

# OMॐPOINT

INTERNATIONAL CIRCULAR • ISSUE 12 • SPRING 2014





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# contents

## issue #12

3. Daniel Ladinsky 'Meherabad Stories'
5. Heartland Beads Tour 2013
13. Jill English 'Enchantment of the Great Blue Heron'
14. Heartland Beads Tour 2013 Photo Gallery
15. Matthew Talbot 'The One Star Review of the One Star Review'
18. Norina Matchabelli described a meeting with Meher Baba - Lord Meher
19. H. Talat Halman, Ph.D 'Brain Science, LSD, and Meher Baba'
22. Alice Klein 'What the Heart Wants' Book Review by Laurent Weichberger
23. Helen Hill 'Three Drawings'
24. Meher Baba 'A Noble Nation' (excerpt from 'Discourses')
25. Anonymous 'Theme of 2010 India Trip'
27. Melinda Abeles Featured Artist interview by Laurent Weichberger
32. Josh Dreyfuss 'Love Poem to the Avatar'
33. Jan Michael Meade 'Three Poems to my New Lover'
34. Anne Weichberger 'Doors' poem
35. Katherine Islely '0011' poem
36. Sarah Weichberger 'Always' poem
37. Sarah McNeill poem
37. Shonto Begay 'Prayer'
38. Marla Faith poem
39. Marla Faith poem, artwork
40. Wilberforce Clarke 'A Blood Drenched Song' poem
41. Meher Baba's Discourse on Manonash
43. Don Stevens 'Three Snapshots of Reality' reviewed by Steve Eisley

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# Dan Ladinsky: Meherabad Stories

Steve Eisley has shown me some kindness lately encouraging me to tell some Eruch stories he could share with people. So this one I am sending to him, and Max Reif, and Kendra and Nancy Barton to post as they might like. And in giving this main story some thought I got the idea to frame it the best I could, so there is some intro stuff here some might consider a moat to have to wade through, but I think it will be very worth it. Here goes:

First off, there is a part of me that could have been a great Baba fanatic. Part of my definition of that might have played out so that I would never have held any book in my hands (for my entire life) that was not a book directly from Baba. I might have become so radical and nuts ... that I never even would have touched a Rumi or Hafiz or Kabir book, or ever watched any of the wonderful videos we can see of the Mandali (thinking somehow they were second-hand)—and only looked at Baba photos and none of the often beautiful painting of him. I actually knew someone very close to Baba (from India) who felt like that ... about paintings vs. actual photos. But Baba himself encouraged so much via the arts (it seemed), and for people to explore Rumi and Hafiz, and the lives of other historic saints.

And then there was Mehera and Eruch and Mani and Goher and Padri and Pendu, and dear Bhau. Over the years I have come to feel that we really have no idea how fertile Mehera and Eruch (and some of the others) really were. I think a saint probably could have easily seen that anyone Mehera or Eruch ever touched had golden seeds planted in them ... or a process began within that person (from their precious physical contact) that would awaken golden seeds -- talents, abilities to affect others and to --- loooooove more.

And then I think few had any real idea of the power of Eruch's voice -- and what sacred seeds it could plant in one (or help awake) from hearing his sounds. Won't history come to feel he literally spoke for God and literally even helped write God Speaks? I feel Eruch was perfect at selling himself short. He was, in some ways, very much like Clark Kent and Superman. I watched him fool people so easily. But at night, and I was very often with him at night out on the veranda, when in the summer he would be basically naked except for his big baggy underwear that were like giant bermuda shorts ... well I would sit with him mostly in quiet

then, besides someone reading the paper to him ... and I felt like I was in the presence of (at the least) a great & powerful zen master and yogi.

How many people know that Baba used to read Kabir to Mehera when Baba still spoke, and that Mehera even had a favorite Kabir poem that Baba had apparently read to her on more than one occasion? I mean Baba could (I would think) have just let Mehera get lost in His eyes. Anyway, I never became the Baba fanatic I could have, and to the dismay of some ... I've now got hundreds of my Hafiz renderings traveling about the world. Well, my work is spreading Baba's name to literally millions of people. Seems like I would get offered help with that rather than the poison arrows some (in our own community) shoot into me.

Something else some may find interesting: I remember once, right before Gary Kleiner was going to film Eruch at Meherabad on a day that was closed to pilgrims (and at this point Gary had been filming/recording Eruch for years)—and I very sincerely said to Eruch, "Eruch, are there any questions that you would have liked Gary to have asked you that he never has?" And Eruch did not even think for a second, and looked at me very sincerely and sweetly responded, "Not one."

Also, Gary told me that before Eruch died, he said to Eruch (and I am just paraphrasing here), "Eruch, is there more you could have told us about Baba?" And my understanding to that question Eruch said, "I told you all you need to know."

I think in a way -- that Baba, as did Jesus and Buddha and Mohammad ... sorta had to wear a coat and tie before the world.

That is, they had a message for the world, BUT there was also another message that they shared with their disciples/mandali, and sometimes the mandali would share something of that message -- OR that message could be seen in their lives. There is, to me, a wonderful, wild tale of Adi K. Irani and Baba meeting a mast, and then the mast making a grand (drunk-sailor) comment describing what really happened from his meeting with Baba. Jack Small, a clever and a bit cunning lawyer who was close to Adi for years told me the story. And I will leave it up to any brave and enduring ones to try and exact the treasure here from Jack. He might even say there is no such story. That is what you could be up against. In short, I am afraid there are some juicy golden ripe secrets out there (around Baba) not easy to pick -- get into a basket.

And then how many people know that Eruch's best friend (before he ever met Baba was a Perfect Master, a mast-like great seventh plane man ... who loved Eruch more than any other human being. And that was just the start of stuff there.



There are a range of stories around that, some Eruch has told in Mandali hall and some he never did. Here again some lost treasure. Steve Klein might give you some glimmer into that. Some conservative view. What I was told by Eruch is really unprintable. Sorry.

And then this: Devana (Brown) may deny this (for reasons she feels are correct), but I know for certain she told me this, and it is nothing so controversial but effects following, recounted events.

One day, Devana is with Eruch in his room, and her back is facing him, and some thought comes to mind about something she might (or should) have mentioned to him some days back, and she begins to turn to bring the matter up. But before she gets completely turned around, or can speak . . . Eruch addresses the matter in the most specific terms, and in a way Devana (or a normal person might feel was impossible). She then says to Eruch (something very close to this): "Eruch, this had happened many times over the years with you. Do you know my thoughts?" And Eruch (to the best of my memory of this story with Devana) says, "It is natural for a person who is dead to themselves -- to Know."

So, I am at Meherazad now, (to any unaware, I stayed there over a 12 year period between 1987 and 1999; sometime for as long as three or four months, though usually for about a month, and once or twice for about two weeks; and once I was a resident at Meherabad for a year, and several times for six months, that started in the late 70s). It is my first morning of walking with Eruch, after having been in the states for nearly a year, and we are walking, just he and I. We come to a little farm where I know he has in the past interacted with the children living there, and their parents and their grandparents. And as we approach the house I stand back some 20 feet and let Eruch walk up alone, not wanting to anyway interfere, wanting to be as invisible as I could. So I am standing there some 20 feet back and Eruch is giving the kids some candy and playfully interacting with them, then the parents and grandparents come out, and now they all converse for maybe three or four minutes. And while this is going on, occasionally I am glancing at the farm animals, for I too have a farm in the states. In the Ozarks it is. And it strikes me that this little Indian family seems to have some extra chickens now, and a new goat and maybe even a new cow. And I feel happy for them that they are prospering in their humble way. Then Eruch and I begin to walk down the road again and nothing at all has been said since leaving the farm, until Eruch says to my surprise and delight, "I am happy too, Danny, they are prospering."

All that seemed so simple. But it was very touching to me, and worth sharing I feel.

Then this is the little story that got me writing all this.

