by millions of barrels of oil that have flowed into the Gulf. Oil has polluted shores that are home to birds, turtles, crabs and other forms of life, making their nesting places uninhabitable. Hundreds of miles of coastline are affected. It is hard to predict the long-term ramifications for ocean and shore life in that area, not to mention the people whose health and livelihoods depend upon a clean environment. It’s a problem caused by human actions, but as we have seen, it is not one we can easily resolve.

In the midst of such potentially disheartening devastation, Baba’s words and teachings provide a way to understand the situation from a different vantage point. In the book *The Nothing and the Everything*, based on points Baba gave in the months before dropping His body, Baba explained that the universe is a closed system and a balance of nature must be maintained. However, scientific exploitation motivated by “human extravagance and excessiveness” can have



Meher Nazar Publications, Ahmednagar, used by permission.

an effect on nature. Therefore, God has guardians in place to help maintain this balance and sometimes He personally must come and take control.

## Angels in the Subtle Sphere

In the book’s section titled “The Third Plane, the Third Heaven”<sup>1</sup>, Baba explains that angels have an important role in maintaining the balance of nature in the gross world. Angels are governed by an individual soul occupying the post of Indra, a post that Baba describes as “a station of considerable power and certain duties concerning the elements of nature, specifically to do with earth.”<sup>2</sup> As scientists search for ways to mitigate the impact of crude oil released into the environment, apparently work is taking place in the Subtle realm as well.

Baba explains: “The Universe, though huge and immeasurably vast and of countless variety, is a closed system, and a balance of nature must be maintained within this Universal Container (Universal Body). The Universal Container holds all light, all heat, all sound, all water — all the elements contained in nature and the natural forces (energies) generated in the Universe. It is the work of the angels and fairies (various types called

genii, or jinni, or sylphs, etc.) under the direction of Indra, to keep light, heat, sound, water, and the elemental forces of nature in equilibrium. Without the angels and fairies, there would be frequent colossal disturbances in the Universe as a result of the imbalance of these elements and energies, for the human mind plays havoc with the natural forces through scientific exploitation.” (Note, He uses the term “exploitation,” not “exploration.”)

Baba continues: “Each angel performs a different function under Indra’s reign: some control the winds, temperature, the seas, or evolving forms, as some fairies are connected with metals, vegetation, worms, insects, fish, birds or animals. The 330,000,000 angels in Devaloke [a section of the Third Heaven] perform specific functions for the maintenance of the Universe; according to the specific duty assigned them by Indra, each angel is called a god of this power or that power (as it is said Neptune rules the seas.)”

Concerning the oil spill, there have been news reports about microbes utilizing oxygen to break the oil down into more harmless substances. Given what is stated in *The Nothing and the Everything*, we might surmise that angels or fairies may be responsible for the increase in



Lord Indra

microbes. Still, their work has to be balanced out, for large-scale oxygen depletion in those waters would affect plant life, fish and other components of the ocean ecosystem.

Indra's power to restore nature does have limits. The damage may have a cumulative effect. "It is only after many years," Baba said, "that the natural forces go out of control. During such eruption in the Universe (resulting in chaos in the world — earthquakes, floods, famines, etc.), not even the angels and fairies nor Indra can control the cosmic consequences. These cosmic consequences are universal disharmony caused by human extravagance and excessiveness; then the Ancient One Himself must come into creation and work to restore equilibrium in the Universe."<sup>3</sup> This might lead one to ask: Does the work by the angels, Indra and the Avatar necessarily have to come after the damage is already done, such as with this oil spill? Can't such things be diverted in the Subtle or Mental spheres before they take place in the gross world? Although we have no way of knowing the spiritual reasons for this particular event, we can draw inferences from comments Baba made about other sorts of disasters. One type is that which results from the misuse of powers on the fourth plane. Baba indicated that the damage wrought by such activity is usually — but not necessarily — diverted by a seventh plane Perfect Master.

To explain this, Baba used an analogy: it is like a scientist who desires to explode an atomic bomb for the sake of craving for name or fame or for some other low purpose, "irrespective of the potential destruction and devastation which can be wrought." Baba wrote, "If the soul of the fourth plane is about to lose control of his mind, his powers are snatched away by the Perfect Masters, who can control the minds of all subtle-conscious and gross-conscious souls. The cases of actual downfall are accordingly rare and occur as exceptions to the rule. They must ultimately be attributed, not to any failure in the vigilance maintained by the Perfect Masters, but to the original urge within God Himself. So it is literally true that each and every thing, small or great, that happens in the universe, happens only according to the will of the Almighty."<sup>4</sup> This is not to imply that any fourth plane individuals were involved in the BP oil spill. It is mentioned here merely to show

that the five Perfect Masters, who are functioning in the world at all times, are indeed aware of everything that is about to take place, but might choose to take no preventive action.

### **The Avatar's Intervention**

Baba did say that the Avatar comes when imbalance in nature is too great for Indra to restore. Since this summer's oil spill has taken place four decades after Meher Baba's physical departure, one might assume that this was not an event that needed His involvement. Yet there is another way of looking at it. Baba's presence on Earth was certainly concurrent with a monumental change in human impact upon the planet. He may have come down to Earth when He did, not only to clean up the "Augean Stable" that has emerged since His last advent, but to shape this period of growth and change for the future.

As we look back over the period of time that Meher Baba lived (1894-1969), one of the most significant changes was the increase in mechanization. One crucial innovation that made such mechanization possible was the advent of petroleum-based lubricants. Prior to the 1890s, lubricants for industrial equipment were limited to animal- and vegetable-based oils such as melted beef tallow (for valves and cylinders), lard or castor oil (for bearings), and whale, olive or rape-seed oil for light machinery. But the new, more powerful steam engines of the late 1880s created so much heat that fatty acids from animal or vegetable oils would corrode the metal. Petroleum-based (mineral oil) lubricants solved that problem and cleared the way for increased production of far more powerful machinery than had existed up until that time. This stuff called "rock oil" would provide another product, gasoline, which would become even more significant as fuel for the internal combustion engine.

Just about five months after the first automobile prototype had a successful test run on a public road in America, Meher Baba was born (1894). Charles Duryea sold his first motor carriage in the United States in 1896, and within a few years the industry would become one of the fastest growing in our country's history. In 1900, there were about 1,000 automobiles. Today, in the United States alone, there are over 136 million cars, 100 million SUVs, vans and pickups, and nine million trucks.

Gasoline is only one petroleum product, but it accounts for about 46% of what we produce from crude oil. According to the U.S. Energy Information Administration, another 23% goes toward the creation of distillate fuel oil (including heating fuel and diesel fuel), and 8% for kerosene-type jet fuel. The remaining portion is used for the production of such things as asphalt and road oil, propane and petrochemicals used in manufacture of synthetic rubber and plastics. Products having petroleum-based components are ubiquitous in modern households. They are present in insect repellents, contact lenses, refrigerators, carpets, roofing, house paint, telephones, clothing, cameras, detergents and more. Medical innovations such as heart valves and certain pharmaceuticals include petroleum-based components. If one is looking for an example of the human mind "playing havoc with natural forces," the massive extraction and refining of petroleum during the 20th century would be a candidate.

Given recent events in the Gulf of Mexico, statements Baba actually made about the oil industry would be of most interest. In fact, there are several messages worthy of attention.

First, He said that we are living during the Kali Yuga, which He also called the Machine Age because mankind is now so dependent upon machines to function.<sup>5</sup> The Avatar always takes on suffering while in physical form (for example, as Jesus He suffered through crucifixion), but as Meher Baba, He suffered through the medium of two automobile accidents, one taking place in the Eastern Hemisphere and one in the West, one affecting the right half of His body and one the left. Baba revealed the purpose of these auto accidents: "I got my physical bones broken so as to break the backbone of the material aspect of the Machine Age, keeping intact its spiritual aspect."<sup>6</sup>

Second, it was understood that He did His universal work through individuals — masts, agents, mandali, etc. William Donkin's book *The Wayfarers* touches upon this and includes a supplement that explains how He used agents to assist in His work (pages 373-375.) There is also a chapter titled "Agents, Visible and Invisible" in Murshhida Ivy Duce's book *How a Master Works* (pages 458-463).



Meher Baba with Don Stevens

Baba spoke of “laying cables” by establishing connections with devotees both nearby and overseas. It is noteworthy that two of His closest western devotees, Murshida Ivy Duce and Don E. Stevens, were both deeply involved with the international petroleum industry—Ivy Duce as wife of international oil executive James Terry Duce, and Don Stevens as a scientist and international representative for Standard Oil.

### Links In Baba's Chain

Don had a degree in chemistry from Johns Hopkins University, but he assumed his job with Standard Oil came about by pure chance, perhaps even by mistake. He remembers, “As [World War II] drew to a close, I thought it wise to search for something that would still be turning out products when the war was over. Friends suggested petroleum, and to my amazement a vice president of research of one of the world's great majors took me on.” Later, when Don mentioned to Baba that he'd gotten a raise at his new job, Baba's response

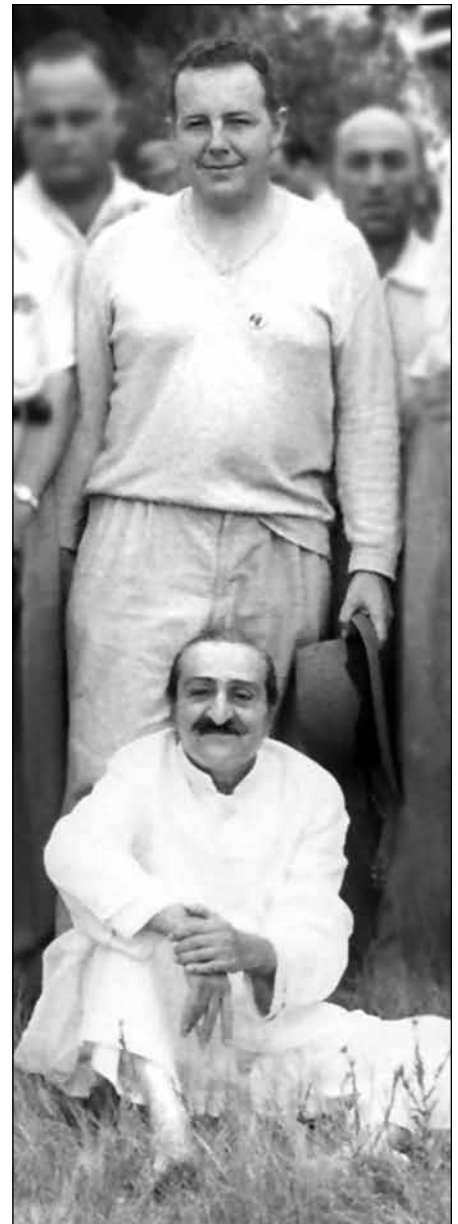
was: “Oh, that should make you very happy, Don. You work very hard, and now your boss is beginning to recognize your worth.” Don replied, “I don't know about that, Baba. I still feel many times that I got into the company almost under false pretenses. And I keep thinking that one day they will wake up and find they made a bad mistake.” Baba beamed back but shook His finger in the negative. “Baba knows

your worth and is always with you, never have a worry about that. Baba's grace will extend to your company and help it in many ways. You will see how Baba will reward it for having taken His Don into their family.”<sup>7</sup>

Don still had his doubts. Years later, he was determined to announce his intention to leave the petroleum industry and pursue work that seemed more “humanitarian.” When he tried to discuss it with Baba, He responded: “Who do you think put you in the oil industry?” Baba explained, “I put you in the oil business because it is the environment which most satisfactorily brings up the sanskaras which you must work out in this particular life. I put you there; now stay there.”<sup>8</sup>

While helping Don with his sanskaras, Baba was also working through him, reaching others. In her memoir *Growing Up with God*, Sheela Fenster recalls a letter from Don Stevens being read aloud to Baba. Baba remarked that Don was both intelligent and had a good heart. The young Sheela asked Him why Don had not been born in India, closer to Him. Baba answered by saying the reason was to spread His work; Don was closely connected with Him and with many other people in the West. In this way, he became a link in Baba's “chain” that became extended through him.<sup>9</sup>

Baba didn't give Don a break from his career responsibilities to do something even more important. He asked Don and Ivy Duce to edit His most significant work, *God Speaks*, and see that it got published. In her autobiography, Murshida Duce tells of the difficulty juggling both a worldly job and spiritual commitments: “While my days were filled with the complexities of our obligations to the oil business and visits from metaphysical



Baba with Lud Dimpfl at the Men's Meeting in September, 1954

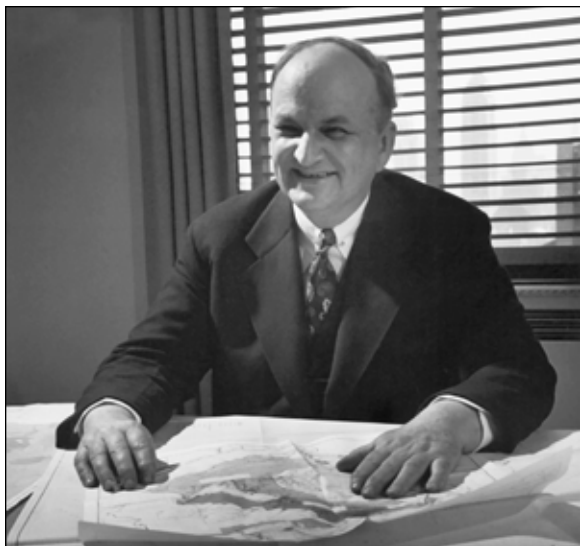
students and certain household cares related to the mechanisms of our 15-room house, to say nothing of guests, it was still much harder for Don, who had to spend much of his time on trains and planes and in hotel rooms working on aspects of the book. He spent every weekend that he could with me because Baba wanted the book published by May [of 1954]. This was not easy for Don as his job entailed constant travel around the United States.”<sup>10</sup>

Baba's order was not only to edit the work but to publish it, and that required money. According to Don's recollection, Baba looked directly at Don and asked what he could contribute. Don immediately offered \$900—all the savings he had, the first savings



Murshida Duce in Baba's quarters at the Delmonico Hotel, New York City, July, 1956





*Terry Duce in his office with maps. In 1952, Meher Baba asked Terry to chart two automobile routes from Myrtle Beach, SC to California*

he had managed to accumulate from his job.<sup>11</sup> So perhaps it can be said that money from the oil business made a contribution to the first printing of *God Speaks*. The majority of the funding came from Sufism Reoriented's sale of its retreat property in Fairfax, California, which brought in \$9,000 (the latter came just in the nick of time as that property had been up for sale for two years), and from donations from members of Sufism Reoriented and Baba groups which contributed another \$4,000 toward the project.