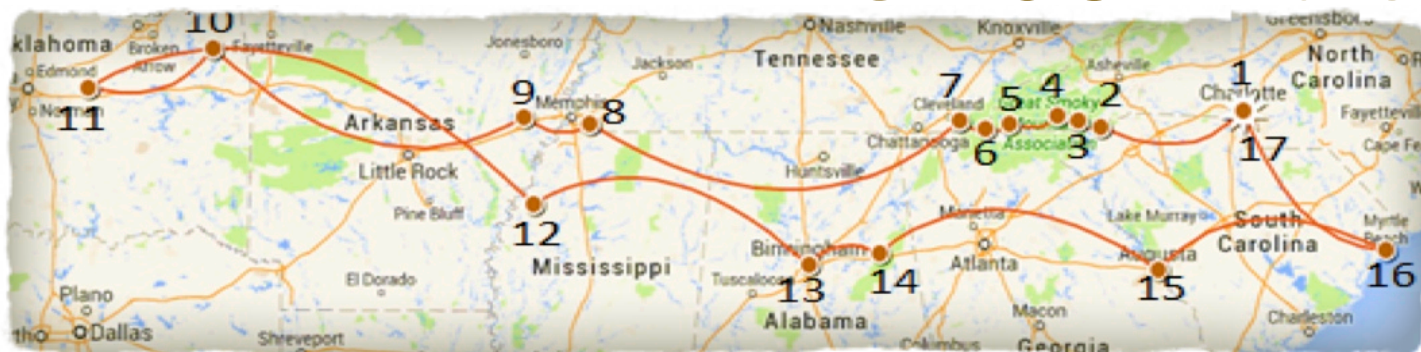
It is again my first walk with Eruch, after being back in the states for several months, but now Meherwan, Eruch's brother is living at Meherazad, and I had the great fortune to have walked with both of them sooo many times in the morning. And as we are walking I see a sweet dog that I know Eruch seemed to like and that he would give candy to. The dog was something like a medium size collie. I can see it very clearly as I write this. And this dog would seem to know when Eruch was coming and sometimes be sitting in a certain spot ... waiting for him. And I had never known Eruch to walk by the dog without stopping and interacting with him. But here the three of us are walking, and I see the dog lying down on the ground as if something is wrong with it, for it would always sit up and appear very glad Eruch was coming or was there. And to my amazement Eruch walks right past the dog -- and the dog does not get up; I can't believe it. Now I am a great dog lover myself. I would go as far as to say that dogs have been a real salvation to me at times, well, actually for years, especially when I was growing up in a super whacked-out family. And here Eruch has just walked past this wonderful animal (as if the dog is not even there) who looks in pain. And I can't believe this also.

I am a few feet behind Eruch now ... lingering near the dog a bit, and something in my heart silently cries out, "Eruch, what are you doing? Help this beautiful creature. Please help it." And then Eruch and Meherwan stop. Now I have not said one word, I was behind them, but I guess my face was telling when they turned, so Meherwan says, "Danny, after you left last time this dog found a girl friend. She was a shy stray that he would take care of and loved. He loved her so much that when Eruch would throw him candy -- he could catch in his mouth -- he would not eat it himself even though he was hungry, he would literally then lay the candy at her feet for her to eat and feel nourished by. This went on for sometime and then she died, and ever since then he is as you see him -- so depressed he will not even get up for Eruch or even take any candy when he is hungry. He now just always lies there when we walk by."

Then Eruch and Meherwan start to walk off again. But I once more and even louder now (in silence) cry out, "Eruch you can help him. I know you can. Please do." Now mind you Eruch and Meherwan both have their backs to me. And they are walking off. But Eruch now stops, and reaches into his pocket and gets some candy. Eruch now speaks for the first time since we got near the dog and says something very close to this. "God heard your prayer, your cry for that animal, let us see now what happens." And Eruch then tosses a piece of candy to the dog from some feet away and the dog leaps up and catches it midair, and then from that day on was very close to his old self. JAI BABA, JAI BABA, JAI BABA



# HEARTLAND BEADS TOUR 2013



Forgiveness is found and offered from within the reality of oneness that is often found even unexpectedly within the moment. -- Don E. Stevens

## OFFICIAL STATEMENT OF PURPOSE

### Heartland Pilgrimage 2013

Journey of Forgiveness September 22nd thru October 2

The purpose of this pilgrimage is the endeavor to understand, experience and creatively express the Oneness that lies at the heart of all. This journey will include sites along the Cherokee Trail of Tears, Meher Baba's car accident in Prague, Oklahoma, and sites significant to the Freedom Riders of the American Civil Rights Movement. The intention of this pilgrimage is to recognize our shared human experience and explore the meaning of forgiveness. At these sites, we will offer prayers of forgiveness for violations of human dignity and ask for an imminent awakening to the reality of the One in all. Through companionship, intuitive guidance and the journey itself, we hope to galvanize a deeper sense of personal connection to the One Truth which binds all of Creation.

## THE PRAYER OF REPENTANCE

We repent, O God most merciful, for all our sins; for every thought that was false or unjust or unclean; for every word spoken that ought not to have been spoken; for every deed done that ought not to have been done.

We repent for every deed and word and thought inspired by selfishness, and for every deed and word and thought inspired by hatred.

We repent most specially for every lustful thought and every lustful action; for every lie; for all hypocrisy; for every promise given but not fulfilled; and for all slander and backbiting.

Most specially also we repent for every action that has brought ruin to others; for every word and deed that has given others pain; and for every wish that pain should befall others.

In Your Unbounded Mercy, we ask You to forgive us, O God, for all these sins committed by us, and to forgive us for our constant failures to think and speak and act according to Your Will.

...

## ITINERARY

### Day 1 Sep 23 Monday 265 MI

- Charlotte NC to Caesar's Head
- to Silver Run Falls for lunch and water ceremony with Lianna Constantino of the Cherokee tribe
- to Niquasi Mound in Franklin TN, meet Carol Long of the Cherokee tribe Coalition of Healing and Wellness
- to Ducktown TN, sleep

### Day 2 Sep 24 Tuesday 397 MI

- to Nancy Ward gravesite with Lianna and Carol, say goodbye
- to Germantown TN, sleep

### Day 3 Sep 25 Wednesday 396MI

- to Village Creek State Park, visitors' center, land bridge, river
- to Talequah OK, traditional village welcome dance and sing, sang Amazing Grace in Cherokee, met Ryan (Wa:de) Mackey and others, to Sam and Ella's for pizza
- sleep

### Day 4 Sep 26 Thursday 671 MI

- to Prague OK, AMB crash site, to Heartland Center for lunch
- turn around, head EAST
- to Clarksdale MI, meet Catherine-Burks-Brooks, take her to Zero Point Blues Club for dinner
- sleep

### Day 5 Sep 27 Friday 408 MI

- to Yazoo Pass MI, Parchman State Penitentiary with Catherine-Burks-Brooks
- to Yazoo Pass for lunch
- Dinner with Catherine Burks-Brooks
- to Birmingham AL, sleep

### Day 6 Sep 28 Saturday 151 MI

- Birmingham AL, to 16th Street Baptist Church, Civil Rights Museum
- to Anniston, AL to former Greyhound Station at 1031 Gurnee Ave, met Freedom Rider Georgia Calhoun and EPIC Director Pete Conroy
- to Wall of Hope, lunch, Bus Burning site, future Freedom Rider Park with 32nd District State Representative Barbara Boyd
- Dinner at Anniston's 'Classic On Noble' restaurant
- to Atlanta GA, sleep

### Day 7 Sep 29 Sunday 370 MI

- to Myrtle Beach SC
- sleep

total approx 2658 miles not including U-turns and backtracking

## WE FOLLOW THE TRAIL

We follow the Trail  
hallowed by tears and blood  
of those true to One Heart,  
hallowed by the Creator's own Footprint.

We ride and we tread lightly,  
to not erase the power and the sorrow  
of their plight, but to harmonize  
those efforts, those losses,  
with forgiveness  
in order to realize God's True Intent.

With eyes of kindness for all,  
we offer ourselves utterly  
in Beloved God's service.

Irma Sheppard

...

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF COUNTRY

From Australia

We acknowledge the traditional custodians  
of the land where we are now gathered  
and recognize that it continues to be  
sacred to them. We hail them as guardians  
of the earth and all things that grow and  
breed in the soil, as trustees of the waters  
(the seas, the streams and the river, the  
ponds and the lakes) and the rich variety  
of life in those waters.

We thank them for passing this heritage to  
every people since the dreamtime.  
We acknowledge the wrongs done to them  
by newcomers to this land and we seek to  
be partners with them in righting these  
wrong and in living together in peace and  
harmony.

contributed by Dhiresha Chapman

...

After our arrival home from the Heartland  
Tour, no one seemed to be able to write a  
cohesive start-to-finish account of our  
travels, even though we sent about a  
million emails among the group. I asked  
group member Lois Colton, who seemed  
to have made a start while we were still on  
the road, if she would mind doing a  
narrative. She has, and I and all the 2013  
pilgrims thank her for shouldering the  
burden. With her permission, I edited her  
very personal recollections down for this  
issue of OmPoint. There will be inserts of  
photos and others' shorter recollections.



Day 1, group at Caesar's Head NC



Lianna Constantino



Lianna with group at Silver Run Falls

But the body here was written by Lois. Thank you Lois and Jai Meher Baba!

Karl Moeller

...

### Lois Colton writes:

From September 22 to October 2, 2013 I was one of a fortunate 15 companions who participate in the "Heartland Pilgrimage" sponsored by the Beads on One String Foundation. The pilgrimage was subtitled a "Journey of Forgiveness and America's Destiny" with an expressed intention to recognize our shared human experience and explore the meaning of forgiveness.

Telling the story of the pilgrimage is not telling about the who, the what, the where nor the how of the journey though those things are indeed absorbing and often humorous, but something else, something that each day we marveled at, cocked our heads at the mystery of, held hands silently sharing with each other. The real story is about that something that changed us from 15 strangers traveling together in two vans into spiritual companions sharing in the great and intoxicating abstraction of sharing love with others.

### Day 1- September 23, 2013-Charlotte, NC

We loaded into the vans that first morning around 8:00 AM. Our first stop that day was around noon at Caesar's Head, NC, a well loved tourist stop prized for its view into the Blue Ridge Mountains. This had been one of the places Baba and the women Mandali had stopped and picnicked on their fateful road trip from east to west in the spring of 1952. As we would be staying close to their route, we considered this spot as the beginning of our pilgrimage together and initiated our journey by reciting the prayers and poems for the first time. We were now in the vast traditional Cherokee homelands. We would be continuing west



along the route of the Trail of Tears as Baba had before us.

After this first stop at Caesar's Head, we loaded up again and followed the twisting road downhill till we came to the little resort town of Cashiers, NC. There we met up with Lianna Constantino, a Cherokee elder, who led us to Silver Run Falls where we ate sack lunches and were given our initial introduction into some of the Cherokee spiritual traditions. Standing knee deep in the pool at the base of the falls, we joined in with Lianna as she performed the Cherokee water ceremony.

Back in the vans, we traversed the wooded hills till we came to the town of Franklin where we stopped beside a large grassy mound, the Niquasi Mound, which is thought to be one of many sacred and very ancient burial mounds found in this region. The energy was very strong in the area of the mound and we chose to share our prayers with Lianna in this spot. We explained to Lianna that for us this was a pilgrimage of forgiveness for the transgressions Americans had committed against the American Indians throughout our shared histories. In a circle we again said our prayers which at this time included Don Steven's Prayer of Forgiveness, a beautiful "Acknowledgement of Country" invocation Dee had brought from Australia, companion Irma Sheppard's poem entitled "We Follow the Trail", Baba's Prayer of Repentance, and singing "Amazing Grace" in both Cherokee and English.

### Day 2- Ducktown, TN

After breakfast the plan was to find the memorial park and grave site of Nancy Ward, an 18th Century Cherokee woman well loved for the bridge she maintained between the Cherokee and the early American settlers in the Cherokee lands. We were joined by another Cherokee elder, Carol Long. Eventually we found the memorial park up on a hill overlooking miles of forest. It was very peaceful and quiet that morning except for the low symphony of sounds of the insects and birds that inhabited the surrounding meadows and forests. Carol and Lianna shared more about what they knew of Nancy Ward and about the lives of many modern Cherokee and the legacy of the Indian



Silver Run Falls



Lianna and Jill perform Cherokee Water Ceremony



Nancy Ward gravesite with Carol and Lianna



Part of the group with Carol Long and Lianna Constantino at Nancy Ward gravesite

schools. They told of how the Cherokee and certainly other American Indians suffered from being forced to give up their native languages and cultural and spiritual practices when they were sent as children to the Indian schools. Again we said our prayers together into the open air looking out over the rolling hills of Tennessee. And again both Carol and Lianna and the 15 of us were deeply touched. It was beautiful for us all.

After eating our sack lunches beside the grave marker, we loaded up the vans and drove post haste across the expanse of the state of Tennessee, driving the interstate first up toward Nashville, then down southwest to outside of Memphis near the Arkansas border.

### Day 3-Germantown, TN

The first stop would be Village Creek State Park in Wynne, AR. which was a 7000 acre park about a 1.5 hour drive from Germantown, TN. Everything sparkled in the morning sun as we went deeper and deeper into the wilderness. Soon we arrived at Village Creek State Park and the cats were let out at the Visitors' Center to pee and collect brochures and maps to help us find the Trail of Tears pathway.

Some who didn't feel that they could handle a hike into the woods stayed with the vans which were parked in the shade along a lake. Even at this hour and this late in September, the weather was warming up. The rest of us quietly walked across the top of a dam and into the forest listening to the birds and watching hawks circle above us. We stopped to read the large illustrated signs that told of the numbers of American Indians who had marched along The Military Road that we were now approaching. We moved forward with open but heavy hearts. We stood beside this actual "Trail of Tears" and gathered even more quietly into a circle holding hands. Dee read the "Acknowledgement of Country" invocation then we read Irma's beautiful poem, and chanted out our prayers of repentance and forgiveness.

This moment singing together along this trail was especially moving to us all and we walked back to the vans in silence absorbing the sounds of the

forest. My attention was on the trees, so many steeples in God's glorious church.

### Day 3- Talequah, OK

It was a long drive across Arkansas to Tahlequah, OK where we were expected to meet with Ryan Mackey at the Cherokee Historical Center. Finally, at dusk we rolled into the woods that surrounded the Cherokee Heritage Center. We were met by Ryan, Nathan and several women. We apologized profusely for the hour, but our Cherokee hosts seemed unfazed by our late arrival saying we were only on "Indian time", and directed us to some wooden benches located within the reconstructed Cherokee village. I regretted that we did not have the light or time to explore the village further as I love that kind of living museum. Then they each introduced themselves and their families giving us their Cherokee names. Ryan was now Wa:de.

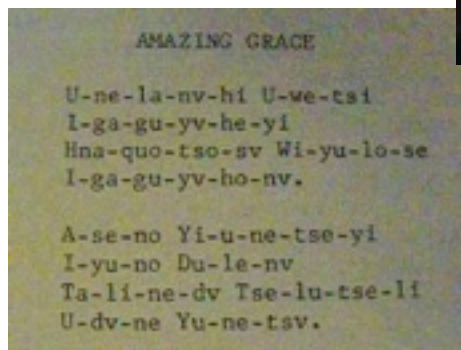
As the sun sank behind the trees they told us about traditional Cherokee life. Women play a big role in Cherokee culture. They make the decisions, but the men speak them. It is the mother's brother who trains the children as the children belong to the mother's clan. There are 7 Cherokee clans and lineage is matrilineal.

When it turned completely dark they led us into a ceremonial round house of what looked like packed earth construction. We walked through a curved entrance before it opened onto a dark circular inner room. In the center of the room was a large prayer fire burning with wood placed to face the 4 directions. Above the fire there was a hole in the center of the roof, but little smoke seemed to be escaping and the dark room was very, very thick with smoke, which was alarming.

Wa:de and his son and then Nathan each led a dance around the fire. The women didn't lead the songs, but they were the shell shakers and danced alongside the men. After several more dances we asked if we could offer our prayers of forgiveness and humility to them once again explaining that we were witnessing the errors of our past shared history as Americans. In the dark we said our prayers, recited our poems and sang Amazing Grace in Cherokee and English. Then Wa:de offered several prayers in



Cherokee Heritage Center, Talequah OK



Our attempt at 'Amazing Grace' in Cherokee



With Wa:de after dinner at Sam & Ella's, Talequah, OK

Cherokee and we danced several dances more. Though we were all desperate to get out of the smoke, being in there was too wonderful to leave.

When the dancing finished, we gratefully went into the clean night air and followed Wa:de and others into central Tahlequah to Sam and Ella's Pizza House where we sat together at one long table and stuffed ourselves once again while we visited with our new Cherokee friends and their families.

In our hotel room that night Robin and I felt dazed by the wonder of our evening with the Cherokees. We knew that we were lucky little marionettes and that Baba was pulling the strings. It was a play within a play and we felt happy to be part of it. Then we washed off the smoke and went to bed. The magic of this day would never be forgotten.

### Day 4- Heartland Center, Prague, OK

In the early morning Dee from Australia got dressed and went into the small dining area of our hotel to get coffee and breakfast. She sat down next to an older man who, she discovered through casual conversation, was the great great grandson of Cherokee Chief John Ross who had been one of the leaders of the Cherokee tribe during the years of the removal. This fortuitous meeting was a reminder that Baba is the one who uses everything and wastes nothing, not even an early morning coffee.

After breakfast we loaded up for our drive to Prague and the Heartland Center. We all felt heavy hearts about leaving the Cherokee section of our pilgrimage. The interactions with the Cherokees were like connecting with the living forest itself, and each of us felt very grateful to Baba for the intimacy of the links we'd made. The Heartland Center was the pivot point and after lunch we would be turning around and heading back east, shifting our focus to the route and experiences of the Freedom Riders of the 1960's Civil Rights Movement.

It was another beautiful morning and the rolling prairie lands of Oklahoma glistened in the sunlight. When we got to the town of Prague we met up at the laundromat where we thought Charmian had washed the Mandali's



clothes after the accident. (I have since learned that that laundromat no longer exists) We picked up some flowers at the florists and drove en masse out to Baba's accident site. There was the body of a recently killed raccoon laying in front of the site and a dead rattlesnake just a couple of feet away. We sat quietly at the side of the road and I watched the cars roll over the hill trying to imagine that May 28th in 1952 when Baba's car had been invisible to oncoming traffic in the dip between hills.