Lud Dimpfl learned of Baba while sharing an office with Don at Standard Oil in the late 1940s and like Don, became a Sufi. Lud's career led him to

be posted for a time in Iran, where he was able to deepen his understanding of the Persian Sufi literature (Hafiz, Rumi, etc.) This informed his work in compiling the glossary of terms in *God Speaks* that Baba reviewed and approved for inclusion in the 2nd edition.<sup>12</sup>

### ***The Duces' Role In Oil Diplomacy***

*A*s mentioned previously, Murshida Ivy Duce was married to James Terry Duce, a key figure in international oil development. In her role, Mrs. Duce was hostess to domestic and foreign heads

of state, ambassadors and oil executives. Baba's order to Ivy, issued upon their first meeting, was to "Never criticize your husband, and do everything he says."<sup>13</sup> She organized major diplomatic events the success of which were considered essential to relations between her husband's company (the Arabian American Oil Company, known as Aramco) and governments. Ultimately her success would lead to the United States' continued access



*Charmian and Murshida Duce entertain King Saud of Saudi Arabia in their home in Washington, D.C.*

to oil which was by then crucial to the country's economy and infrastructure.

Murshida Duce asserted her belief that her husband was one of Meher Baba's unconscious agents. Baba did assign Terry some significant tasks. At their first meeting in 1952, Baba asked Terry to return later and help build the Spiritual Center at Myrtle Beach. He also asked Terry to draw up two alternative routes for an automobile trip across America. Baba chose one, and it was during that trip that He was involved in the serious collision. All of the individuals who shared in His suffering during that event were very close to Him: among them lifelong Mandali member

Meheru; Elizabeth Patterson the driver, who broke ribs, arms and a collarbone; and Mehera, His dearest disciple, whose x-rays showed a skull cracked like an eggshell. As the one who drew up the routes, Terry could not have been merely a minor player.

Almost any book about the history of oil development in Saudi Arabia will mention Terry Duce for his role in establishing a strong long-term relationship between the U.S. and the Saudis. His job was fraught with an array of difficulties, and the stakes were high. Petroleum products by the 1940s had become the basis of industry. Access to oil had turned out to be essential for strategic advantage during World War II, and afterward petroleum products were needed to rebuild Europe. They

were also needed to keep factories, agriculture, and transportation running in the United States. Policy-makers in the U.S. government realized that the nation needed a reliable and steady supply, and they knew that its own reserves were limited. The United States had a big stake in Aramco's success.

Terry had headed the Foreign Division of the U.S. Petroleum Administration of War during the 40s, and later served as Aramco's Vice President in charge of government relations. His work was potentially complicated with each move the United States made concerning the new state of Israel. For example, when the U.S. changed its arms policy to permit shipment of weapons to Israel, Arab public opinion of the U.S. fell to such a degree that the Saudi king indicated that he might be forced to apply sanctions against the U.S. by cancelling Aramco



*Murshida Ivy Duce greets King Saud as Terry shakes hands with the Saudi ambassador Sheik Asad Al-Faqih. Through contact with Murshida Duce, most of the ambassador's children became Baba lovers. His son Zuheir later portrayed Meher Baba in the musical dramas Sufism Reoriented staged on Baba's life. In a skit at the 1962 E-W Gathering, his son Khaled portrayed a doctor examining Baba where he instructed Him, "Open your mouth and say OM!"*

contracts. Terry rushed to inform the U.S. State Department, and his message was relayed in a memo to the Secretary of State in May 1948. Terry's work to keep peace is documented in the State Department's primary publication, *Foreign Relations of the United States*.<sup>14</sup> Terry Duce's position required the knowledge of a scientist and the diplomacy of a statesman as well as good business sense. Aramco needed to answer to its investors, who of course, hoped for a return on their investment. With all of this to factor in, there is one thing clear from Terry's speeches and writings, and that is that he wanted Saudi Arabia to benefit and prosper from the partnership. He wanted the proceeds from oil sales to improve the lives of the people. At one point when he was offered twice the money to work at a different job, he turned it down. He told his wife, "The world is only as strong as its weakest link, and the desert countries are so in need I've decided to stay with Aramco."<sup>15</sup>

### Baba's View On World Affairs

Terry's wife and their daughter, Charmian, had first met Baba in January 1948. Baba had an important piece of advice for Mr. and Mrs. Duce at the time. Ivy recalled, "Just before leaving Meherazad I asked Baba if He cared to say anything about politics, as Terry and I were in the mainstream of Washington. He looked very solemn and replied, "Russia has the greatest power in the world for destruction and America is not taking her rightful place as world leader."<sup>16</sup> A more detailed version appears in *Lord Meher*, where Ivy is quoted as follows: "I had asked Baba if He would give me some slant on the political situation of the day since my husband and I are so involved in international mat-

ters. That afternoon He sent for me, and gave me an outline. He reiterated the point that everything is going according to plan, that the spiritual hierarchy functioning in world affairs have the reins in their hands; that Russia holds the key for the greatest destruction in the world; that America has the most important role to play; that the Arabs will fight. He charged me to tell my husband to do everything to keep the great oil concessions in Arabia for America."<sup>17</sup> Up until this time in 1948, at least in terms of oil, America had seemed fairly well-positioned. Figures for world crude oil production from 1857-1944 reveal that, by far, most of the world's oil supply had been coming from wells in the United States.<sup>18</sup> Only for about three years around 1900 did any other country surpass U.S. output, and that was Russia. Russia's production fell rather precipitously due to political instability especially during World War I, while America's oil companies had a chance to grow stronger due in part to investor confidence. Terry Duce once commented, "Venture capital, which is the lifeblood of our industry, will only operate where there is a possibility of reasonable return in comparison with the risk taken."<sup>19</sup>

American companies had been working to develop foreign sources of oil (primarily in South America) since around the 1920s, but the pressure to secure foreign concessions intensified after World War II, when its domestic supply was estimated to be insufficient to sustain both internal needs and export demands for the long term. The Middle East increased in strategic importance.

The British were the first to move in to the Middle East and get a

foothold there, especially in Iran (Persia), where they essentially controlled all the oil producing interests for some time. It was only after vigorous diplomatic action by the United States that American interests succeeded in getting representation in the Middle East at all.<sup>20</sup>

As for the Middle East, it needed the revenue. Prior to World War II, Saudi Arabia's economy was built primary upon revenue from pilgrims traveling to the holy cities of Mecca and Medina. After the outbreak of war, transportation restrictions dramatically reduced the number of pilgrims, and this precipitated a crisis. The king of Saudi Arabia, faced with the problem of providing for his subjects, turned to the American companies holding oil concessions and sought relief in the form of advances. Aramco agreed. Preserving the partnership was essential.

Four months after Baba urged that America "take its rightful place as a world leader," Terry addressed the annual meeting of the American Petroleum Institute in Philadelphia. His speech "Tomorrow's Oil" was covered in the May 13, 1948 issue of the *New York Times*. In it he announced, "We hope that American companies will be able to produce a considerable portion of this oil abroad; but I can assure you that, if American companies do not produce this oil, foreign companies will." He did not appear to be so concerned about Russia quite yet, for he said: "Russia with better geological prospects, produces one tenth of the oil produced by the United States."

Britain seemed to be of greater con-



1947 — Charmian, Terry, and Murshida Duce in Saudi Arabia just prior to Charmian and Murshida meeting Meher Baba for the first time



Terry hosts a dinner for King Saud of Saudi Arabia

cern to Terry. Addressing the assembly, he remarked, "We have in the Middle East an immense reserve. Historically it looked for a long while as though this was going to be produced entirely by companies under British control. The Anglo-Iranian [later renamed British Petroleum, or BP] was wholly British; the Turkish Petroleum Company and its successor, the Iraq Petroleum Company and its associated companies, were held in majority by British interests. It is only by fortunate circumstances that an American company was able to get into the Middle East and secure that foothold which prevented the oil of that area from being dominated by British political policy.... Americans have not always agreed with the British as to their industrial policy, and it seems to me salutary that there exists in the Middle East, now developing the oil fields of that area, an organization responsive to the general policies of the United States government but which at the same time can work harmoniously with the people whose oil it is developing."<sup>21</sup>

In a career retrospective published years later, Terry Duce discussed his views on Russia in greater detail. He wrote, "The Russian planners have preferred to put their investment capital in steel for munitions instead of into roads and automobiles. The result is that in the Soviet Union per capita consumption of oil products is about one-quarter of that in the United States. We know that Russian reserves must be very great, and that for a long time to come Russia will continue to be an exporting country, using its oil resources in support of Communist penetration and therefore as a political weapon. In Cuba, it is doubtful if Castro could have maintained himself in power without the support of Russian oil; probably the same can be said of Red China. The Russians also, we know, have long had ambitions to press southward into the Persian Gulf countries — a fact that was emphasized in some of the discussions between the Russians and the Germans at the opening of World War II."<sup>22</sup>

## Looking for Oil in the Gulf of Mexico

While helping to develop American oil interests internationally, Terry had also recommended that the U.S. look for additional domestic sources. It was

as early as June 1945 that he testified before the Special Congressional Committee Investigating Petroleum Resources, with regard to oil potential in the Gulf of Mexico. The statements from Terry Duce and questioning by Committee Chairman Joseph C. O'Mahoney and Chief Counsel Henry S. Fraser were recorded verbatim:

**Mr. Duce:** In the United States there are large areas off the coast of Texas, Louisiana, Mississippi, Alabama and Florida which may well be productive of oil....

**The Chairman:** If that area off the coast of Texas were as productive as the State of Texas is, it would mean a considerable addition to our sources of supply, would it not?

**Mr. Duce:** That is correct.

**The Chairman:** And that might be 75 miles beyond the shore line?

**Mr. Duce:** I am just giving you an average, sir.

**The Chairman:** All in all, what is your conclusion with respect to the desirability of our taking this area into consideration?

**Mr. Duce:** I would think it is desirable. All I was going to say here is I do not want to get into the very complicated questions of the legal rights involved beyond the 3-mile limit....

**The Chairman:** So, as a scientist, you are of the opinion that the subsoil under the territorial waters and beyond is worthy of the intensive search for oil and other minerals?"

**Mr. Duce:** Yes, sir.

**Mr. Fraser:** How deep does the water have to get before drilling is out of the question under present conditions?

**Mr. Duce:** The only thing I can say as to that is that wells have been drilled in over 100 feet of water at Lake Maracaibo [a large lake in Venezuela.] That, of course, is an enclosed body of water, but it gets pretty rough at times. I think drilling in depths of water 100 feet and over will get very expensive."

In the same hearing, C. L. Moore, a senior petroleum engineer at the U. S. Bureau of Mines gave this statement: "As a result of geophysical exploration, a great number of salt dome type oil and gas fields have been discovered in recent years in the coastal area of Louisiana

and Texas. This area is notable for its vast system of bayous, lakes and other shallow waters and marsh lands.... In recent years development has moved out in the open waters of the Gulf, with well sites located as far as two miles from shore.... The greatest hazard to drilling and producing operations in the Gulf coast area are hurricanes which temporarily delay drilling operations and isolate producing wells, making it necessary to use suitable protective devices such as storm chokes on flowing wells, which automatically shut off the flow if well head connections are broken."<sup>23</sup> It was a prophetic warning to make at that early date, made more significant by the fact that one of Baba's close ones (perhaps an unconscious agent) was present and involved in the proceedings.

Ultimately, Terry was optimistic about the future. He once said: "I believe that oil will be available for all in ample quantities until science develops new sources of energy which may in the end supplant the use of oil as a source of power."

After Terry's passing in 1965, Baba sent Murshida Duce a telegram reading, "Blessed is Terry, for he has come to Me."<sup>24</sup> Baba subsequently included Terry's name in the list of His departed lovers.

## Prem Ashram Boy Goes to Work for BP

There is another interesting oil connection found in the Baba literature, this one with the very company that came to be known as BP. To trace this connection, we must review events involving Abdulla (or Abdullah) Pakrawan (also called Chhota Baba or Chota Baba) that took place in Meherabad in the late 1920s. The events are chronicled in the book *Ramjoo's Diaries*.<sup>25</sup>

The Prem Ashram was a boy's boarding school that Meher Baba started in Meherabad during those early years to provide conventional studies and spiritual training. Baba issued one basic condition: "Once the boys are admitted they must remain at the institution until the completion of the full course, whether it may take two years or seven years." Otherwise, Baba conveyed, His purpose would be defeated.

One of the boys in the Prem Ashram was Abdulla Pakrawan, a Muslim teenager who had seen an announcement





Copyright holder of photo unknown at this time.

In 1927, Abdullah Pakrawan (Chhotta or Chota Baba) in a state of bliss when he was elevated to the sixth plane

for the school. Years later he recalled that immediately upon hearing of it, "it was as if all of a sudden I was on fire." He traveled for eight days at sea and then by train to get to the school at Meherabad, Baba's ashram in India. Later he said that from the instant he entered Baba's presence for the first time, "Truly from that moment I felt a small portion of His greatness in my heart."

Once when Baba visited the boys in the school, He told them: "Those whom I shall find worthy I shall attract... and I shall offer them the elixir of life. Children, only Truth is real — all else is worthless." Then He said specifically to Abdulla, "Try and be diligent — I shall make pure gold from your mixed alloy." Abdulla said that "the profound effect this short speech had upon me put me in the most bewildered state for most of the night, the morning and the next day." Shortly after, "I began to feel an extraordinary heat and everything began to get dark around me, nay, I observed how things began to vanish around me. Abruptly and without my volition, a weeping welled up from the depth of my being and I began to wail and cry (which had no apparent reason). Then I lost all consciousness of the children

and the staff around me.... After a short while, I found myself conscious again and repeating these words: 'I am far, I am far. Where is He and where am I?...' I raised my head and found my Beloved sitting in front of me. His presence and the sight of His pure face once again moved me to tears, and unthinkingly I fell at His holy feet."

In the weeks and months that followed, his love for Baba increased. He said "It finally reached such an extent that even when eating, bathing, studying etc., I would be drowned in thoughts of Him and there was not

a moment that I could forget Him.... I could spend 14 hours a day in the company of my only Beloved, but still it was not sufficient."

Then Baba gave Abdulla a rare gift: He raised him to the sixth plane. For five days Abdulla was unconscious of the gross world and only experienced seeing God face to face, everywhere and in everything. Baba renamed him "Chota Baba" which means "Small Baba."

Baba explained to others at the time: "Realization cannot be given to anyone other than circle members, except during Avataric periods when a few extra persons are selected to be God-Realized. I have in mind to prepare two or three extra human beings for Realization, and Abdulla is one of them."<sup>26</sup> Baba kept Chota Baba close to Him, seeing to his needs as he came back down to gross consciousness.