Together we said the Parvardigar prayer then returned to town for our lunch at the Heartland Center. The Heartland Center staff was exceptionally welcoming to us and showed those of us first timers around the Burleson's home. I was then taken over to the little hospital next door. I could readily see and feel where Baba had been lying without being told and felt him smiling at my arrival and gesturing to me to, "come closer, come closer." Back in the Heartland Center we had a wonderful lunch of lentils and rice, beet salad, raita, and an oatmeal cookie. Sometimes road food isn't healthy food, so this luncheon so full of fresh vegetables was savored by all; many thanks to the Heartland Center Staff. After a group photo, we piled back into our vans and turned toward the southeast.

#### Day 4 - Clarksdale, MS, Home of the Blues

We were leaving the Cherokee phase of our pilgrimage and moving toward new connections with African Americans and the Deep South. Our mental shift was almost immediate when we left the Heartland Center. We had at least a 7 hour drive back across Oklahoma and Arkansas to reach that night's destination, Clarksdale, Mississippi. We were to meet Catherine-Burks-Brooks, one of the original Freedom Riders I'd seem interviewed in a Frontline program entitled, "Would You Have Gotten on the Bus?", at the Ground Zero Blues Club. This proved to be a big open warehouse near the train tracks, filled with tables and a bar and a stage. We watched an elderly local bluesman, Razor Blades, with a topnotch backing band. This was also Open Mike night, and we watched a procession of beginning-to-expert 'harp' players from



2013 Beads members and Philip White and Dan Sparks at the Heartland Center



Burleson House, Prague, OK



Don and Margaret Eucker in the Ground Zero Blues Club, Clarksdale, MS



Clarksdale is the legendary site of bluesman Robert Johnson's 'selling his soul to the Devil' in exchange for blues immortality at the Crossroads - Highway 49 at Dylan's Highway 61

all over the world, attending a blues harmonica school, each do their 32 bars of Blues in 'G' with the backing band.

After enough beer, pulled pork and music we oozed our way towards the back door, then out onto the outside porch where our lovely 20 year old Kiva was visiting with several local white boys who were drinking beer and trying to chat up our pretty girl. Their accents were pure Mississippi country boy, but when we told them why we were in Clarksdale and that one of the actual Freedom Riders was with us in the restaurant, they stood to meet her with appropriate respect when she came out.

Then after the usual delays in getting everyone actually seated in the vans, we went back to our rather grubby hotel room where Robin later got bitten by bedbugs during the night.

#### Day 5-Clarksdale, MS

The next morning was warm and sunny again and we made our way over to the Yazoo Pass coffee shop for breakfast with Catherine-Burks-Brooks before driving out to Parchman State Penitentiary with her. Catherine is an elegant African American in her mid 70's, and we were all eager to hear first hand stories of her years as a civil rights activist in Mississippi and Alabama in the 1960's. Where we were gathered for breakfasts was a great little restaurant that was obviously a local gathering place in this small Southern town. After breakfast we drove out of town till we reached the Parchman State Penitentiary. I expected that we would be run through the same kind of searches and background checks that would have been routine for visitors to Oregon State Penitentiary where I'd been a teacher for 20 years, but the Mississippi DOC instead welcomed us warmly only asking us to leave behind our cell phones and cameras before entering the prison grounds. In fact, the staff that escorted us into the prison were very friendly and almost treated us like celebrities even taking our group picture to put into the DOC's newsletter. It was weird.

Parchman State Penitentiary, often called Parchman Farm, is a huge institution situated on an unbelievable 28 square miles of Delta farmland. Most inmates work the crops, much of it planted in cotton. Think the movie "Oh Brother Where Art Thou" and you kind

of get the picture. Just fewer than 5000 inmates live on Parchman Farm and it also houses the state's male death row inmates, a fact that soon became important. Historically inmates who passed years of their lives in Parchman Farm sang about their miseries, so this prison just outside of Clarksdale is actually the birthplace of the 'Blues'.

In the spring of 1961, civil rights protesters called Freedom Riders were riding the Greyhound busses and were arrested when they reached Jackson, Mississippi and sentenced to serve time in Parchman Prison where they were often sent to work on chain gangs. At one time 300 Freedom Riders were imprisoned at Parchman Farm. Food was poor and limited. Catherine Burks- Brooks remembered that they sang freedom songs almost non-stop in their cell block which raised their spirits and built unity, but this drove the prison authorities to remove their mattresses and the bug screens on the windows, so that the Delta's thick hum of insects and mosquitoes filled their cells. It was so unpleasant that Catherine shared that ever since that time she has had a near phobia of insects.

When the officers escorted us to Cell Block 17, the first thing we passed by was an old metal cylindrical chamber that encased a primitive electric chair. Next we walked past the table where modern executions occur and then walked into the row of cells where Catherine and others had been held in 1961. The cell block was empty of inmates, but though I'd walked many times in the prison cell blocks of Oregon State Penitentiary, this block of empty cells seemed to emanate the pain and loss and anger of those who had stayed within them, including the 45 Freedom Riders in 1961. We spoke softly and listened to Catherine's memories of her time imprisoned there, then we joined hands expressed our invocation to Catherine as a representative of the history of the viciousness of racism that these cells expressed so loudly, read Irma's poem, said the prayer of repentance, and sang Amazing Grace while standing just outside the cells. Then we stood in Baba's silence for a moment before filing out. As we were leaving the building, the large black captain who had lead us into the block and stood listening as we asked for forgiveness for our

country's history of racial prejudice, called Jill back, took her hands in his and said, "I don't know what y'll are doing, but that was a real good thing you did in there, a real good thing, thank you."

When we arrived in Birmingham, it was dark and Catherine, who had been riding with us in the van all day and sharing many wonderful stories, directed us into the historically black section of the city. She and Jill had arranged for us to have a private catered dinner at Roberts Sunday Dinner, a small neighborhood eatery that normally only served food to the Sunday church crowd. We were tired, we were hungry, and we were in for a real treat. We feasted to a wonderful musical background of classic Motown. At meal's end a few energetic souls danced a couple of songs. Catherine relaxed and seemed to enjoy herself, as we all did. I was so full that I felt like I needed a piggy back ride to the car or maybe a wheel barrow ride.

#### **Day 6-Birmingham, AL**

Saturday, Birmingham Alabama. The plan had been to visit the famous Sixteenth Street Baptist Church, home of so many civil rights initiatives, but the agreement fell through. We headed to the church nonetheless, hoping to say our prayers at the commemorative statue that was outside the church. This church is also where four little girls had been killed when local Klansmen set off a bomb during Sunday service, September 15, 1963. (The African-Americans we encountered called them "...the Ku Klux". - KM)

Baba's hand showed clearly here, in that once we arrived, it appeared we would indeed be able to take the tour. The church administrator, Mr. Washington, invited us to come into the Sanctuary to sit in the pews where he then began giving us his usual tour lecture which included a very interesting video of the role the church played during the Civil Rights era and the history of the bombing and the resulting police investigation and trial.

A few minutes into our tour lecture, the next tour group arrived early. The newcomers were all African Americans, mostly teenagers, a youth group and their chaperones from the Chattanooga Baptist Church from Chattanooga, Tennessee. We smiled our

greetings to one another and settled in again to listen to what Mr. Washington had to tell us.

When the lecture and video were finished, we expressed that as part of our pilgrimage we were saying prayers of forgiveness in key locations. We asked if we could be permitted to say our prayer before leaving. Permission was granted and we stood and faced the youth group and spoke out Baba's beautiful Prayer of Repentance. It was awkward, but heartfelt, and when we finished, Mr. Washington asked our group to wait back a minute while he showed the youth group to the little museum downstairs. As members youth group filed past us out of the pews, a number of them came forward to greet us individually and share meaningful hugs and comments on the power of the Prayer of Repentance we'd just recited. Baba's prayer once again said what we held in our hearts, and once again something important had been heard. As we waited in the sanctuary for Mr. Washington to return, Karl moved over to the grand piano that sat before us. The notes of the Gujarati Arti filled the sanctuary, and though I felt very uncomfortable about the "white folks" footprint we were making in this black church and the appropriateness of guests playing their piano, there was no denying the healing power of the reverberating music.

By now it was getting late and we made our way across the street to a memorial park and then into the wonderful Civil Rights Institute, a terrific interactive museum where the story of the Civil Rights struggles really came alive.

There was not much time to wander through the museum. We had to be in the vans by 12:30 as Anniston, AL, our next appointment, was about an hour's drive away. Anniston was the town where one of the Greyhound busses carrying Freedom Riders had been surrounded by hate filled crowds and set on fire in 1961.

#### **Day 6 - Anniston, AL**

Our first stop was at the old bus station where we met Pete Conroy, a local white businessman and mover and shaker in the community, and Mrs. Georgia Calhoun, a retired school teacher who appeared to be one of those dignified black women who are so often leaders in





Catherine-Burks-Brooks © Associated Press



Last evening with Catherine



Inside the 16th. St. Baptist Church



Beads group with Catherine Burks-Brooks and a trusty in front of the Parchman Penitentiary sign



Georgia Calhoun in West Anniston

their communities. Mrs. Calhoun was probably in her 70's, but she was still very beautiful. She wore a shimmering lime green dress and matching heels as she was heading to church when she finished her meeting with us. Mrs. Calhoun told us that an angry crowd had met the bus at the Greyhound station that day and had slashed its tires. Obviously with slashed tires, the bus was forced to stop outside of town where it was once again attacked by angry white crowds and set afire. We expressed what we were doing on our pilgrimage and stood together in a circle to say our prayers of forgiveness and repentance and to sing Amazing Grace. As usual, Baba's Prayer of Repentance profoundly touched us who knew it well and Mrs. Calhoun and Pete, for whom it was new. Mrs. Calhoun embraced each of us warmly and said she had never heard a more complete prayer and could she get a copy of it. Throughout our pilgrimage we said our prayers, never connecting them or ourselves to Baba. But Baba's prayer perpetually brought our connections to others to the heart level and it never failed to deeply move whoever heard it.

Pete then led us over to West Anniston, the black section of town that was literally across the tracks. In former days West Anniston, the 'colored section', to see a newly painted mural entitled "A City within a City". The mural represented how lively West Anniston had been. There were scenes of kids skating in the street, a big church, some Buffalo soldiers who during WWII had been housed in the neighborhood, and scenes of the pipe factory where nearly everybody worked. By this time it was 2 or 3 in the afternoon, and we were all getting really hungry. Pete had told us about a fancy restaurant in town where we could get a good dinner, but across from our lot we could see a local barbershop and snack shop where plenty of neighborhood folks were going in and out. Pete said we could get something to eat there, so most of us walked over up to order. This black-owned and run eatery had never had a white patron before, not to mention 13 of them all at once.

Soon General Jackson, the owner, arrived. He was a simple man in his mid 60's who also seemed surprised

to see us in his little diner. He took us across the street again and told us more about the mural and the hopes they had to revitalize West Anniston. Then a big white car drove up and another well dressed African American woman got out and came forward to greet us. Her name was Barbara Byrd and she was the State Representative from this area. Suddenly we were reluctant celebrities, and a camera man from a local paper came to take our pictures. It all felt very wrong.

We followed Barbara Byrd and General Jackson to the actual site of the bus burning and to the proposed memorial park. While standing alongside the highway with these two African Americans, a truck with a couple of young white men draping a large Confederate flag drove back and forth yelling obscenities at us. Racism was alive and well in Anniston, Alabama in 2013 and it only made the events of 1961 come vividly alive. Again, we said Baba's Prayer of Repentance, and General Jackson just kept shaking his head and commenting on what a prayer it was, "My that prayer is really something, my oh my, really something."

By this time we were exhausted. However, the plan seemed to be to gather for dinner at the 'most expensive' restaurant in Anniston, 'Classic on Noble' (street). We still had to drive to Atlanta, Georgia that evening and it was now already sunset. When we learned just how expensive eating at the Classic on Noble was going to be, most of us felt we couldn't spend that kind of money. However, it turned out that Barbara Byrd, the state representative, said that she should buy us dinner! She arranged over the phone the restaurant owners to give us our meals for free. So we made our way up the stairs of the old downtown building which in former days had been a department store, to the elegant chandeliered dining room. We were shown into a separate dining area and then given menus and told about the wine selection. It was very bizarre after our afternoon in West Anniston, and frankly, I was still full from the tasty hamburger I'd eaten at General Jackson's diner.



2013 Beads in Anniston's former bus station with Freedom Rider Georgia Calhoun



At the bus-burning site outside of Anniston, where there is a Freedom Rider Park planned



Alabama State Representative Barbara Byrd and restaurant owner 'General' Jackson at future Freedom Rider Park



Sunrise, Baba's Beach

Soon General Jackson arrived and joined us at our table. He seemed very very uncomfortable and despite our urgings wouldn't order off the menu, but instead asked the black busgirl to bring him some chicken wings and fries. General Jackson couldn't believe that we had all just met each other the week previous and kept asking us questions about our pilgrimage. We all tried to make the best of this awkward situation, but it seemed very weird for us to be eating in this fancy "white" restaurant after just having eaten a huge hamburger at his diner. I was itchy to get out of there.

Eventually dinner was finished. We left a large tip, paid for our wine and thanked the restaurant owners profusely for our free dinner. At last we were in the vans again and on the freeway to get to Atlanta for our last hotel night on the road. I have written a lot about this day. It was certainly not the best day of our pilgrimage, but it was a potent day that affected all of us differently. I for one was glad to sleep it off that night.

## Day 7-Atlanta, GA to Myrtle Beach SC

After a rather pleasant 6 hour drive from Atlanta to Myrtle Beach, we found our way to the Meher Center. Our Heartland Pilgrimage was coming to an end. It had been perfect in all ways; how could it not, for Baba had written the script for this play. We were only the performers. I loved my fellow companions, loved that we had experienced these days together immersed in Baba's adventure and embraced by his love. The stops at the Heartland Center and the Meher Retreat Center had worked as bookends to the volumes we'd experienced between. What could be more perfect, I certainly don't know. With gratitude to Jill who planned the tour, to the Beads on One String Foundation who sponsored the pilgrimage, to my fellow travelers who kept it interesting, and ultimately to our Beloved for infusing every moment with his grace, I close this long tale.

Jai Baba,  
Lois Colton, December 1, 2013



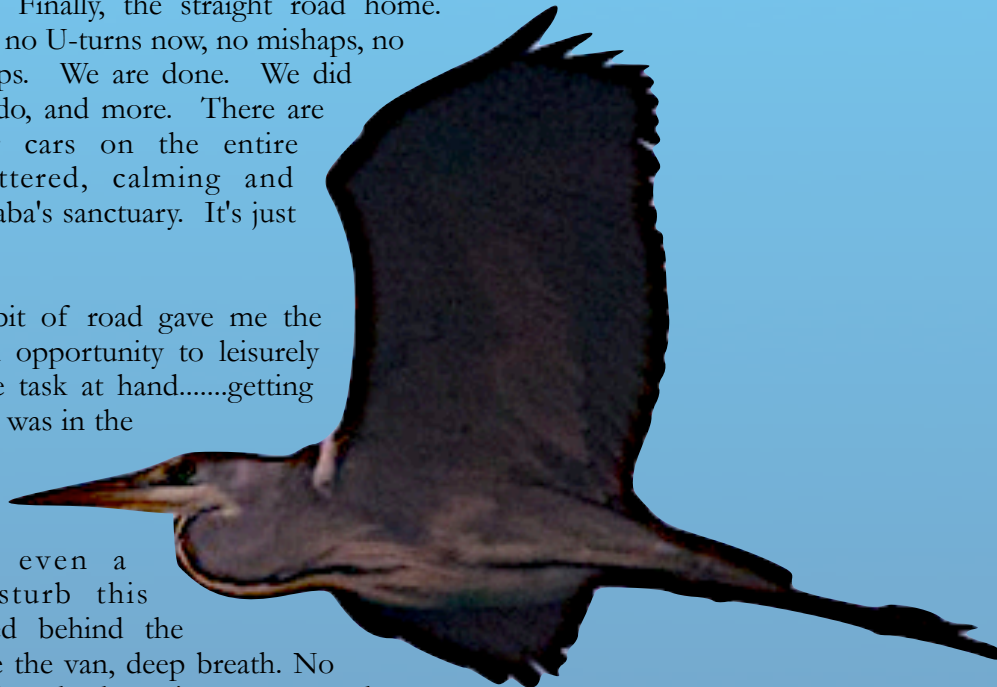
# ENCHANTMENT OF THE GREAT BLUE HERON

King's Highway. Finally, the straight road home. Surely there can be no U-turns now, no mishaps, no communication gaps. We are done. We did what we came to do, and more. There are almost no other cars on the entire gorgeous, uncluttered, calming and peaceful road to Baba's sanctuary. It's just a matter of time.