About three years later, Baba took Chota Baba on a trip to Persia. Once there, Chota Baba was overcome with the wish to leave Baba and "go to his own place." Baba told him to wait until His order, but Chota Baba would not listen. Finally Baba embraced him and told him to go, but while doing so He had tears in His eyes. Meherjee recalled,

"In my forty-three years with Baba I only saw Him twice in tears, and that was not because anyone was leaving or had died, but because of His work, or something."

Chota Baba left and went to work with the Anglo-Persian Oil company, the company now known as BP. Meherjee recalled "It was a good job and Abdulla was happy.... But the British were looked upon as the enemies of Persia (Iran), and the oil company where Abdulla worked was in the hands of the British." The government mistook Abdulla for a spy and put him in prison for three months without a trial. It was only then that he regretted leaving Baba. He was eventually released upon condition that he never travel.

When interviewed in 1975, Abdulla said that after he left Baba, he never again communicated with Baba nor felt any desire to see Him. He had no further spiritual experiences such as those experienced in the Ashram. He remarked, "Though I departed from Him and lost my attaining in the path, I got character for life in the world — the worldly life in trade, in business, in community...."

<sup>27</sup> He had a strong interest in offering humanitarian aid. He once stated, "I worked free for the Iranian Red Cross for nearly 27 years without taking a penny in salary. The Red Cross is in the service of humanity and offers the best aid that can be given to the needy at the time of disaster."

We cannot know the ways in which Meher Baba as the Avatar of the Machine Age did His universal work. The stories and quotes concerning petroleum are interesting and the coincidences intriguing, but the meaning behind them is hidden to us. We do know that Baba did say He needed to break the material aspect of the machine age so the spiritual aspect could flourish, and we can presume He did so during His time on Earth. Before dropping His body, He indicated that His work was done, completed one hundred percent to His satisfaction.

## Notes

<sup>1</sup> Bhau Kalchuri, *The Nothing and the Everything*, 2nd edition, (Pune, India: K. Joshi Printers, ©2009), pp. 76, 81.

<sup>2</sup> "If a man successfully performs a severe penance such as Chilla-Nashini (staying inside a circle for forty days and nights), when he drops his body (dies), this man attains the Indra state." Meher Baba's

father, Sheriar, attempted Chilla-Nashini but failed. See *Lord Meher*, pages 129-130 for more information about his attempt.

<sup>3</sup> *The Nothing and the Everything*, pp. 80-81.

<sup>4</sup> Meher Baba, *God Speaks*, 2nd edition, revised and enlarged, (Walnut Creek, CA: Sufism Reoriented, ©1973), pp. 45, 61-63.

<sup>5</sup> Bhau Kalchuri, *Lord Meher*, (Ashville, NC: MANifestation, Inc., c1999), Volume 12, footnote to page 4206.

<sup>6</sup> Bhau Kalchuri, *Lord Meher*, p. 5526; also in *How a Master Works*, p. 295.

<sup>7</sup> Don E. Stevens, *Some Results*, (St. Helier, Jersey, Channel Islands, Great Britain: Companion Books, ©1995), p. 43, 47.

<sup>8</sup> *Lord Meher*, p. 6275.

<sup>9</sup> Sheela Kalchuri Fenster, *Growing Up with God*, (Ahmednagar, India: Meher Nazar Publications, ©2009), p. 467.

<sup>10</sup> Ivy Oneita Duce, *How a Master Works*, (Walnut Creek, CA: Sufism Reoriented, ©1975), p. 202-203.

<sup>11</sup> Don Stevens mentions this incident to explain how Baba helped him overcome his sanskaric attachment to money. The fact that he earned it at Standard Oil may or may not have been part of Baba's plan to do "work" with the oil industry—it is mentioned here as an interesting aside only. See the book *Some Results*, p. 44.

<sup>12</sup> Email from Duncan Knowles (Terry Duce's son-in-law) to Dina Gibson, July 2010.

<sup>13</sup> *How a Master Works*, p. 43-44.

<sup>14</sup> U.S. State Department, *Foreign Relations of the United States*, 1948, Vol. V, Part 1: The Near East, South Asia and Africa (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1975), p. 15. Note: the *Foreign Relations of the United States* is also available in full text online from the University of Wisconsin Digital Collections, URL <http://digicoll.library.wisc.edu/FRUS/>

<sup>15</sup> *How a Master Works*, p. 55.

<sup>16</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 43.

<sup>17</sup> *Lord Meher*, p. 3221.

<sup>18</sup> U. S. Senate. Special Senate Committee Investigating Petroleum Resources. *American Petroleum Interests in Foreign Countries Hearings*, June 27, 28, 1945. Washington: Government Printing Office, 1946), pp. 354-355.

<sup>19</sup> James Terry Duce. "Tomorrow's Oil," speech delivered to the American Petroleum Institute Division of Refining at the 13th Mid-Year Meeting held in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, May 10-13,

1948. Printed in the *Proceedings of the American Petroleum Institute*, Volume 28M [III], 1948, p. 77.

<sup>20</sup> *American Petroleum Interests in Foreign Countries*, p. 340.

<sup>21</sup> James Terry Duce, "Tomorrow's Oil," p. 79.

<sup>22</sup> James Terry Duce, "The Changing Oil Industry," *Foreign Affairs*, Vol. 40 #4, July 1962, p. 633-634.

<sup>23</sup> U. S. Senate. Special Senate Committee Investigating Petroleum Resources. *Investigation of Petroleum Resources (New Sources of Petroleum in the United States) Hearings*, June 19, 20, 21, 22 and 25, 1945. Washington: Government Printing Office, 1946. (Y4.P44:P44). Terry Duce's quoted testimony is printed on pages 170-172. The quote from C. L. Moore is on p. 406.

<sup>24</sup> *How a Master Works*, p. 55.

<sup>25</sup> Ramjoo Abdulla, *Ramjoo's Diaries, 1922-1929: A Personal Account of Meher Baba's Early Work*, (Walnut Creek: Sufism Reoriented, ©1979), p. 409, 532-549

<sup>26</sup> *Lord Meher*, p. 1012; see also *How a Master Works*, p. 39.

<sup>27</sup> *Lord Meher*, p. 1045.

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# Heavens, Angels and Planes Explained

M. Concannon

The terms heaven, angel and fairy have been used in very different contexts in literature, religion and mythology. Additionally, concepts like “subtle sphere” and “third plane” may be unfamiliar to some. Let us explore how Baba defined these terms.

In *God Speaks*, Baba tells of the existence of gross, subtle and mental spheres or worlds. The first plane straddles the gross and subtle spheres. The second and third planes are completely within the subtle sphere, which Baba called the sphere of infinite energy. Most of humanity (ordinary humans) are conscious only of the gross sphere and have not yet entered the spiritual path or become conscious of any of the seven planes. Except for a brief discussion on pages 232-233, *God Speaks* does not address the heavens associated with each plane. They are however, handled in great detail in *The Nothing and the Everything* (hereafter abbreviated “N&E”), pages 67-103.

About the term “heaven,” Baba speaks of several kinds. He says that when ordinary gross conscious humans (who are not yet on the spiritual path) dissociate from their gross bodies (die), they may enter a heaven or hell “state of consciousness” depending on sanskaras (impressions) picked up during the life just ended. Such physically discarnate individuals do not inhabit the Third Heaven, the World of Angels. Rather, they actually enter a state in the second plane of the subtle sphere where they experience with extreme intensity the effects of their accumulated sanskaras, good or bad (N&E p. 52-55). Some are spared this experience. Baba says “Those people closely associated with the Avatar or Sadguru do not enter heaven or hell, even though they are gross conscious and not on the planes; they take birth almost immediately. A balancing of good and bad sanskaras is a deep effect of a Sadguru’s work with an individual, and it is most difficult. When equilibrium finally is effected, all sanskaras are thereby annihilated.” (N&E p. 54)

Although the path to God Realization generally involves passage through the planes, it does not mean that human souls become like angels under Indra. Humans who have advanced to third plane

consciousness are quite distinct from angels who reside in the Third Heaven. Baba provides counts of each, accentuating the contrast. He says there are 558 human beings as saliks (sober pilgrims) on the third plane and an even greater number of masts (intoxicated pilgrims) in the heavens between the third and fourth planes, but there are 330 million angels in the Third Heaven (N&E, pp. 78-79.) A further distinction is made by divisions within the Third Heaven: the first is the state of Indra; the second is Devaloke, the abode of the angels; and the third is “where the pilgrim experiences subtle knowledge.” Further, it should be borne in mind that Baba said the heavens can be a sidetrack for a pilgrim and seriously delay the arrival at God-Realization.

Who then, are these beings who are working so diligently to keep life on earth in balance? Like us, angels are beings that entered creation as “drop-bubbles” of individualized consciousness, but the difference is that they “remained stationary in the subtle world during the first six stages of movement in the Ocean of Nothing and never reached the seventh stage, the Gross World.” (N&E p. 79; see also *Lord Meher*, p. 1873) Baba explained that angels are automatons to the will of God. Although they are completely happy and enjoy the bliss of the third heaven, they still aspire to human form because only in human form can a soul become God-realized. Even Indra must eventually relinquish that post and take a human form in order to continue on the journey.



## The Divine Union

Not through worldly wisdom, but by diving deep to the innermost, is it possible to be united with God, Who is at once the Lover and the beloved. For this union, one must summon the necessary courage to rise beyond the alluring shadows of the illusory world of sense-perception. Consciousness, loaded with attachments, gets pinned to the sense-world of duality. Mere withdrawal of consciousness from the world of forms presents a vacuum of nothing. But when consciousness is illumined by the Truth, it reveals God as everything and it experiences one uninterupted and endless continuity of limitless bliss, love, power and understanding.

*Reflections continued from pg 23*

poise is to have great freedom, to be unperturbed by anything. The fact that we can become poised in Baba’s sense of the word, I think, is an expression of Baba’s Grace, His gift, available to us.

In this respect poise can be seen as linked with obedience — which is “a gift from Master to man.” Interestingly, obedience (ob-audiens), in a spiritual sense, is to do with attuning the heart to truth, and its true opposite is absurdity (ab-surdus), which means being absolutely deaf to that truth. To live without poise, without obedience to Baba, is to live in an absurd world, a farce, a dream in which I act out, along with everyone else, pent-up fears and anxieties while trying to convince myself that this is what life is all about. This is a joke. One statement that jumps out at me from Kitty’s recollection of Baba’s talk is the line “only then can you help others, only then can you make others happy.” This says to me, in bright neon lights, that if I want to be of any real service, or of any use in any situation, poise is the necessary prerequisite.

I don’t think I can consciously work on or cultivate poise. I can’t become more poised by an act of will; that would defeat the purpose. And it certainly has nothing to do with being right or wrong; that’s the world’s call, and to get caught on that treadmill is to quickly lose poise. But rather I have to enter into it or put it on around me as if I’m putting on a cloak. Returning to my incident with Tom, it is not about my making a judgement call on his behaviour but requires that I simply listen to what Baba is saying in our relationship together. That is, listening for the truth in the relationship. To be able to do this I need to be poised and, as Baba says, make the most of the situation. And I can only make the most of the situation if I remain genuinely happy and totally convinced that my present life situation has been carefully planned by Baba for my highest good. This would certainly mean an “undoing” not only of what I have been doing, but also of what I have been thinking. And that’s another Baba-word that I can’t say lightly: “undoing.”



# Baba Warns of the Approaching “Dark Cloud” as Early as 1957

Quotes compiled by Kendra Crossen at MeherBabaManifesting.com

*“Even if the sky and earth should come together, do not let go my daaman.”*

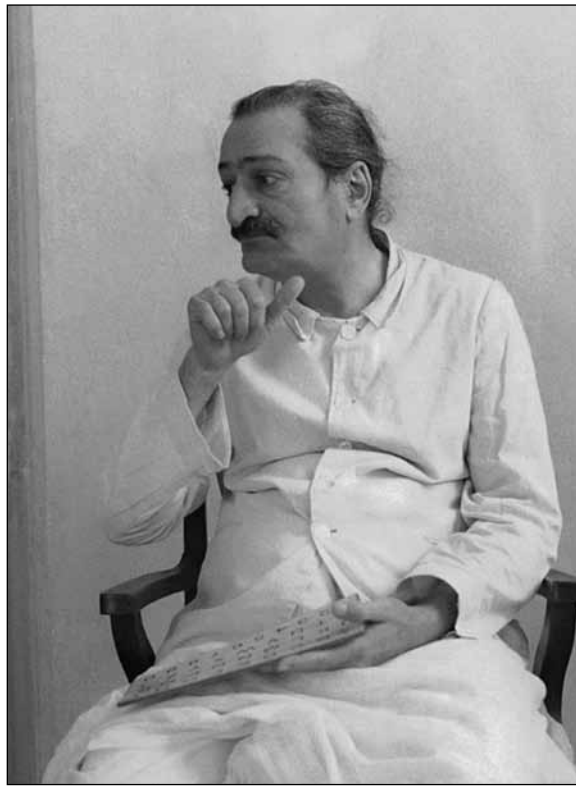
*The Awakener Magazine*  
22, no. 1, p. 38

On Sunday, 19 May 1957, Baba held a meeting in Guruprasad with the mandali and his lovers from Ahmednagar, Poona and Bombay to issue a ‘Warning.’ It was a most serious matter. The meeting began at 8:00 a.m. Forty-seven persons attended the meeting. Baba asked those present whether they had slept well that night, adding that those who had not, should not doze during the proceedings. He then stated, “As for me, I had no sleep for I had to do some important spiritual work. From the time of the accident [1956], I have been continuously suffering severe physical pains. Tell me, from my face how I look now?”

[After further preliminary remarks, Baba said:]

“I want to tell you one important thing which each of you must remember well. It is a fact that I am the Lord of the universe. I am omnipresent. Now the time is fast approaching and I clearly see the “dark cloud” hovering; I see its picture. By this I am not referring to the recent [1956] automobile accident that has already come to pass. The humiliation that I was referring to for many years is within sight. During that phase of my life, there is every possibility that I may slip out of your hands.

“Now let me first explain what I mean by humiliation. Suppose you are loved by someone very dearly for several years and one day when you happen to meet him, he suddenly begins to abuse you, kick you and spit in your face. In the context of your previous relationship with him, your plight becomes an example of humiliation. In the same way, if some persons who have previously adored me and raised me up to the skies



©MSI Collection, Meherabad

in adoration for years suddenly turn against me and express extreme disdain for me by throwing me in filth, it will be another example of humiliation.

“I will also give you an example of circumstances under which this kind of a thing can happen. You are worshiping me for so many years. Suppose you suddenly find me eating garbage, living in rubbish and roaming about naked in the streets, behaving like a madman. What will be your reaction to this behavior of mine? I do not want any one of you to think or say that Baba is going to become mad. On the contrary, I have come to make the whole world mad after God and Truth.

“Only the Avatar, whenever he lives amidst mankind, has to undergo humiliation. When there are five Perfect Masters, who are God Personified and who control and look after the affairs of the universe, what need is there for them to precipitate the incarnation of God on earth? They bring Him down to shoulder the sufferings of humanity. The five Perfect Masters are not as much

scandalized or humiliated as the Avatar. I have been made to take this human form by the five Perfect Masters of this age, to bear the Cross and to undergo humiliation.

“You have read in the Gospels wherein Jesus Christ had said to his apostles: “You will deny me.” This did happen when Peter, the chief apostle, denied Jesus. The thing is that during the phase of humiliation, the circumstances will go so array that you will not be aware when my daaman has slipped out of your hands! At that time, you may even feel justified in leaving me. But if you feel that this should not happen, there is one remedy. You should grasp well all of what I say and understandingly live up to it. You should also tell everything that you hear today to those who are not present. In short, I clearly see the dark cloud. I do not wish to make a mere mention of the dark cloud without any reason, but this is my loving warning to you so that my daaman may not slip out of your hands...”

*Glow International, May 1980, pp. 6-7.*  
Also Lord Meher 15: 5169, 5171-72

On 8 September 1957 a three-hour meeting of the mandali and thirty-two men from Bombay, Poona and Ahmednagar was held at Meherazad, ostensibly to discuss the upcoming sahasas and arrangements for the invited Westerners. Baba said:

“The world, once it knows who I am, will understand then what I want you to understand now — that from the beginningless beginning, I am the Ancient one, immutable and eternal...

“I have already warned you of the dark cloud which I clearly see hovering over me. I have been referring to it in one way or another for many years. In fact, only the shape of things changes every time I come, and that is why I say the same things again and again in different ways. At the time of Jesus, I uttered many warnings, yet none could grasp in advance about my crucifixion.

"The dark cloud is very, very near to bursting, and I have to take the whole force of it upon myself. You can have no idea what that will mean for me. It will be like hell itself bursting upon me on earth. Be resolved to hold fast to my daaman even when this cloud bursts. You will thereby share in my work..."

"Look at the weapons of destruction science has evolved. Nation accuses nation of preparations for war, and world catastrophe might come without warning at any moment. World events reflect the results of my inner working. At the time of the Flood, hell was let loose in the world. Scientists and statesmen now solemnly declare that if total war comes, the whole world may perish. They are just echoing me. But the whole world cannot perish because I have to come down again after seven hundred years..."

"Just as I am now quite unable to do so many physical things unaided, in spite of an otherwise healthy body, I may, at the time of the impending crisis, become even mentally helpless, without being mentally deranged in the least. You may then not be able to continue to hold on to my daaman because circumstances will seemingly justify your letting it go."

"I am infinitely merciful, and so repeat the same theme again and again, so that you may remember my words and try your best to cling to me. For example, in a sudden and terrifying earthquake, any man, in the blind hope of saving his life, is likely to run, forgetting in an instant his family and all his possessions, and thus forsake them before he realises what he has done."

"Whatever is to happen will happen. This is the principle, or as I call it, the Law of Must, the law on which universal illusion thrives. It is as if the ready and complete film of illusion, from the beginningless beginning to the endless end, is being projected continually."

"If it is destined that my daaman should slip from your hands, it will. But it is for me to warn, and for you to remain alert. . . ."

"Life Circulars of Avatar Meher Baba", pp. 79-82. Also in *Lord Meher* 15: 5221-23.

On 29 September 1957, at another meeting at Meherazad about the sahas, Baba said:

"The work I do, to fulfill all that is ordained, releases a tremendous force that stamps my advent. When the Infinite and Changeless works through the finite and

changing, the channels are necessarily varied and unlimited. The opposing forces created are tremendous, but also serve my work. In spite of the dark cloud facing me, I do my work ceaselessly. Part of my work, by June 1958, is to give my sahas to hundreds of my followers."

Do not try to understand the method of my working. Do not worry or question. Just obey. The pain I have in the hip joint is one of the many distractions I have to reckon with while doing my work. Because unquestioning obedience and one hundred percent willingness to happily carry out my instructions and abide by my decision do help in my work, do not worry if my instructions seem contradictory or oscillating. I know what has to be done. I know how it is to be done. It is for you to do what I say. Do not be concerned with anything else."

*Lord Meher* 15: 5228.

. . . When Baba sipped a little water at 5:00 P.M., He again coughed. He commented, "Even in the first [darshan] group I got this cough at this hour. Who is remembering me?" Eruch said that when Baba put this question to the first group, they could not answer. But Baba repeated that it was the impending dark cloud that remembers Him. Baba confirmed this by remarking: "It is a fact that the dark cloud is coming and that cloud is remembering me."

*Lord Meher* 15: 5333.

On 20 May 1958, in Myrtle Beach, Baba made the following remarks to the Sufi group:

"The dark cloud is approaching very fast. Only a few will hold on to me. Those who are near me, not in space but in love. The rest will leave me. The age-old experience will be repeated. In this incarnation, I have a large following, but again I shall be left with a few. It is as if around me there are many beautiful buildings. It took years to build them, but when an earthquake comes, they are destroyed in a few seconds. Only a few survive. The doctors have said: 'Don't go to America; this is a bad time.' But I replied: 'No, I must go to meet my lovers and tell them these things.'"

"If you love me one hundred percent, you will be able to hold on to me. Obey me at all costs — especially until July 10th. You will never see me again in the flesh. All will come to pass in quick succession as I have said, any time after July 10th. . . ."

When Ivy Duce and her Sufi group had their interview in the Lagoon Cabin, Baba reiterated how they must hang on to His daaman, and how difficult it would be:

"If six cobras came into this room suddenly from out there, would you just sit still here with me? No, you would be flying out the doors and windows as fast as you could in sheer panic. You would forget all about Baba!"

"Peter denied me when I was Jesus. The dark cloud of which I have been warning you of is very, very near. It will happen suddenly, from an unexpected angle, just like I have mentioned the sudden onrush of the cobras. You will not expect it from such an angle, and you will feel justified in leaving me. Each will be tried by his own psychological weakness, but try to hang on."

*Lord Meher*, 15: 5395, 5398. See also Ivy O. Duce, *How a Master Works*, p. 308



**Irwin Luck continued from page 35**

*But you are the one.  
The sun of all life and love.  
The Master of all things.  
You took upon yourself the mission  
to raise the consciousness of the world.  
so we may see the truth for ourselves.*

*When you come  
you punch a big hole in the clouds  
however many and dark they may be.  
Your sunshine which is always there  
can now be seen in the midst of any  
misery*

*Those who follow your beam  
join your light  
beyond the clouds.*

*Oh Lord.  
Savior of the blind  
The day is beautiful beyond measure  
where you come from.  
To see your cloud piercing ray is to follow you  
beyond the clouds that hide you.*

*Then Lo.  
Heavens gates are open  
while the battle rages below.*

Irwin Luck  
May 6, 2010



# Exciting News from Meher Baba Archives

Irwin Luck, Myrtle Beach

Dear Meher Baba Lovers and Friends,

Presently there is in the Meher Baba Archives, movie film footage that is uncirculated. It may be the last remaining film of Avatar Meher Baba that has not been shown or distributed. This footage will require much restoration and special optical work to make it suitable for viewing. Furthermore those of you who have seen the movie "MEHER BABA" Avatar of the Age with the subtitle: The Human Side of God know what kind of work I do to make a movie. This film will also be in that class. This movie when completed will reveal the special role and love that Mehera and Meher Baba had for each other and his great love for all those who loved him and received his guidance during his advent as the Avatar of the Age.

If you are amongst those who would like to see this movie upon its completion then I have a special offer for you which will also help me to make this movie.

Those who donate \$100 will be amongst the first to receive a DVD of the new movie upon its completion. In addition I will send you a copy of Book 1 of my poems which will include the odelet: "The Journey to the Beyond and Back". Those of you who have not seen my poems will wonder what is this? Especially since many people don't care for poetry. However, most overwhelmingly liked what I write and even enjoyed poetry for the first time.

Therefore, I am including at the end of this letter to you 2 of my poems from the trilogy of 3 books I wrote last year. I also hope you send me your comments about the poems whether you donate to the new film or not.

Those who donate \$200 will receive the new movie when completed and the Trilogy of all 3 books of my poems.

Those who would like to get the DVD of the movie that was previously made titled "MEHER BABA" Avatar of the Age can send \$55 (which includes shipping). 1hr 20min

All checks should be made payable to; Meher Baba Archives

Mail to: Meher Baba Archives - 1130 Waterway Lane - Myrtle Beach, SC 29572  
Phone: 843-267-8524

Please also state what you would like to get. Include your name, address,

phone number and Email address.

You can pay by credit card if you prefer. Let us know what you would like and we can send you a Pay Pal money request. If you have any questions, Email me. See below.

In His loving service,  
Irwin Luck, Director  
Meher Baba Archives, Inc. a not for profit tax exempt corporation.  
**Website:** <http://avataroftheage.com/>  
**Phone:** 843-267-8524  
**Email:** OPFD22@Gmail.com

Poem from Book One in celebration of Meher Baba's Birthday,

## Happy Birthday Baba

February 25, 2010

*Meher Baba is throwing a birthday party.  
Come one, come all. Everyone is invited.  
What a celebration. How grand it is.  
Your party includes the whole world.*

*Once every year, the earth completes its orbit around the sun.  
In that time, everyone on the planet has a birthday to celebrate.*

*Now the maker of suns and planets has invited us to join his celebration.  
What good fortune has come to us.  
To celebrate with the maker of life, His birthday on earth.*

*When you were born, a new age began.  
A new birth of love and truth, divine light and music, tv and cars.  
Your party includes all of mankind and angels unseen.  
Everyone is invited, to come and enjoy,  
Devils and Saints, high and low, however rich or poor.  
There are no pretenses here.  
No one is left out, of your come as you are party.*

*Whoever comes, will not leave empty handed,  
You have just the right gift for each one.  
Neither will anyone leave, the same as they came.  
Your all-powerful love,  
transforms the mind and heart of those who enter.  
This grand birthday, gives birth to an amazing new life,*

*for all those who accept your invitation.  
What an extraordinary present.*

*I would not miss this birthday celebration of the Ancient One.*

*The truth is, your birthday party never stops.*

*It has been going on for ages.*

*In every advent, your Birthday celebration gets bigger and better than ever.*

*You play your music and we dance to your tune.*

*No one can rock the world like you.*

*What a ball we are in for.*

*Happy, Happy Birthday Baba.*

*I was born to come to your party.*

*Lots of Love,  
Irwin Luck*

*Written: February 17, 2010  
Myrtle Beach, SC*

Poem from Book 2

## HEAVENS GATE

*Today there was a lot of love in the world.*

*You may not have seen it because of the clouds.*

*Earthquakes that kill hundreds or thousands.*

*Tsunamis, hurricanes, tornado's, maybe a meteor hit that can wipe out so much life on the planet.*

*Natures disasters that we call an act of God.*

*Then there are the acts of some men.  
Murderers, muggers, hate mongers, civil and national strife of all kinds.  
Political, religious, family conflicts and wars.*

*Lots of pain in a most amazing variety of ways.*

*Yet, there is a sun  
But there is also clouds  
that hide the brightness  
and life giving energy of the sun.*

*If I were God  
and I saw all this*

*I would want to do something  
to make things better  
for both the ignorant and the wise.*

*continued on facing page 35*

# *"Welcome to My World Built With You in Mind..."*

*Welcome to James Francis Kim!*



Born on 08/20/2010 7:51 p.m. and weighing in at 7 pounds 8 ounces and 20.5" tall.  
He joins his mother and father, Missy and Glenn, and big sister Rachel  
in Minnesota.

## *Meherabad Welcome and Information Office Opens*



*Debbie Nordeen*

The Meherabad Welcome and Information Office had an open house on January 10, 2011. This celebrated the active opening of this Office. The space (formerly known as the account office or 'Gary's office') had been allocated several years ago, but the Welcome office sprang into life with an array of materials about Baba's life, and about

pilgrimage. Donations of furniture and a printer helped facilitate the increased activity. Baba lovers also donated postcards of the Samadhi, pens with Baba quotes, as well as the ever popular Baba photo cards.

The Welcome Office is focused on offering introductory information to newcomers in a variety of languages, for example the Universal Message in 14 languages. The updated Meherabad Walking Tour and Life Sketches of Meher Baba are also offered in several languages, especially Marathi and Telugu. The Meherabad Guide was recently printed and is a small, self-guided tour brochure that includes a map of the historic sites of Meherabad and short definitions of these places where Baba lived and worked. This is especially valuable for newcomers.

Baba is drawing hearts from around the globe. Newcomers from Mongolia, China, Yeman, Korea, Macedonia, Afghanistan, Iran, Denmark, Russia, Finland, Brazil and other countries visited the Welcome Office in the past 3 months. Last weekend we helped introduce Baba to 50 people here on a meditation group tour. These people were visiting from Slovakia, Hungary, Germany, and the US.

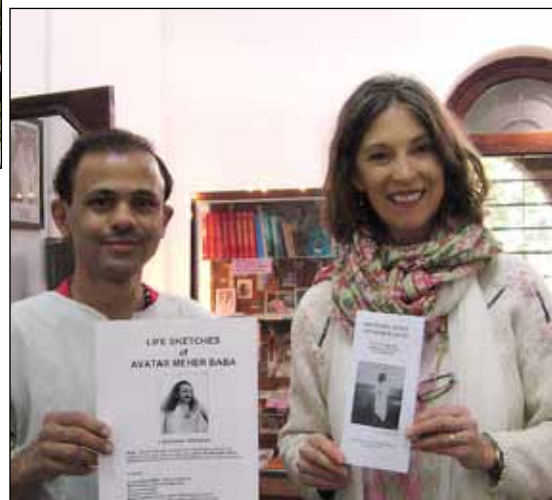
The office is open 6 mornings a week. Plans for the future include researching locations at Meherabad for supplying and helping distribute pertinent information where it is needed, so that we can best assist all the many pilgrims who come seeking the Divine Beloved.