Driving that last bit of road gave me the very much needed opportunity to leisurely concentrate on the task at hand.....getting to Myrtle Beach. I was in the most appreciative state of mind at that point, glad there was not even a billboard to disturb this expanse. Relaxed behind the wheel, peace inside the van, deep breath. No sooner did that thought have its moment when directly in front of us, right down the very middle of the road I detected something. There was a disturbance. A spot of grey vibration was it? So small the one instant, but growing quickly so that it couldn't be dismissed, the spot grew to become a large wing-span with a distinctive shape. Oh. My. God. It's a Great Blue Heron, and it is heading directly into me, in my lane, in the middle of my lane and oh please Baba, don't let me hit it head on!!! Although these are my panicked thoughts, I am so transfixed at the image that has so magically, yet very deliberately, aimed itself at us that no other thoughts come next. I just watch. I guess there is no way out, but I'm also not scared. The heron suddenly, deliberately swoops above and to one side of our van. Wow. Close call. But now here it is again, swooping up and around, around and up,

circling us, dancing with us, STAYING with us. How ever is it able to be so agile? It even takes some moments to fly right next to me on the drivers side, and just close enough to that I get a really super charge and a great look at the grace, size, and beauty of it. I feel so calm. It was just like it was supposed to happen, just like it was mystically planned. Mind you, we are doing at least 55mph, probably more. This heron takes all the time it wants to perform an elaborate pattern around the van as we speed down the highway. Mission accomplished, off it swoops to the van behind us. I watch in the side view mirror. It gives them a couple of passes too and then up into the sky and poof, it is gone.

Jill English



# Heartland Beads Tour 2013 Photo Gallery



Caesar's Head Day 1



Tour Leader Jill English entering 16th Street Baptist Church, Birmingham, AL



Anisa Shah, Lianna, and Carol at dinner



Plans for Freedom Riders Park, Anniston, AL



Irma Sheppard, Dhiresha 'Dee' Chapman and Katherine 'Fuzzy' Harris outside Yazoo Pass restaurant, Clarksdale, MS



Beachwear for the Southern woman



# The One Star Review Of The One Star Review

by Matthew Talbot

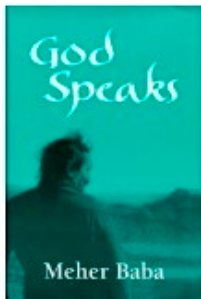
If you go to the Amazon.com page for God Speaks right now, you will sadly not see the one star review. Somehow, somehow, it was removed. Fortunately for humanity (also, the New Humanity!), I saved it to my email and have reprinted it in its entirety below. On July 22, 2012, a truly historic thing occurred. A mysterious fellow named Sam (or a woman named Samantha, that will be lost to the mists of time) wrote a one star review of God Speaks at Amazon. This review was 50% of all non-5 star reviews for God Speaks at Amazon (there is also a 4 star review).

Some of what concerns Sam make sense. But he either takes

body to get to his larger point. All of it is wrong, because dinosaurs don't exist anymore. I wish I was making this up! But it's better that I'm not. Time to quote an actual sentence:

"If Meher Baba's theory were true, then we'd still have dinosaurs on our planet..."

Well, time to close up shop here. Sam has figured it all out! His underlying point is that the extinction of animals on Earth disproves the evolution of the consciousness. I'd like to make a series of smart alec comments in a snarky manner (or at least more of them), but for the life of me I cannot figure out what the heck Sam means by this. Baba is wrong, because Jurassic Park was fictional? Do alligators existing prove Baba was right? I am so confused! Sam if you are reading this out



## God Speaks by Meher Baba (1997)

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the criticisms to cartoonish extremes or writes them in a way that just cracks me up. I realize Amazon.com reviews aren't known for their eloquence or Atticus Finch-level legal analysis. Nonetheless, the thought of somebody giving God Speaks a one star review really interested me, so let's go through it.

Sam throws down the gauntlet early noting in the review's header that God Speaks is a heap of worthless metaphysical nonsense. Sam, clearly, is playing for keeps. He says that he grew up in a Baba family and has even been to Meherabad. But reading God Speaks will only lead to silly daydreams. And everybody knows how important it is for your daydreams to be serious! My daydreams are of doing my taxes, ironing shirts, and placing a put option on Cisco stock right before a lackluster earnings report.

I shouldn't be so sardonic, because ultimately Sam is here to help. He notes Baba's words that the Goal is to realize the Reality. But then Sam cautions, hey, don't get your hopes up. Thanks, Sam! I was so upset that I couldn't realize the Reality.

Sam then spends a significant period of time describing the contents of the involution and the evolution of the soul and

there, feel free to write in and explain yourself further.

The review continues; it is so is long! It's so long it deserves its own Amazon.com page, so people can provide reviews of it. "5 stars, words organized in a sentence format, American English grammar, and mostly proper punctuation, this review had it all! Plus, that whole thing about the stegosauruses made so much sense! A++++ Would read again!"

Honestly, if I could take a moment away from being a soul-less joke machine whose sole job is to tear down instead of building up, Sam does make some genuine points here about God Speaks. He writes about how it isn't quite as applicable to day to day life as the Discourses. That's true! He talks about how God Speaks is more intellectually focused and includes a significant amount of complex terms and concepts that will overwhelm most people (myself included). Also true! He talks about the Pope, the President, and the Illuminati are conspiring to keep Bitcoin down. Okay, I made that last one up. His underlying points are sometimes valid, but he stretches them to the extreme and writes hilariously in a "lack of self-awareness" sort of way. That's why writing this review of his review is so easy!

Sam then says that Baba was a “very special guy,” which seems nice. He calls Baba a “benevolent master brainwasher,” which I think he views as an insult. But do you know how many experience points you have to get to reach benevolent master brainwasher level? I’m still at benevolent apprentice brainwasher. I guess I gotta kill more orcs and get some more XP!

Sam then surmises that Baba “got high off of playing God, and the highness that he felt from it rubbed off on other people, and they called it Baba's divine love.” I have no witty rejoinder here. Have you ever played God? It’s one of the best board games out there. Much better than playing Life, Monopoly, or Hungry, Hungry Hippos. Especially Hungry Hungry Hippos. That game made no sense! Nobody is going to get high off of playing Hungry Hungry Hippos.

If you’ve been TL;DRing me this entire time, [ED: TL;DR means "too long, didn't read"] let me bottom line you. Mostly, by providing Sam’s bottom line, which is APPROACH WITH CAUTION! Based on his review, he most likely wrapped God Speaks in a roll of yellow police tape. I’m not 100% sure if that is the case, but I’m going to go on the assumption that it is; that Sam placed God Speaks on its own shelf in his bookcase, covered in yellow police tape, and kept all the other books he has as far away from it as possible. Just to be on the safe side. You can never be too safe when it comes to these sort of things.

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### THE REVIEW:

6 of 7 people found the following review helpful

1.0 out of 5 stars

A heap of worthless metaphysical nonsense, July 22, 2012

By

Sam - See all my reviews

This review is from: God Speaks (Hardcover)

For the record, I am quite educated about the Meher Baba movement. I was born and raised a Baba lover, I stayed in Meherabad for a month, and I've been to the center in Myrtle Beach three times.

Let me tell you that this book will amount to nothing for you but silly daydreams about the Beyond (if there is such a thing as the Beyond). Baba himself seems to downplay the book's worth on the back page where he says "To understand the infinite, eternal Reality is NOT the Goal of individualized beings in the Illusion of Creation, because the Reality can never be understood; it is to be realized by conscious experience. Therefore, the goal is to realize the Reality and attain the 'I am God' state in human form."

Don't get your hopes up. This book will not give you spiritual enlightenment. If that were its aim, it would provide various meditation exercises and wisdom from enlightened masters to guide you along your journey, but it doesn't. If that's the kind of Meher Baba book you are after, go with Discourses (although, I still think Meher Baba was not the Avatar he proclaimed himself to be, and that his teachings should be taken with a grain of salt).

Therefore, why would Baba write this book, when it is essentially page after page of metaphysical jargon, which he himself tells you that you can't possibly understand? At times the reader may find it to be overwhelmingly bland with its nonstop repetition of terms like "Beyond God" "Beyond Beyond God" "Infinite knowledge, power, and bliss" "gross, subtle, mental worlds", which again, you've been told by the author you can't understand. Sound like a rewarding read?

However, there are some things in this book (thankfully) that we can comprehend intellectually, and they allow us to see how very wrong this book is.

Baba says that how it all is is kind of like Darwinism backwards. Instead of the evolution of form driving the evolution of consciousness, it is the evolution of consciousness that drives the evolution of form. The Infinite Soul of God was in the beginning, sound asleep. Then there was the "Whim to know His own Divinity", and God awoke, but not really, for he experienced most finite gross consciousness (consciousness of tangible things). The reason this happened is that as a result of the Whim, a kind of explosion happened, and the infinite ocean of God thrust out of it innumerable drop souls. Let's look at one drop soul. It experienced after its separation from the ocean, the most finite first gross impression (or sanskara). Baba doesn't want you to ask why this happened. He just wants you to accept that it did. In order to experience this most finite gross impression, it must assume for itself the most finite first gross form, so for convenience's sake, we'll consider this form to be gas. After the soul has fully exhausted this impression, it drops the form, but oh no! The soul has accumulated new impressions as a result of being in the form it just dropped. It now must take for itself the most slightly more advanced form. So it takes the form of a gas a little more



complex than the last. This process happens over and over, and the soul ascends through these forms (in the order Meher Baba specified): gas, stone, metal, vegetable, worm insect and reptile, fish, bird, animal, and human.