For more information about the Welcome Office and how to donate materials for distribution, please contact Debbie Nordeen:

**[nordeen@mail.ambppct.org](mailto:nordeen@mail.ambppct.org)**

*Left, the old PC where the Pilgrim Reservation and the Welcome and Information offices are now located.*

*Below, Nandu and Debbie Nordeen working in the Welcome office.*



# 1962 East-West Gathering

## 50th Anniversary Commemoration Programme

### at Meherabad 1st - 4th November 2012

**A**vatar Meher Baba P.P.C. Trust is happy to announce about the 50th Anniversary Commemoration Programme at Meherabad of the 1962 East-West Gathering between 1st and 4th November 2012. Baba lovers all over the world are kindly requested to let us know of their inclination to participate in this programme at their earliest possible convenience. This will help us to make the necessary arrangements. Also, we would like to specially request those lovers who participated in the 1962 East-West Gathering to kindly share their experiences of 1962 during the 2012 programme by personally attending the 50th Anniversary Commemoration. Those lovers who for some reason are not able to personally attend are kindly requested to send a brief written account of their experiences for publication in the 50th Anniversary Commemoration Volume, which the Trust is planning to bring forth. Since this is going to be a big programme, its preparations have started in right earnest and cooperation from all of you is solicited. The details of the programme will be posted in subsequent announcements. The venue will be Meherabad,

and the dates will be between the 1st and 4th November 2012. The programme will include sharing of experiences by those who attended the 1962 East-West Gathering, a special film on the East-West Gathering, plays and skits, musical presentations, and an exhibition.

Meher Baba Centres are requested to make some special presentation of music, play, skit, or dialogue (like Bhurakatha presented by Telugu group in Baba's presence, which you might have seen in the 1962 film), etc., for this occasion for which extra time can be allotted, but the presentation should be based on some episode of the 1962 East-West Gathering. Centres are expected to inform the organisers at an early date of their inclination for giving some special presentation. The maximum time limit for such presentations will be 50 minutes. It should be noted that this commemorative programme would be organised in the amphitheatre opposite to Baba's Samadhi on Meherabad Hill, and all these programmes are under the broad daylight sun, so the presentations should be evolved accordingly. At the amphitheatre, the films cannot be shown, since the programme timings are between 9:30

a.m. and 6:30 p.m., during which it is not possible to screen any film. However, films can be shown after the evening arti for which only two slots are available. There can be only four film showings on four days of the programme, out of which two days are already reserved for the film which the organisers are making for this occasion. The other two evenings can be allotted to those centres which may be interested in making some special film for this occasion. The centres are therefore requested to kindly send a short synopsis of the intended film, so that a slot can be allotted to those films which are most appropriate for this occasion. The film itself can be submitted one month before the programme, but the synopsis of the intended film may be submitted at the earliest possible date. Note: All presentations except the films will be during the daytime and the film screenings will be after evening Arti between 7:30 - 8:30 p.m.

Please contact [hill.library@ambppct.org](mailto:hill.library@ambppct.org) or Urmilla and Gokaran Shrivastava, Librarians, Meherabad Hill Library of A.M.B.P.P.C. Trust, Post Meherabad, Ahmednagar, (MS) India 414 006, phone 0241-2548473.



## *Bowl of Saki*



photo from <http://wahiduddin.net>  
Pir-o-Murshid Hazrat Inayat Khan

Background - the *Bowl of Saki* is a compendium of 366 brief quotations, one for each day of the year, selected from the teachings of Hazrat Inayat Khan. Many of the quotes came directly from his lectures, while others came from his personal notebooks. In the December 1921 edition of the quarterly publication "Sufism", the new book was announced as: "a collection of some of the most striking and arresting sayings of Pir-o-Murshid, arranged in the form of a daily textbook"

**T**he only way to live in the midst of inharmonious influences is to strengthen the will power and endure all things, yet keeping fineness of character

and nobility of manner together with an everlasting heart full of love.<sup>1</sup>

Commentary by Pir-o-Murshid Inayat Khan: Many seek protection from all hurting influences by building some wall around themselves. But the canopy over the earth is so high that a wall cannot be built high enough, and the only thing one can do is to live in the midst of all inharmonious influences, to strengthen his will power and to bear all things, yet keeping the fineness of character and a nobleness of manner together with an ever-living heart.<sup>2</sup>

To say, You are different and I am different, your religion is different and my religion is different, your belief is

*continued on page 38*



# God Is Shy of Strangers

I've been sleeping with strangers most of my life.  
Their numbers are legion, their legacy strife.

Strangers they may be, but I know each one well;  
They're my own desires, with their own tale to tell.

Each stranger resides in a house apart.  
Now they're a city teeming within my heart.

Each abode is so crowded, You cannot enter.  
Clearly, I must look for a different type of renter.

The ones I attract are so boorish, so crude,  
Their TVs too loud, and what's on is too lewd.

These are the neighbors who've moved in next door;  
So close, in fact, I can hear the roar  
Of each screaming desire, each insistent plea:  
"Fulfill my wish!" "No, satisfy me."

No wonder You can't enter, there's simply no room;  
Each desire's a prison, each longing a tomb.

As landlord of this most hellish domain  
It's my job to evict each tenant insane.

I keep serving them notice, but they refuse to go;  
Though each is a stranger, each one's face do I know:

The faces of lust, anger and greed  
And always the continual, aching need  
For each one to be given its fulfillment whole,  
But desires' perimeter is a depthless black hole

So wide and deep, yet it can never be filled,  
Not unless and until each desire is killed.

I've got the Man for the job: a real exterminator;  
He's a want-destroyer,  
a desire-terminator.

**A selection of Mick Karger's poetry can be found online by typing these words into your search engine: Mick Karger's Poetry Page.**



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Now the real work begins, the house-cleaning starts;  
Enticing these strangers has its own divine arts.

Rooting out desires from their darkest lair,  
Too deeply hidden from even my long stare;

But visible enough to Your infinite gaze  
Which can penetrate the ego's hardest glaze.

The real courage lies in exposing to You  
What I myself am afraid to view.

Exposure to light is painful indeed,  
Yet this very exposure I know they need.

As an ocean can absorb a drop of oil,  
This drop of me this ocean won't spoil.

Though I've struggled to express in the simplest rhyme  
My struggle with strangers I'm afraid that I'm

Still cohabiting, or "living in sin"  
With a host of new strangers who've just moved in.

Though Your love is assured, I must do my part  
To evict these strangers from the abode of my heart.

"God is shy of strangers," for they are foreign to Him  
Who is all-sufficient without and within.

Mickey Karger, Florida

\*Inspired by the discourse, "God Is Shy of Strangers," from the book, *The Everything and the Nothing*, by Meher Baba, page 7.

**Bowl of Saki continued from page 37**

different and my belief is different,' will not unite, it will only divide humanity. Those who, with the excuse of their great faith in their own religion, hurt the feelings of another and divide humanity which has the same source and goal, abuse religion, whatever be their faith. The message, at whatever period it came to the world, did not come just to a certain section of humanity; it did not come to raise only some few people who perhaps accepted the faith, the message, or a particular organized Church. No, all these things came afterwards. The rain does not fall in a certain land only; the sun does not shine only on a particular country. All that comes from God is for all souls. If they are worthy, they deserve it; it is their reward; if they are unworthy, they are the more entitled to it. Verily, blessing is for every soul; for every soul, whatever be his faith or belief, belongs to God.<sup>3</sup>

When a person begins to see all goodness as being the goodness of God, all the beauty that surrounds him as the divine beauty, he begins by worshipping a visible God, and as his heart constantly loves and admires the divine beauty in all that he sees, he begins to see in all that is visible one single vision; all becomes for him the vision of the beauty of God. His love of beauty increases his capacity to such a degree that great virtues such as tolerance and forgiveness spring naturally from his heart. Even things that people mostly look upon with contempt, he views with tolerance.<sup>4</sup>

For further reading: *The Spiritual Message of Inayat Khan*: books, articles, photos <http://wahiduddin.net/mv2/index.htm>

<sup>1</sup>Bowl of Saki, September 13, by Hazrat Inayat Khan

<sup>2</sup>[http://wahiduddin.net/mv2/XIII/XIII\\_14.htm](http://wahiduddin.net/mv2/XIII/XIII_14.htm).

<sup>3</sup>[http://wahiduddin.net/mv2/IX/IX\\_2htm](http://wahiduddin.net/mv2/IX/IX_2htm)

<sup>4</sup>[http://wahiduddin.net/mv2/IX/IX\\_9.htm](http://wahiduddin.net/mv2/IX/IX_9.htm)



*Beloved God, help us love you more and more, and more and more, and still yet more, until we become worthy of union with you, and help us hold fast to Baba's Daaman until the very end!*

-Avatar Meher Baba

# Humor for Huma from His Katie

When Baba was with us, He was always asking for jokes to be told to Him to lighten His burden. He counted on Katie to always have some new ones for Him. Towards the end of her life, Katie loved to email jokes to her friends around the world. I imagine Baba was still laughing at them along with her readers.

## Life is like Chocolate Cake

We all wonder many times over WHY? Sometimes we wonder, 'What did I do to deserve this?' or 'Why did God have to do this to me?' Here is a wonderful explanation!

A daughter is telling her mother how everything is going wrong, she's failing algebra, her boyfriend broke up with her and her best friend is moving away.

Meanwhile, her Mother is baking a cake and asks her daughter if she would like a snack, and the daughter says, 'Absolutely Mom, I love your cake.'

'Here, have some cooking oil,' her Mother offers. 'Yuck' says her daughter.

'How about a couple raw eggs?' 'Gross, Mom!'

'Would you like some flour then? Or maybe baking soda?' 'Mom, those are all yucky!'

To which the mother replies: 'Yes, all those things seem bad all by themselves. But when they are put together in the right way, they make a wonderfully delicious cake!'

God works the same way. Many times we wonder why He would let us go through such bad and difficult times. But God knows that when He puts these things all in His order, they always work for good! We just have to trust Him and, eventually, they will all make something wonderful!

God is crazy about you. He sends you flowers every spring and a sunrise every morning. Whenever you want to talk, He'll listen. He can live anywhere in the universe, and He chose your heart.

## The Perfect Doctor

This is the Doctor I want as my primary physician; he answers questions like this:

**Q:** I've heard that cardiovascular exercise can prolong life; is this true?

**A:** Your heart is only good for so many beats, and that's it... don't waste them on exercise. Everything wears out eventually. Speeding up your heart will not

make you live longer; that's like saying you can extend the life of your car by driving it faster. Want to live longer? Take a nap.

**Q:** Should I cut down on meat and eat more fruits and vegetables?

**A:** You must grasp logistical efficiencies. What does a cow eat? Hay and corn. And what are these? Vegetables. So a steak is nothing more than an efficient mechanism of delivering vegetables to your system. Need grain? Eat chicken. Beef is also a good source of field grass (green leafy vegetable). And a pork chop can give you 100% of your recommended daily allowance of vegetable products.

**Q:** Should I reduce my alcohol intake?

**A:** No, not at all. Wine is made from fruit. Brandy is distilled wine, that means they take the water out of the fruity bit so you get even more of the goodness that way. Beer is also made out of grain. Bottoms up!

**Q:** How can I calculate my body/fat ratio?

**A:** Well, if you have a body and you have fat, your ratio is one to one. If you have two bodies, your ratio is two to one, etc.

**Q:** What are some of the advantages of participating in a regular exercise program?

**A:** Can't think of a single one, sorry. My philosophy is: No Pain...Good!

**Q:** Aren't fried foods bad for you?

**A:** YOU'RE NOT LISTENING!!! .... Foods are fried these days in vegetable oil. In fact, they're permeated in it. How could getting more vegetables be bad for you?

**Q:** Will sit-ups help prevent me from getting a little soft around the middle?

**A:** Definitely not! When you exercise a muscle, it gets bigger. You should only be doing sit-ups if you want a bigger stomach.

**Q:** Is chocolate bad for me?

**A:** Are you crazy? HELLO! Cocoa beans! Another vegetable!!! It's the best feel-good food around!

**Q:** Is swimming good for your figure?

**A:** If swimming is good for your figure, explain whales to me.

**Q:** Is getting in-shape important for my lifestyle?

**A:** Hey! 'Round' is a shape!

Well, I hope this has cleared up any misconceptions you may have had about food and diets. And remember:

'Life should NOT be a journey to the grave with the intention of arriving safely

in an attractive and well preserved body, but rather to skid in sideways: chardonnay in one hand, chocolate in the other, body thoroughly used up totally worn out and screaming 'WAH-HOO, What a Ride!' AND.....

For those of you who watch what you eat, here's the final word on nutrition and health. It's a relief to know the truth after all those conflicting nutritional studies.

1. The Japanese eat very little fat and suffer fewer heart attacks than Americans.

2. The Mexicans eat a lot of fat and suffer fewer heart attacks than Americans.

3. The Chinese drink very little red wine and suffer fewer heart attacks than Americans.

4. The Italians drink a lot of red wine and suffer fewer heart attacks than Americans.

5. The Germans drink a lot of beers and eat lots of sausages and fats and suffer fewer heart attacks than Americans.

CONCLUSION: Eat and drink what you like. Speaking English is what kills you.

## The Lone Ranger and Tonto

The Lone Ranger and Tonto went camping in the desert.

After they got their tent all set up, both men fell sound asleep.

Some hours later, Tonto wakes the Lone Ranger and says, 'Kemo Sabe, look towards sky. What you see?'

The Lone Ranger replies, 'I see millions of stars.'

'What that tell you?' asked Tonto.

The Lone Ranger ponders for a minute then says, 'Astronomically speaking, it tells me there are millions of galaxies and potentially billions of planets.

Astrologically, it tells me that Saturn is in Leo.

Time-wise, it appears to be approximately a quarter past three in the morning. Theologically, the Lord is all-powerful, and we are small and insignificant. Meteorologically, it seems we will have a beautiful day tomorrow.

What's it tell you, Tonto?'

'You dumber than buffalo dung. It means someone stole the tent!'



# Passings

## Remembering John Grant

### 1924-2010



Ross Keating, Sydney Australia

John Grant passed away on the 17th June this year. In the last months of his life he was lovingly cared for by his son Hugh and daughter Diane. John will be remembered as one of Australia's early Baba lovers who first met Meher Baba when He came to Australia in 1956 and who unstintingly gave his life in service to His Master's cause. Here are some passages taken from John Grant's book, *Practical Spirituality with Meher Baba*, which give a fascinating account of his life as a spiritual seeker and convey something of John's character and distinct voice.

"I was born at Canterbury, a suburb of Sydney, New South Wales. As a boy I went to Sunday school, but my family often moved house during the depression of the 1930s and sometimes there was only one Sunday school in the town where we were living. It was usually of a different Christian denomination at each place. So I had attended many Sunday Schools taught by many different Christian Religions by the time I had grown-up.

"When I was in my teens, I was very idealistic and was very impressed with the stories of the life of Christ that I read in the New Testament of the Bible. But I noticed a marked difference between the life of Jesus and the lives of the people of the Church who taught others about His life. He lived truth and love in His life, they only talked about His living it and didn't seem to try to live it themselves.

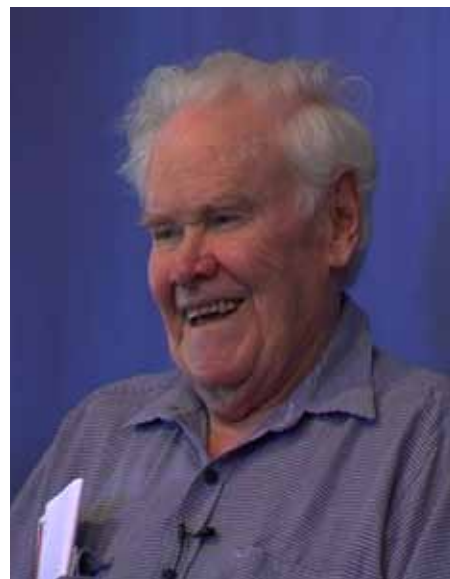
"I soon discovered that each Christian Religion had its own interpretation of

the meaning of what was written in the Bible and they considered anyone with a different interpretation to be misguided and wrong. Instead of living the spirit of His teaching of "love thy neighbour as thyself", they were quarrelling about the letter of the teaching — did He say 'this' or 'thus'?

"When I went to read about other great Spiritual Masters of history, the only accounts that I could find written in the English language were written by Christian scholars and these accounts were definitely prejudiced. I didn't know then, but I know now, that there is an inner and an outer teaching of every religion and I was only finding the outer teachings of them, which are all different, while yearning for the inner teaching of any one of them, because the inner teachings are all the same, because God is always the same, even although He is given different names, in different languages, in different religions.

"But with the passing of the centuries the inner teaching, the essence or spirit, is often lost, while the words of the teaching and the external ceremonies and rituals are always preserved. However, even the meaning of words can change. I have known in my own lifetime many words that have changed their meaning completely in my language and I believe this has happened in most languages. So it would not be surprising if some of the messages written in the Bible became unintentionally changed with the passage of time.

"In 1945 while visiting a second hand bookshop in Auckland, New Zealand, I could not find any book that interested me, so as I was about to leave, in desperation I took a book in a brown paper cover from one of the shelves and opened it. I found that it was a book on Raja Yoga. I had no idea what that was, but I looked at the headings of the chapters, they were on such topics as; attention, concentration, perception and will-power. They certainly seemed to be interesting topics to me so I bought this book on Raja Yoga and later started reading it.



"It was an unusual book because at the end of each chapter there was a summary of the chapter and then a mantra to repeat daily. Also there were frequent references to other books that presumably I should have read before reading this one. I was a Radio Officer on a ship at sea at this time and I didn't have an opportunity to obtain these other books that I should have read first. I realized that part of the power of the summary and the mantra would be auto-suggestion, but the values suggested were opposite to the ones usually accepted as being worldly values or commonly accepted values. They were more mystical or spiritual values.

"So I started doing as the book instructed, i.e., after reading a chapter I would meditate on the summary and then repeat the mantra. After a while I began to think that if I was not careful my mind could suddenly flip over and I may not be able to get my consciousness back to this world or plane which we think of as normal or reality. However I decided that I would continue reading the book and saying the mantras but I resolved to be very watchful while doing so. After reading a chapter I would meditate on the summary and then repeat the mantra — I thought if anything happened I didn't like, I could stop and all would be well. I had repeated the mantras for a few weeks, when early one morning after I had finished my shift of duty at 4:00 a.m. I went to my cabin and after changing my clothes I got into my bunk and put out the light. I had been in my bunk for only a minute or so and I was not asleep, when suddenly I saw



a very bright light. It was brighter than looking into the sun, but whereas the sun just appears as a small, very bright object in the sky, this light seemed to cover the whole of my visual horizon.

"As I was looking at this light, a very loud voice called my name — JOHN GRANT — I was frightened. All that I could think of was that it was the voice of GOD. I opened my eyes. It was dark, so I turned on the light and sat up in my bunk. I didn't know what had happened, but I associated it with the Raja Yoga and having said the mantras. I didn't say the mantras anymore and I resolved to buy the books that I thought I should have read first, before reading this one. Although I was still interested in Raja Yoga I decided that I would not go on with it unless I had a living Spiritual Master. In Australia in the year 1945, I couldn't find a Master, so I resolved to obtain more information, but not to practice mantras or anything else until I had a living Master. However it did awaken in me an interest in mysticism and later an interest in spirituality. I now realized that there was a different world with different values, very close to this world with its values.

"By the same author of the book on Raja Yoga, there was a translation of the *Bhagavad Gita* which I obtained and read. I was quite impressed by this book and read it over and over again. I particularly noticed one passage as follows: Lord Krishna said, 'Whenever the world declines in virtue and righteousness, and vice and injustice mount the throne — then come I, the Lord, and revisit My world in visible form, and mingle as a man with men, and by My influence and teaching I destroy the evil and injustice and re-establish virtue and righteousness. Many times have I thus appeared; many times hereafter shall I come again.'

"I was very impressed with this idea and I never forgot this statement attributed to one of the great Spiritual Masters in history. It also seemed to me that by and large this is what had happened in the world. There are historical records of this happening, but the different Advents are not normally associated with each other, because they happened at a different place, at a different time and the messages were given in different languages at a time when most people were illiterate and communication between widely separated communities in different countries was difficult and almost non-existent. I could not help feeling that we were overdue for the next visit.

"I had an old friend who was a theosophist and he gave me Edwin Arnold's *Light of Asia* which introduced me to the life of Buddha. Later I discovered and read books on Vedanta. One day I was at a motor tyre-works overlooking Manly, a Sydney suburb, having my car tyres changed and I was talking to the foreman as he changed it. I don't remember what was said, but he finished up mentioning about Sufism and he said that he was sure that I would be interested in it. He even took me to a meeting of a Sufi group that was held every Thursday evening at Cremorne, another suburb of Sydney.

"Here I was first introduced to the books of Inayat Khan, and I loved them. Such books as *The Unity of Religious Ideals*, and *In an Eastern Rose Garden* and many, many more. Through this Sufi group I met Francis Brabazon. He was a poet, but he was also much more than a poet. Before the war Francis had met Baron von Frankenberg, who was a Sufi teacher from the School of Hazrat Inayat Khan who had established a Sufi Order in the Western World in 1910. It had branches in Europe and America — an offshoot of the American branch was in Australia . . . [Soon after I came to meet] Baron von Frankenberg [who] gave me a copy of the book *Avatar* to read. When I read this book it brought tears to my eyes. Von Frankenberg noted my reaction to Meher Baba and said to think the matter over, and if I felt so inclined, to write to Baba asking for His guidance and to ask Him to take me under His wings.

"I decided that that was the thing for me to do and I wrote to [Meher] Baba. I received a reply in November 1947, this was my first personal contact with Him. I also received letters from Him in March, June, and September 1948. As a result I left the Sufi movement at this time . . .

"[In 1956, Meher Baba came to Sydney and stayed in the house built for him at Beacon Hill and it was here that I met Him for the first time. This was a highly charged and deeply moving experience.] Sometimes during Meher Baba's discourses, when I was present, I would be moved to tears. One time when I was sitting in front of Him, I glanced behind me, first to the right and then to the left, and everybody that I saw was weeping. Then I looked up at Eruch [one of Meher Baba's Indian disciples], who was interpreting Baba's gestures [for Meher Baba was observing silence] and there were tears trickling down his cheeks as he spoke the words. He must have interpreted these

discourses many times and yet he was still moved to tears. I wondered why I wept. I came to the conclusion that I wept for the rest of humanity that could not be here, to experience what I was experiencing. When I told other people about Meher Baba they just thought I was mad. At that time I felt so inadequate to convey to them what He had conveyed to me."

And yet for many people, including myself, who later heard of Meher Baba but never met Him, John very adequately conveyed what it was like to be in Baba's presence and how to deepen that spiritual presence in one's life. John did this in a very natural way, unselfconsciously, by just being himself. At the end of his book he writes:

"I have tried to emphasize in this book the availability and importance of inner contact with Meher Baba and for those people who are interested in having this, how they should go about achieving it. In the course of His ministry Meher Baba gave out many messages and although they were appropriate to that specific time, they are also universal messages appropriate to all times. One of these messages was given out on the 7th October 1954, the last day that He used His alphabet board. It was also His last message given on the alphabet board, which at that time had been His means of communication for almost three decades.

"This message is very appropriate for today, after He has withdrawn even His body which was yet another means of God's communication during this Advent. Meher Baba Himself was continually emphasizing the importance of inner contact and connection with Him as this message illustrates.

"This message given by Him in 1954 has even more importance now after He has dropped His body. It is with this important message that I conclude this book:"

"There is no reason at all for any of you to worry. Baba was, Baba is, and Baba will also be eternally existent. Severance of external relations does not mean the termination of internal connections. It was only for establishing the internal connections that the external contacts have been maintained till now. The time has now come for being bound in the chain of internal connections. HENCE EXTERNAL CONTACT IS NO LONGER NECESSARY. It is possible to establish the internal link by obeying Baba's orders. I give you all My blessings for strengthening these internal links.

"I am always with you and I am not away from you. I was, am and will remain eternally with you, and it is for promoting this realization that I have severed external contact. This will enable all persons to realize Truth by being bound to each other with internal links.

"Oh, My lovers! I love you all. It is only because of My love for My creation that I have descended on Earth. Let not your hearts be torn asunder by My declarations concerning the dropping of My body. On the contrary, accept My Divine Will cheerfully. You can never escape

from Me, even if you try to escape from Me, it is not possible to get rid of Me. Therefore, have courage and be brave.

"If you thus lose your heart, how will it be possible for you to fulfill the great task which I have entrusted to you? Be brave and spread MY MESSAGE OF LOVE far and wide to all quarters, in order to fulfill My Divine Will. Let the words 'BABA, BABA' come forth from every nook and corner of the world and from the mouth of every child, and let their ignorance be reduced to ashes by the burning flame of My Love.

"Come together in order to fulfill My Will by taking your stand on TRUTH, LOVE AND HONESTY, and be worthy of participating in My Task. I give you all My blessings for spreading MY MESSAGE OF LOVE."

If there is a single message of Meher Baba's which John embraced and tried to fully embody in his daily living, I think it is this final quote in his book. And indeed his book stands as testimony of that embrace and a statement of what he felt was the essence of practical love and service (spirituality) for his Beloved Spiritual Master, Meher Baba.

## *Toby Mertens, Baba's Swiss Playmate* *November 1932- March 2011*

**O**n March 14, Toby Mertens, best known to Baba Lovers as the adorable blonde boy playing with Baba in a classic 1934 photo, passed away here in California as a result of the cancer he'd been battling for eighteen months. He was 79.

Toby's parents, Walter and Hedi Mertens had met Meher Baba in 1933 and the following year hosted Baba for ten days at their large home in Zurich, Switzerland. A great many people came from all over Europe to meet the Silent Master, booking nearly all the local hotel rooms.

Over fifty years later, Toby spoke at the old L.A. Baba Center [on Santa Monica Blvd.] and recalled the event in startling detail, although he was only eighteen months old at the time: "I was told we were going to have guests and then one morning my life changed." He remembered his home being invaded by "a lot of strange-looking people...and I was a stepchild from that moment on. Baba got all the attention. My entire life changed."

Toby described how he felt jealous of the attention his mother lavished on Baba and how his resentment finally boiled over: "I was upset and I burst into Baba's room. Baba turned around and looked at me, held out His hands, grabbed my hands and swung me around a couple of times and put me down, and I was over it."

From then on, Baba was the little boy's beloved playmate and it was the others' turns to be jealous!

Oddly enough, Toby said his memory of meeting Baba again in 1952, at the

age of nineteen, was not nearly as sharp as that of the 1934 visit.

Toby was a quiet, shy, delightful man who followed his father into the field of landscape architecture. [His father found, landscaped and designed the Bangalore Spiritual Center in India.] We send our love and prayers to his wife Jane and their family, and we're grateful to Baba that he shared his love for the Beloved with us.

An excerpt of that long ago interview at the L.A. Center can be seen on-line at:

**<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4YLofT3SzM8>**

Jane Mertens writes to Jeannie Kassof:

Dear Jeannie,

I have the sad duty to tell you that my dearest Toby passed away suddenly this past Monday, March 14, 2011. He had been battling cancer for the past year and a half, and although he was continuing as best he could with the business of life, he was in discomfort and his body was very weak.

We knew he did not have long to live. But did not suspect that the end was so near.

Monday morning while I was downstairs preparing breakfast, and Toby was



*Toby Mertens with Meher Baba*

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upstairs dressing, I heard a big sound of him falling and rushed upstairs to find him unconscious on the floor, his breathing labored. He did not respond to my words or touch, and as I watched, he breathed his last at about 9:50 AM.

Family, friends, and business associates alike are devastated that he is gone.

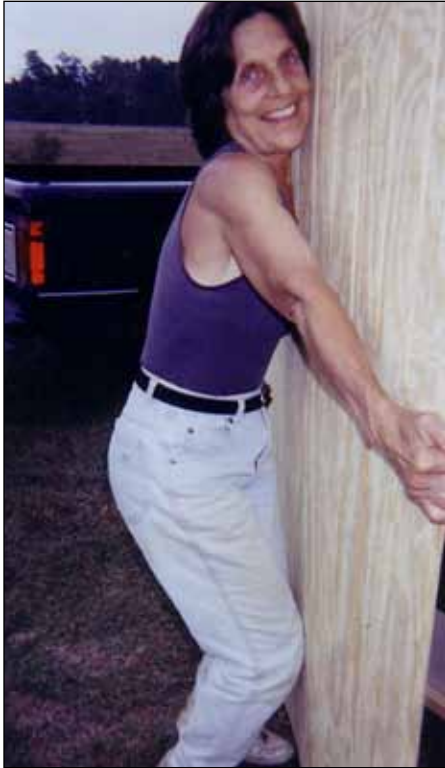
I am giving you these details in the hope that you will pass the news to the Baba people who need to know.

Thank you for helping me make this known.

Love, Jane Mertens

*continued on p 44*

# Yvonne Judith Andrau, 1934-2010



**A**t the age of 76, Yvonne died in a car accident on December 29. She was born in Dortmund, Germany, in 1934, the oldest of three children, and was already a world traveler at the age of seven, having lived in Germany, Hungary, Sweden, India, and Indonesia. She, along with her family, spent World War II as a prisoner of the Japanese military in Indonesia. After being liberated in 1945, she came to America. She lived in Texas, California, and Illinois until she finally settled with her family in Woodstock, NY. She was educated at Wheaton College, and the University of Aix-en-Provence in France, and then Columbia University in New York City, where she earned her degree and started her career as a physical therapist.