So here's the point I really want to make: Baba is saying that the soul created (and is still creating) these forms for itself to further its evolution of consciousness. NOWHERE in the book does Baba account for the many species that have gone extinct from the Earth. If Meher Baba's theory were true, then we'd still have dinosaurs on our planet (unless you think the dinosaurs are now incarnating on another planet billions of light years away, in which case, you are buying into outrageous absurdities). Second, wouldn't you say that the result of birth is not due to some soul saying "Okay, I'm going to take this here body for myself now so that I can exhaust my sanskaras!" but more due to a sperm cell fertilizing an egg? These are important questions, and you'd think that Meher Baba being God incarnate (as he so claims) would care to answer them, but he doesn't. He demonstrates an abysmal knowledge of science. The whole book is essentially him throwing the most abstract ideas at you which are all about supernatural spirits, planes of consciousness, etc., and are in no way applicable to your daily life (reminder, he says you can't possibly understand any of it since you're hopelessly engrossed in illusion, and that only a Perfect Master (God-Realized being) can save you from your ignorance). Yet he claimed God Speaks was the most important book on the planet. I might as well throw in here that Meher Baba pretty much spent his whole life boasting about how great he was for being the Avatar, yet had no miracles to show for it. He claimed miracles were not conducive to the opening of the heart. Okay then. Blind faith all the way!

I think Meher Baba was undoubtedly a very special person, and that his life is certainly worth studying. He may have even had some psychic powers (I can't say with certainty that the supernatural doesn't exist). But in analyzing his life and comparing him to other gurus, I have concluded that he couldn't have been the Avatar as he said he was. He may have just been a benevolent master brainwasher instead who got high off of playing God, and the highness that he felt from it rubbed off on other people, and they called it Baba's divine love. The bottom line is: APPROACH WITH CAUTION. This quote of his says it all "Don't try to understand me. Just love me." Yeah, he doesn't want you to exercise rational thought and skepticism, because then you might see that he was wrong about a lot of things, which seems to run contrary to his claim about being the Lord of the universe.

.....



"..be happy and carefree." A frame from the Louis van Gasteren film "Nema Aviona Za Zagreb" ("There is no plane for Zagreb")

# Norina Matchabelli

## described a young philosopher's meeting with Meher Baba

After hearing my enthusiastic description over the telephone of a Perfect Master, he decidedly refused to accept the privilege of a visit with the "suspectful man." When I suggested that, for his own sake, he be a more courageous adventurer in the search for Truth, he agreed to come.

At the Hotel Elysee at 2 P.M., he stood in the presence of, as he so ironically qualified Baba before meeting him, "your phenomenal man." His attitude was arrogant and critical. He coldly viewed Baba, sizing him up as if taking notes for a newspaper article.

In his unparalleled simplicity, Baba affably invited him to sit down. The young erudite at once started the mental attack. He provoked and examined Baba's knowledge from the cold, intellectual standpoint of erudition, asking question after question. To this most complicated cross-examination, Baba replied with such clear wisdom and in plain, concise, almost lapidary sentences that I, who was the translator, felt like divine Gospel was coming alive!

But the professor remained dissatisfied. He was not in an accepting mood. He was unable to grasp the positive sense of Baba's pure wisdom. His mind was blurred by its own struggle in duality. Suddenly prompted by an uncontrollable inner anger, he abruptly interrupted Baba, bringing an end (to the relief of us all) to his own awkward position. He turned to me with these words, "Tell your Master that he has not given me any new answers. He has repeated all over again the old, worn-out formula for Truth!"

Immovable in his divine bliss, Baba merely smiled with benign humor and instantly solved this embarrassing situation by putting his hand on the excited man's head. Baba looked deep into his eyes, settling the mental storm at once. It was as if the man's life energy were exchanged for a deeper substance. He began breathing deeply, as if his mind's reactive attitude were stopping. He became a transfixed receptacle of grace before my eyes.

An instantaneous act of expansion of



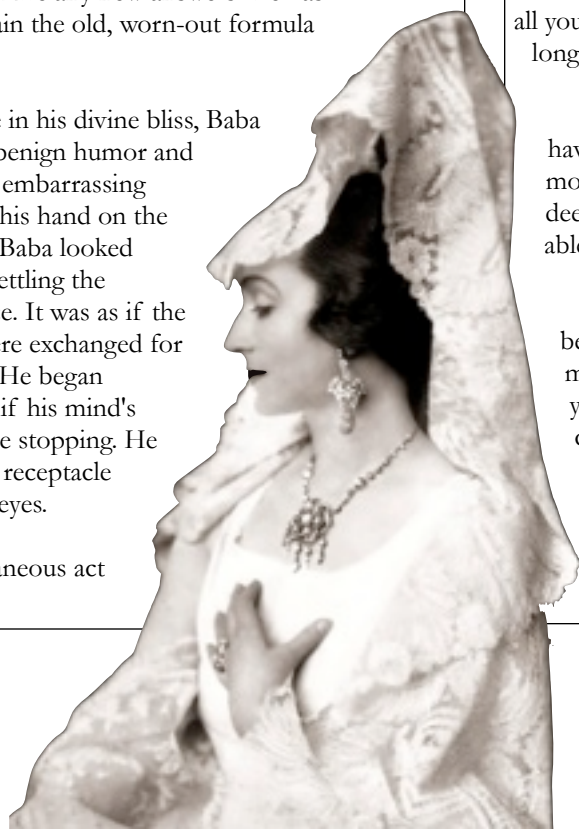
consciousness took place. After a while, he regained his normal composure and he bowed his head to Baba with the expression of a newborn soul christened by divine waters, saying, "I know love is the only answer to all questions. Love is Truth and you made me realize it. I now know only love can solve an individual's problems, duality, and the battle of life." He then knelt before Baba and said, "Take my whole life and use it."

Baba replied, "Do not be confused; do not struggle. Do not change the mode of your life but make an effort with all your heart to create longing to be one with God. This longing will make you see the Self."

Cautioning him, Baba then added, "The glimpse I have now given you will not last, but you will understand more and more of the Truth. You will go deeper and deeper into it, and in the due course of time, you will be able to be of great service to humanity."

After he left Baba's room, he stood for a while before the closed door. With tears in his eyes, he said to me, "To think that I did not want to see God! I thank you for making me come. Please let me know whatever I can do for him. I am at his service." Wiping his cheeks, the professor slowly left.

Lord Meher, p. 1784



# BRAIN SCIENCE, LSD, AND MEHER BABA

H. Talat Halman Ph.D

For decades neuroscientists have been studying how meditation and prayer affect the brain. So here I raise two questions: what parts of the brain are involved in spiritual experiences? And how does Meher Baba's message about LSD and the brain correlate to current neuroscience?

In a letter dated July 14, 1966, in response to a letter from psychologist, psychedelic experimenter, and then Meher Baba Lover, Allan Cohen, Meher Baba directly refuted the idea of "areas in the brain reserved for subtle consciousness." Meher Baba wrote:

"There is no such thing as 'areas in the brain reserved for subtle consciousness' and the question of LSD affecting them has no meaning." (quoted in Weichberger and Smith, 2003, 15)

## The Neuroscience Response

Neuroscience supports this in three senses. First, according to neuroscientist Andrew Newberg, all the centers of the brain--and, in addition to "areas," the neurotransmitters--involved in mystical experiences evolved to fulfill practical purposes. (Newberg 2001, 125, 126, 139. Tremlin, 2006) So these areas are not "reserved for subtle experiences." Instead they share multiple functions for everyday living.

Second we find overlapping functions in specific brain areas and in that sense, specific areas are not "reserved" only for one function. Thus emotion, memory, and vision each involve seven different areas. Audition works in four areas; body sensation in six; motor activities in nine. It seems that the brain involves a real team effort. To do any one thing circuits of different brain areas coordinate together.

Third, according to research studies, neurotransmitters, especially, but not limited to, dopamine, serotonin, and endorphins are involved in spiritual experiences. In one model of mystical experience, five areas are included. We will return to this model. (Eugene d'Aquili and Andrew Newberg 1999, 115) Based on further research Newberg identified another brain part in the circuit, the anterior cingulate, an area involved with attention and interaction with others and which contributes to generating

compassion. (Newberg, 2005, 123-126. ) Newberg writes: "The biology of religious and spiritual states is very complex, and as we've seen it seems to involve many different brain regions and many different neurotransmitters..." (Andrew B. Newberg 2012, 263)

In fact, taking Meher Baba's point about "...no areas in the brain reserved for subtle consciousness," further, we can relate this assertion to Newberg's findings that part of spiritual, meditative, or mystical experience involves the inactivity of a part of the brain: the left parietal lobe. What is happening here is that neurons are not firing into the left parietal lobe, an area of the brain that contributes to our sense of being a distinctive self apart from the world. This absence of activity in the left parietal lobe is called deafferentation, meaning the nerves do not receive activation. And this contributes to a sense of selflessness.