Her life was to change significantly when she discovered Meher Baba in 1955. Shortly after, in 1957, she married Thomas Riley. Hers was an entrepreneurial life, including a highly successful antique store, and a land development and custom home building business. Wherever she lived, she was hostess to countless people who were becoming newly acquainted with Meher Baba. She and her husband acted as an informal center for gatherings in New York State for decades.

Meher Baba gave Yvonne and her husband permission to live on His Spiritual Center, located in Myrtle Beach,

SC, and to design and build their home there. It was not until 1976 that she and her husband moved to Myrtle Beach, to expand their building business. Yvonne remained there for the rest of her life. In Myrtle Beach she had an active involvement in the community focused around Meher Center.

Yvonne is dearly remembered by those associated with the Center, and in the greater area community as a selfless, practical, active, adventurous and determined lover of God. She was a self-taught electrician, house designer, gardener, and belly dancer. She was a fearless maverick and tackled all projects with gusto. She leaves behind her daughter, Christina Riley in New Bern, NC; her son Demian Riley, his wife Heather, and their daughter, Alexandra, in Loris, SC; her two sisters, Maya Andrau of Asheville, NC, and Robine Andrau of North Scituate, MA, as well as four nephews and nieces, and countless friends worldwide whose life she has touched in so many ways.

## **The Memorial Gathering for Yvonne Andrau**

January 3, 2011

by Kendra Crossen

I read today in a book about the yogic view of dying that “the last moments of a saint reflect his entire life.”

The report of Yvonne Andrau’s death in a road accident on Wednesday, 29



December 2010, in the local Sun News newspaper said that she ran off the side of the road and lost control of her vehicle. It did not mention that she had swerved to avoid hitting two dogs who were fighting on the road. Whether or not Yvonne was a saint, her final moment was a selfless act of seeking to protect two living beings. In addition, Yvonne was alone in the car and it was a one-car accident, and her daughter, Christina Riley, said, “It was so like my mother not to involve or hurt anyone else.”

The final words of the article were: “Andrau was not wearing a seat belt at the time of the crash.” No mention of the fact that Yvonne had medical permission not to wear a seat belt because of her dialysis port. (She was on the way to dialysis at the time of the accident.)

Christina explained these details to a huge group gathered yesterday (Sunday, January 2, ’11) for Yvonne’s memorial at Jerry Edwards’s house in Briarcliffe. I tried to count those present in the living room and stopped at 60; there might have been nearly 100 present, mainly from the Meher Baba community (nearby residents and Center guests) and Yvonne’s family, including her son, Demian Riley, and her two sisters, Maya and Robine.

The youth who was the sole witness apparently had said that the accident was over in seconds, and according to the police it was believed that Yvonne was dead before the vehicle even came to rest. This fact had caused some unease in Christina, who was concerned that Yvonne had had no time for any thought other than surprise. But something happened to Christina that answered this doubt: while she was driving, a deer suddenly jumped out into the road in front of her. The incident made her realize how much time there actually was for her to think — “about anything I wanted to.” Tearfully Christina said she now felt confident that Yvonne had taken a moment to remember Meher Baba before she breathed her last.

It was touching that among those present were the boy who witnessed the accident, along with his mother. He had called his mother, a nurse, to the scene when it happened, and she told us that she had reported to the EMT’s that the victim was in her 30s or 40s. During the sharing of memories of Yvonne, many mentioned the timeless quality of this



woman who, at 76 years, seemed so young and vital. The funeral director was said to be shocked when he learned her age.

It was recalled with fondness that Yvonne was very proud of her hair, which she had never dyed. She also had pride in her considerable ability and knowledge in many areas, such as construction, electrician's work, repairs, and other skills requiring strength and skill, and she was always learning about new fields and the latest findings in them. After many people had commented on this point, citing anecdotes about Yvonne's superior know-how (not to mention that she often proclaimed her know-how to be superior), Bob Cushman brought down the house by calling out to someone, "Didn't Yvonne do brain surgery on you?"

Yvonne was warmly remembered as a loving mother, grandmother, and caregiver (e.g., to Gladys Spratt in her last illness), and last but not least as a mystic. A guest shared one visionary dream she had told him, in which, on parallel staircases, she came face to face with lionesses whom she knew to

be Mehera and Mani, and a massive lion who was Meher Baba—and when they roared at her, she roared right back!

More details about Yvonne's adventurous life (which included the traumatic experience of being held in a Japanese internment camp in Indonesia during the war, along with her two younger sisters and mother, the latter having written about it in a book titled *Bowing to Fate*) were said to be forthcoming in an obituary that may appear today or possibly next Sunday.

I conclude with one of the memorable comments made about Yvonne at the gathering: "In her own mind, she could swallow the world."



*Those who truly love Me are My centres in the world. Let each 'Baba Lover', wherever he or she may be, be a 'Baba's Centre' personified, radiating the eternal message of Love Divine, living a life of love, sacrifice and honesty.*

Meher Baba, Gift of Love

## Greetings From Meherabad Hill Library

Urmilla and Gokaran Shrivastava

1st of January 2011

May the year 2011 bring you the desired happiness and unfoldment of more and more of Beloved Baba's love, for which every Baba lover aspires. Beloved Baba repeatedly said that Meherabad will become the greatest place of pilgrimage in the whole world, and people from all walks of life will come here to pay obeisance at His feet here in His Samadhi. He also said that great philosophers, scientists, and mathematicians would come here. This has become evident from the following greeting which is sent to Meher Baba by one great mathematician. Meherabad Hill Library wishes to share this with all of you so that you feel His special love coming to you in this new year.

### Greetings From a Mathematician

Beloved Avatar Meher Baba, my salutations and New Year greetings to You. After reading somewhere that the Avatar always has a Divine Sense of Humour I was always thinking that I should try to make You laugh through

my mathematical humour. I discovered humour in mathematics and that is why it has become my favourite subject, otherwise for every one else it is really a difficult subject. I also learned that as a student You did not enjoy studying maths, but my mathematical humour will surely make You laugh. People say that mathematics is a dry subject, but if I am successful in making You laugh, then this concept should be changed and in Your next advent You will be a great mathematician, probably the greatest of Your time. So here is my love for You expressed in mathematical terms. Beloved Baba if You find some expressions difficult then You can ask any one of Your lovers, who has opted maths for his High School degree, to explain it to You.

### It is how my love is expressed:

Yesterday I was passing by Your rectangular House in trigonometric lane. There I saw You with Your circular face, conical nose and spherical eyes, standing within the perpendicular rectangle door

**Toby Mertens continued from p 42**

Toby sent this note to Jeanne last September:

Dear Jeannie,

Last September I had surgery for cancer (Liposarcoma) A tumor was removed from my abdomen (12 lbs) and I am doing fine. Everybody is amazed how well I am doing. However a nerve controlling my left leg was cut and removed and so I am stuck with a seriously "gimpy" leg. I can get around well with a walker, or a cane. In the house I do walk without the contraptions.

I chose not to do chemo or radiation (so I still have all my silver hair). I get a full body scan every 3 month and so far no areas of concern were found.

Be well,

Love,

Toby

frame. Before seeing You my heart was a null set, but when a vector of magnitude (likeness) from Your eyes at a deviation of theta radians made a tangent to my heart, it differentiated. My love for You is a quadratic equation with real roots, which only You can solve by making good binary relation with me.

The cosine of my love extends to infinity. I promise that I should not resolve You into partial functions but if I do so, You can integrate me by applying the limits from zero to infinity.

You are as essential to me as an element to a set. The geometry of my life resolves around Your acute personality. My Beloved Baba, if You do not meet me at parabola restaurant on date 10 at sunset, when the sun is making an angle of 160 degrees, my heart would be like a solved polynomial of degree 10.

With love from Your Higher order derivatives of maxima and minima, of an unknown function.

Your ever loving mathematician Arch-angle, Pythagoras.

### *Thorn In The Flesh*

Michael Da Costa, England

My consultant surgeon is extracting a  
thorn from my flesh  
It is deeply embedded, hooked firmly,  
just beneath my heart.  
It has been there for a very long time.  
Secretly I had hoped that it would pain-  
lessly dissolve,  
but dimly I knew there was no escape  
from facing the pain of its removal.  
Now my consultant has decided  
the time has come;  
this thorn, he says, is far too close  
to my heart,  
and hinders the full flowing function  
of my life-blood.  
To be fair he gave me ample warning  
that the time was approaching,  
but in my blindness, I failed to  
heed the signs.  
And so it was with alarm that I awoke  
to find him silently at work,  
digging and probing into the softness  
of my flesh;  
his only implement a thorn,  
the only anaesthetic his  
compassionate smile.  
Then oh the rush of pain! The pain!  
And oh how I am bleeding! And how I  
cry out for mercy,  
or in anger, that he could be so cruel!  
But still he works on through the pain's  
dark waves,  
plunging and piercing deep to the root.  
I peer through my tears at the  
beam on his face,  
but when the pain peaks my vision  
turns to blackness,  
and I can only grasp in desperation at  
his surgeon's robe.  
Make no mistake, I have no illusions.  
This thorn is deep, the operation  
not yet complete.  
So hold me tight I beg you;  
hold me in your heart with love;  
hold me in your heart that I may find  
the strength  
to bear with courage whatever else  
is yet to come;  
hold me in your heart that I may  
one day  
hold this thorn in my hand, and  
breathe free,  
and feel the release of a new  
life-blood-flowing,  
and remember the gentle spirit  
of true smiling.

## *Poetry Page*

### *A Dream of the Beloved*

Rose Jackson, England

I was simply turning from  
the chest of drawers  
and there You were, on the chair  
by the bed:  
divinely radiant.  
You looked as You did when  
Your humanity  
was about to be dropped:  
so perfect, so complete,  
so full of God, the illusion of Your body  
already transparent.  
You wore Your usual coat and sadhra,  
but they had a Venetian glow  
as if You were sitting under  
an orange lamp.  
And there was a tambourine  
in Your hand,  
which You were tapping lightly  
against Your thigh.  
Beloved, You were – are – so beautiful,  
I find it hard to believe  
such beauty is possible,  
let alone that it has anything  
to do with me.  
Yet there You were – are –  
in my bedroom,  
next to me, closer than life itself,  
with me at every moment: heaven sent.  
Beloved, I cannot convey to You the  
fullness in my heart,  
the gratitude for Your being:  
Your reality, Your suffering, Your Love.  
Wipe me clean, Beloved, of anything  
not worthy of You;  
of everything that stops me  
knowing You.  
Take away all meanness and doubt,  
And let me remember only Your beauty,  
Your almost unbearable beauty  
as You sit near me -  
That look upon Your face of  
unfathomable Love beyond Love -  
and gently play the tambourine  
waiting for me to stop and keep time  
with You.

### *All is to come*

Irma Sheppard

Laurel Oak Cabin, Myrtle Beach

It rains and Baba reminds me  
I have brought no umbrella.  
Blessings pour down  
And I have no protection  
from His mercies, from His cleansing.  
Raindrops like acid ants  
swarm over my ego mess  
eat at my longings  
strip me of all cover  
skin me to the marrow.  
No, Baba reminds me  
I sit sheltered and screened in  
hear only the scatter of drops  
the piddle off the eaves  
the ocean's soft whoosh beyond  
the lagoon.  
I am not yet naked  
I am not yet drenched  
I am not yet ablaze  
not yet blown hollow.  
It rains and Meher promises  
All is to come.  
*we only met you. . .*  
bill gannett, berkeley  
we only met you after you left your  
body behind,  
but we know you to be compassionate,  
most kind.  
your loving presence has always  
remained with us-  
even awakening the stony heart to feel  
your kiss.  
stone must break to release the  
secret joy within-  
only dust can rise to the clap of the  
master's whim.  
age after age rolls by to crush the  
hardened heart,  
we must long for the master and from  
him never part.  
god help us to believe in our own  
grinding pain-  
there is no other way to abide in  
lover's lane.  
the world throws salt on the wounds  
of our endeavor,  
we cry out for grace to unite us with  
you forever.  
the dawn breeze spoke to darvish  
about god's deep trust-  
one day, by the master's touch, he will  
be singing dust!

# Know Before You Go—But GO!

## PILGRIMAGE PLANNER FOR WESTERNERS AND FIRST-TIMERS

**PLAN:** Money, passport, air reservation, visa, room at MPR.

**BUDGET:** Plan two weeks for about \$1500 - \$2000 including US airfare; staying longer costs less than \$100/week, so stay longer. See [www.housecarers.com](http://www.housecarers.com) for info about finding a house-sitter. If finances are really tight and you don't mind roughing it, ask PRO if you can stay in Hostel D.

**Photos** from drug store: 2 for passport, 2 for visa, 2 for MPR.

**Passport:** Valid 6 months past stay. Applications: [travel.state.gov/passport/forms](http://travel.state.gov/passport/forms). Allow 3 months. \$100 for new, \$75 to renew, plus mailing.

**Flights:** Seek cheap "consolidator" charter flights in publications at Asian groceries or via agents specializing in India; web search "cheap flight to Mumbai." Travelocity, Kayak and Expedia are good places to start. 20 to 30 hours flying from US. Fare research really pays off; be sure to seek separate fees charged for baggage, taxes, etc. and try different dates and routes.

**Visa:** [travisa.com/Instructions/indiainst](http://travisa.com/Instructions/indiainst), fee, application, passport, air reservations. \$73 for six months, \$163 for ten years. Allow 2 weeks minimum.

**TIME:** See [www.timezoneguide.com](http://www.timezoneguide.com) for your local zone vs. Mumbai.

**JET LAG:** Good advice at [vagabondish.com/6-real-tips-to-beat-jet-lag](http://vagabondish.com/6-real-tips-to-beat-jet-lag).

**MPR:** [ambppct.org](http://ambppct.org) has complete instructions. Six weeks before arrival, request reservations: Pilgrim Reservation Office, [pimco@ambppct.org](mailto:pimco@ambppct.org) or phone 91.241.254.8733.

**ON TO MEHERABAD:** Arrange a safe 6-hour ride by getting list of approved car services when you make MPR reservations. You can easily connect by air to Pune or Aurangabad for about \$50 and

then the drive is only 3 hours and \$50 more; see [www.9odi.com/](http://www.9odi.com/) travel for getting around within India.

**CARRY-ON:** Documents, books, snacks, amusements, prescriptions, anything non-replaceable. Nothing sharp. Read fine print for airline and TSA rules!

**BE A "MULE."** Ask Listserv, PRO, & Love Street what needs transporting, in both directions. (Know airline's baggage restrictions and fees.)

**WEAR** a Baba button.

**WHAT TO BRING:** [www.onebag.com/](http://www.onebag.com/)

**HEALTH TIPS:** Refill prescriptions to last beyond arrival home; keep in carry-on. No "shots." Most people who take cholera vaccine get no benefit but suffer side effects! To prevent illness, eat in the MPR or the Cherry, or "boil it, cook it, peel it or forget it." MPR kitchen will disinfect fruit for you. Use DEET repellent (check EPA for safe amounts of Deet in repellents) & tuck mosquito netting around bed. Know source of drinking water (only buy bottled water with cap seal intact); disinfect hands every time you handle money. Check health insurance. Consider travel insurance. Allow time after you get home to readjust.

[www.onebag.com/](http://www.onebag.com/) has great packing advice.

**LEAVE AT HOME:** Shorts, low necklines, tight or sheer garments, valuables, worries.

**PHONES:** Your mobile carrier's web site tells if it operates in India. You can get a cheap mobile phone (or just a SIM card) at the airport in Mumbai, handy for calling rickshaws.

**IN AHMEDNAGAR:** Meher Nazar Compound, Trust, Meher Baba Centre (devotional music Saturday evenings), Meher Nazar Books, shopping, restaurants.

**IN MEHERABAD & MEHERAZAD:** Seclusion Hill. Baba's Room; Blue Bus; New Life Caravan; Jhopdi; Rahuri Cabin; Cage Room; Table House; Baba's bicycle; Panchvati Cave; Archives. Sit in the Samadhi. History tour can be self-guided. Jam sessions, volleyball games, walking trails, gardens & verandahs, library. Volunteer opportunities. Master technique for washing laundry, hair, body with two buckets of water. Auto-rickshaw to bazaar or tailor. At Meher Darbar call home or check

your email. Eat chicken curry and fruit at The Cherry in Meher Colony. Check out meherabad.wikispaces.com. Visit Prithvi's handicrafts store and organic farm, and play with the kids at Pumpkin House.

**WHAT NOT TO DO:** Rules for Pilgrims are based on Baba's directives & should be honored at all times: check Trust web page for updates. Do not travel alone at night. (Women: sunset). Maintain silence, and do not smoke, in & around the Tomb. No shoes in the Samadhi & other places; look for signs. Limit contact with local people to business. Do not sell anything to anyone. Do not cash money with anyone. Ignore beggars & people shouting "Jai Baba" or asking your name. Do not approach, feed or touch animals. Lock valuables in Registration Office or an MPR closet or leave home. Do not leave belongings unattended. Use auto-rickshaw fixed rates. Do not tip, or lend money. Do not photograph military sites or equipment or enter military areas. Unmarried couples do not share a room anywhere. Do not express affection in public. Anyone not free of illicit substances will not be accommodated. If you normally take a prescription here, take it there, especially psychiatric! Don't pocket chunks of Seclusion Hill, soon to be called Seclusion Pit. When you leave Meherabad, go straight home.

**CULTURE SHOCK:** Greeting—fold hands & tilt head forward: Namaste. Many Indians are vegetarian & do not drink alcohol. Dress modestly, even on beaches. Rapidly growing educated classes speak English. You will see extreme poverty. Most toilets require you to squat. Be prepared to enjoy sensory overload.

**ARRIVAL IN MEHERABAD:** Register at the Pilgrim Office, hit the white rock trail, pay respects at the Tomb:

## The List

- Adapter (240V 5A, 3 large round pins in a triangle)
- Anti-inflammatories, band-aids, antibiotic ointment, antihistamine, a few pills for diarrhea, strains, heartburn, insomnia, colds
- Arnica or Traumeel
- Books, toys, games for kids
- Camera, dustproof case, batteries, memory
- Cell phone with SIM card for India and charger
- Children's items for Pumpkin House Orphanage
- Coat, gloves, scarf, hat (Nov. through Feb.)
- Collapsible duffle bag, empty
- Contact lens kit, specs/spares, case, cloth
- Copies of prescriptions
- DEET insect repellent
- Diary, tape, art supplies, stationery, iPad or laptop
- Document copies in each bag
- Dust mask, or buy at Prithvi
- Ear plugs, eye mask
- Extra socks & undies
- Flashlight/headlamp, batteries
- Hand sanitizer, moisturizer
- Herbal tea or instant coffee, mug, immersion heater
- Instrument or sheet music
- Jacket, shawl or sweater
- Light shoulder bag (men too)
- Moleskin for incipient blisters
- Pajamas & light robe or shawl
- Pegs, soap, marker for laundry
- Pillow if you are particular
- Rainwear (June - Nov.)
- Safety pins, sewing kit, pocket knife, nail clipper (not in carry-on)
- Sandwich-size zip bags
- Sanitary supplies, shaving gear
- Shampoo, soap, deodorant, dental gear, foil-wrapped wipes
- Snacks, raisins or trail mix
- Sun hat, sunglasses, sunscreen
- Supplements
- Three changes lightweight, layerable, conservative clothing
- Toilet tissue, squirt bottle, hankies
- Toiletry bag to hang on a hook
- Travel alarm, iPod, chargers
- Travel towel, face cloth
- Two pairs comfortable broken-in walking shoes, easy off & on
- Water bottle & strap

## Welcome home!

Hot and Dry		Rainy and 68° to 86°		Warm, maybe Dry		Mostly Dry, 59° to 77°		Hot, Dry																			
JUN		JUL		AUG		SEP		OCT		NOV		DEC		JAN		FEB		MAR									
Rickshaws, laundry, internet, gifts, garlands, snacks, tours, incidentals: \$5-10/day?		5/25 Hostel D open		6/15 MPR open		7/1 Meherazad open		7/10 Silence Day		Samadhi open from 6:30 AM to 8 PM with Arti at 7 AM & 3 PM year-round. Meherazad open Tuesday, Thursday & Sunday mornings in season. Dhuni on 12th, sunset.		12/15 Mami's Birthday		12/22 Mehera's Birthday		12/25 Christmas		12/31 New Years Eve		1/31 Amarantithi		2/25 Birthdays Play		3/1 MPR closed		3/15 MPR & Hostel D closed	
Can I find a travel buddy on the Listserv or invite a friend?		Free Trust bus from MPR to town or Meherazad most days, and to MPC or theater for programs.		Book car and driver and/or flight from Mumbai		www.xe.com/ucc/ for currency converter		Firm up mule duty		Check credit cards for exchange rates & ATM fees; buy travelers checks		Check Trust and Welcome Home websites		Break journey in Paris?												Home!	
3 Months: Apply for pass-port, shopfares		7-8 Weeks: Set dates; book flights		6 Weeks: MPR reservations by email (Fee includes 3 meals, 2 teas)		Mail, pets, house, plants, yard arrangements		3-4 Weeks: Apply for Visa		Check credit cards for exchange rates & ATM fees; buy travelers checks		Pack bags, stop mail, pay bills		20-30 hours: US to Mumbai		6 hours: Mumbai to Meherabad											



## UNITED STATES

### ARIZONA

**Tucson**—Irma Sheppard: 520-321-1566, [ih5222@theriver.com](mailto:ih5222@theriver.com).

**Flagstaff**—Laurent Weichberger 928-774-8305, [laurent@ompoint.com](mailto:laurent@ompoint.com).

### CALIFORNIA

**Los Angeles**—323-731-3737  
[Meherabode.org](http://Meherabode.org).

**Ojai**—Meher Mount: 805-640-0000,  
Samantha and Leslie Bridger,  
[mehermount@sbcglobal.net](mailto:mehermount@sbcglobal.net).

**Sacramento**—premsay@sbcglobal.net. [www.premsay.com/MeherBaba](http://www.premsay.com/MeherBaba).

**San Francisco Bay Area**—Ben Leet: 510-351-8259, [Benleet@earthlink.net](mailto:Benleet@earthlink.net).

### COLORADO & SOUTHWEST

**Denver**—Barbara Roberts 303-238-4649, [babara@fone.net](mailto:babara@fone.net). Contact Barbara for info on Utah, and Wyoming.

### FLORIDA

**Delray Beach**—Mickey and Wendy Karger 561-638-3114  
[mickkarger@aol.com](mailto:mickkarger@aol.com)

**Tampa**—Jane Paladino, 813-962-8629

### HAWAII

**Maui**—Meredith Moon,  
[meredithmoon1@mac.com](mailto:meredithmoon1@mac.com)

**Molokai**—Shirley Alapa, 808-567-6074  
[salapa@aloha.net](mailto:salapa@aloha.net)  
[www.meherdhamhawaii.com](http://www.meherdhamhawaii.com)

### ILLINOIS

**Chicago**—Fereshteh Azad 630-207-9461  
[meherazad@gmail.com](mailto:meherazad@gmail.com)  
[www.ambcc.net](http://www.ambcc.net)

### LOUISIANA

**New Orleans**—Joe Burke, 504-616-1111  
[jburke@babanola.org](mailto:jburke@babanola.org)

### MAINE

**Orono or Rockland**—Daniel and Carolyn Montague 207-594-4115  
[FDM@roadrunner.com](mailto:FDM@roadrunner.com)

### MASSACHUSETTS

**Cambridge**—Michael Siegell 617-864-3997, [michaelsiegell@yahoo.com](mailto:michaelsiegell@yahoo.com)

**Brewster**—Nancy Geagan 774-207-8023  
[geaganae@aol.com](mailto:geaganae@aol.com)

### MISSISSIPPI

**Jackson**—Peter Rippa 601-355-8959,  
[peterrippa@gmail.com](mailto:peterrippa@gmail.com)

### MONTANA

**Emigrant**—Anne Haug 406-333-4582,  
[annemhaug@hotmail.com](mailto:annemhaug@hotmail.com)

**Missoula**—Andy Shott 406-549-5949.

### NEW HAMPSHIRE

Liz Miller 603-749-3668  
[mceliz2001@yahoo.com](mailto:mceliz2001@yahoo.com).

# Meetings



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### NEW MEXICO

**Santa Fe**—Robert Reser and Edle Andersen, 505-983-6621  
[robertreser@yahoo.com](mailto:robertreser@yahoo.com).

### NEVADA

**Las Vegas**—Dick and Carol Mannis 702-326-1701, [rkmannis@aol.com](mailto:rkmannis@aol.com).

### NEW YORK CITY AREA

**Bronxville, NY**—Meher Baba House, 212-971-1050, [MeherBabaHouse.org](http://MeherBabaHouse.org).

**Metro**—Frank Bloise, 856-696-4374  
[fbloise@earthlink.net](mailto:fbloise@earthlink.net).

### NORTH CAROLINA

**Asheville**—Winnie Barrett, 828-274-7154, [winkiebai@charter.net](mailto:winkiebai@charter.net).

Peter and Debbie Nordeen  
[nordeeni@bellsouth.net](mailto:nordeeni@bellsouth.net).

**Greensboro**—Sheldon Herman, 336-459-0711 voicemail  
[bikewalla@gmail.com](mailto:bikewalla@gmail.com).

**Chapel Hill-Durham-Raleigh**—Carol Verner, 919-933-3550  
[carolverner@nc.rr.com](mailto:carolverner@nc.rr.com).

### OKLAHOMA

**Prague**—Avatar Meher Baba Heartland Center, retreat and Baba's accident site. 405-567-4774.  
[amb.heartland@gmail.com](mailto:amb.heartland@gmail.com)  
[www.ambhc.org](http://www.ambhc.org).

### TEXAS

**Nacogdoches**—Chris and Anne Barker, 936-560-2631, [rockbl@yahoo.com](mailto:rockbl@yahoo.com).

### WASHINGTON, D.C.

Pamela Butler-Stone, 301-946-0236,  
[www.meherbabadc.com](http://www.meherbabadc.com)

### WASHINGTON STATE

**Seattle**—Cynthia Barrientos, 206-713-9905, [cybar7@comcast.net](mailto:cybar7@comcast.net).

## INTERNATIONAL

### AUSTRALIA

**N.S.W. Sydney**—Meher House

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### WALES

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# Meherabad Young Adult Sahavas

We invite young adult Baba lovers from around the world to the Meherabad Young Adult Sahavas 2011. This is the 10th year celebration of Meherabad Young Adult Sahavas. The theme for this year's MBYAS is - Mastery in Servitude

**What:** IN JUNE, 100 young adults from all over the world between the ages of 18 and 35 gather at Meherabad to spend six days together in the company of the Ancient One. The keynote of the "Sahavas" is the celebration of Meher Baba's love through sharing, creative expression (such as art, music and drama), and service at Meherabad.

**Who:** Young Adult Baba Lovers from ages 18 to 35.

**When:** The Sahavas starts on Monday, June 20th and continues through lunch on Monday, June 27th. Registration for the Sahavas is scheduled for Monday, June 20th from 4:00 p.m. to 6:00 p.m.

**Where:** Sahavas participants will be staying in Hostel C. (All other family members or friends must make separate arrangements to stay at Hostel D or the MPR).

**Cost:** The total cost for seven nights inclusive of food and lodging for Indian nationals is Rs. 1890/. The total cost inclusive of food and lodging for Westerners (non Indian nationals) is Rs. 2030/.

## Programs:

- ◆ Service Projects for Meherabad and the surrounding community.
- ◆ Workshops, which may include drama, music, song writing, poetry, painting, drawing, dance, mosaic, pottery, rangoli, photography, etc.
- ◆ Discussion Groups.

- ◆ Special Guests, talks by Baba's mandali and other old-time Baba lovers.
- ◆ Sports, such as volleyball, badminton, cricket, football/soccer, yoga, dance, table tennis/ping pong, seven tiles, etc.
- ◆ Evening Programs, welcome and closing program, films of Meher Baba, music programs, performance night, etc.
- ◆ Meherazad Visit, Sahavasees will have the opportunity to visit Baba's home, Meherazad, and hear tales from His mandali.

**Volunteers Needed:** Volunteers play an important and exciting role in the Sahavas from its beginning to end. Volunteer duties may include planning of activities, facilitating discussions, leading projects, setting up for events, and supporting participants to have a wonderful experience in Baba's Home.

**If you have been to a Sahavas before and would like to serve as a volunteer, please fill out the VOLUNTEER section of the application form.**

**Volunteer Training:** Scheduled from 10:00 a.m. on Saturday June 18th until 4:00 p.m. Monday June 20th. Volunteers must be returning Sahavas participants and must be present during the entire training period and stay for the entire Sahavas period.

We look forward to seeing you at the Sahavas!  
In His Love and Service,

Meherabad Young Adult Sahavas Committee: Jal Dastoor, Shridar Kelkar, Ramesh Jangle, Heather Nadel, Rakhi Sharma  
For more info, email [mbyas@ambppct.org](mailto:mbyas@ambppct.org) and cc: [jaibaba@ambppct.org](mailto:jaibaba@ambppct.org)



*Baba has said,*

*“Understanding has  
no meaning. Love has  
meaning. Obedience has  
more meaning. Holding  
my daaman has most  
meaning.”*

*The Everything and the Nothing, Meher Baba*

Painting by Tricia Migdoll, Australia