Left Parietal Lobe is deafferentated (yellow area)

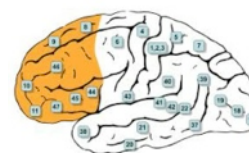


## The Mystical Experience Circuit

The circuit for spiritual, meditative, and mystical experiences first involves the prefrontal cortex, especially the right prefrontal cortex. Newberg calls this part of the brain the attention association area (AAA). The AAA is essential for the focused nature of the experience.

In this observation, Newberg is specifically describing the formulation of the original intent to meditate. He extrapolates that therefore this part of the brain is involved in mystical experience. Based on his research on prayer and meditation, Newberg extrapolates what happens during a mystical experience, i.e. he identifies the brain circuitry that is activated.

Prefrontal Cortex

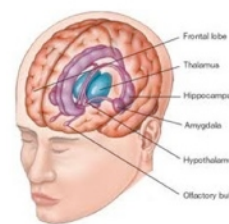


*Here is the sequence in the brain circuitry:*

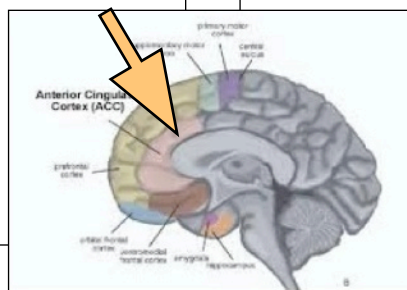
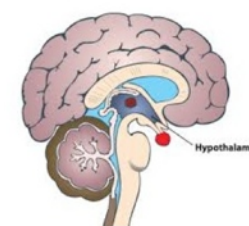
First, discharges from the attention association area travel down to the limbic system (for emotional content).

They then relay to the hypothalamus, creating a sense of pleasure and excitation (here, we might add the possibility of the hypothalamus to release the hormone oxytocin, which is released when in love.) The

Limbic System

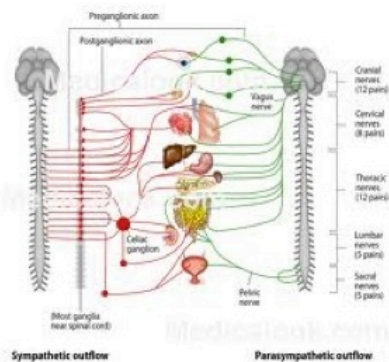


Hypothalamus

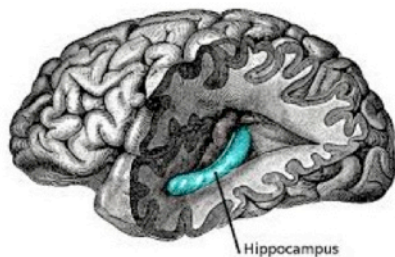




hypothalamus, which regulates the **autonomic nervous system**, thus stimulates the simultaneous activation of both “arms” of the autonomic nervous system (meaning that the experiencer is simultaneously aroused and calmed). These two “arms” are the sympathetic nervous system and the parasympathetic nervous system. The signals then



continue back up through the limbic center. The limbic center includes the amygdala which is central to emotion (although especially for fear of imminent danger, but also essential to appreciating music) and the **hippocampus** which is essential



to learning and creating long-term memory. Newberg calls the hippocampus the “diplomat” especially because it is a structure in the limbic system that regulates and

communicates with other structures. In a mystical experience the hippocampus would direct neurons to totally stop firing toward the left parietal lobe, and also partially reduce firing to the right parietal lobe. This shunting or deafferentation of the left parietal lobe disarms the brain center that distinguishes self from other and which informs our time-space orientation. With this lobe so disarmed, one senses being united with--and not separate from--surroundings. Completing this circuit, the signals then return from the limbic center to both sides of the attention association area in the front of the brain. But also other areas are involved, especially the thalamus, which is a relay station for transmission between the cerebral cortex and the limbic system and brain stem.

Newberg ascribes the classic ineffability of mystical experiences to the fact that the language centers are not involved. (Newberg, 1999, 121-122) Ultimately, these mystical experience circuits identified by Newberg describe the main areas of the brain involved. In other words considering Newberg’s findings of areas especially stimulated might lead one to overlook the fact that many brain centers are at work, even if not exceptionally stimulated. All this complexity reinforces Meher Baba’s point that there are “no areas in the brain reserved for subtle consciousness.” All the areas of the brain in this circuit evolved for everyday purposes including survival, mating, sex, and detecting intentional agents, such as animals, snakes, other people, etc.

None of them are “reserved” for single purposes—and especially not only for spiritual experiences. Newberg writes, “...the neurology of transcendence borrows the neural circuitry of sexual response.” (Newberg 2001, 139)

McNamara (2009) points to a more extensive circuit of the orbital and dorsomedial pre-frontal cortex (Newberg’s AAA), the ascending serotonergic systems, the mesocortical system [dopamine], the amygdala/hippocampus, and the right anterior temporal lobes. McNamara explains:

I believe that when taken together the clinical data suggest that the limbic system (particularly the amygdala), portions of the basal ganglia [area at base of forebrain involved in movements and habits], the right temporal lobe (particularly the anterior portion of the medial and superior temporal lobe) [the area that establishes a sense of self and other], and the dorsomedial, orbitofrontal, and right dorsolateral prefrontal cortex [Newberg’s AAA] are the crucial nodes in a brain circuit that mediates religiosity...[T]he circuit, in turn, is regulated by the mesocortical DA [Dopaminergic sites] and various serotonergic systems. When this circuit is stimulated in the right way, you get religious ecstasy. (McNamara 2009: 105)

McNamara further describes the neurology of religious experience:

Across many different types of religious practices and many different types of participants, the prefrontal lobes, ...the temporal lobes, the limbic system...and the DA [Dopamine] systems all appear to undergo increased levels of activation during the religious practice. There is also a trend at the cortical level for activation increases to be right-sided. The parietal lobes [back top area of brain] tend either to undergo deactivation or do not change at all. Activation patterns in the cerebellum [a section of the brain behind and beneath the cortex involved in movement] are also not consistent....The most important regions of the brain for studies of religious expression appear to be a circuit linking up the orbital and dorsomedial pre-frontal cortex, the right dorsolateral prefrontal cortex, the ascending serotonergic systems, the mesocortical DA system, the amygdala/hippocampus, and the right anterior temporal lobes. (McNamara, 2009: 127)

Finally, McNamara offers a simplified summary of the circuit:

In summary, the circuit that mediates religiousness involves primarily limbic, temporal and frontal cortices on the right.

McNamara includes the temporal lobes which is important in that epileptic seizures happen here and produce religious experiences. (<http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/18171635>)

### Are Drug Experiences Related to Mystical Experiences?

Returning to LSD, Newberg points out that a major part of its workings is the flooding of the neurotransmitter serotonin (to which LSD is chemically related), and suggests that the amygdala and hippocampus are particularly affected. (Newberg, 2012, 101) However, McNamara says that LSD decreases firing in the raphe system (in the brain stem) with a related decrease in serotonin leading to increased firing of



dopamine neurons in the circuit (i.e the circuit described in the passages above).

Marijuana, which Meher Baba also warned against binds to neurotransmitter receptors and thus alters these receptors in five areas: (1) the ventral tegmental area, part of the reward circuit (2) the nucleus accumbens septi, also part of the reward circuit (3) the pre-frontal cortex, (4) the hippocampus, and (5) the amygdala. These first two areas are the core of the circuit of brain centers responsible for addiction. Like any addictive drug—or behavior—marijuana activates the endogenous reward system, areas numbered one and two above. These receptors are not dedicated to cannabis, but in fact are receptors for an Omega-6 fatty acid called arachidonic acid. (Jeanette Norden, 2007, Vol. 2, 101-103)

### God in Human Form: Cognitive Science of Religion

What is missing in this neuroscience on mystical experiences is an explanation of the dimension of mystical experience in which one sees the personal form of God. For example, in this experience Saint Terese de Avila (one of Meher Baba's five favorite Christian saints) describes seeing God's hands and face:

"One day while I was in prayer, the Lord decided to show me just his hands. I could never begin to describe such beauty! The vision shocked me. I am always frightened when God gives me a new supernatural favor. A few days after this, he showed me his divine face, and I was completely absorbed. Since the Lord would ultimately grant me the favor of seeing him whole, I wondered why he chose to reveal himself to me little by little. Later I understood that his Majesty was giving me exactly as much as my delicate nature could handle. May he be forever blessed! Such a crude vessel ... could never have contained such glory. The Lord in his mercy was preparing me to receive him fully." (St. Teresa of Avila 2007, Kindle Locations 777-783)

Newberg would probably argue that through extensive meditation on the face of Christ, in the mystical moment these memories came alive. At least some of you reading this know the power of recognition in first seeing a photo of Meher Baba. In this sense one of the theories in cognitive religion of science demonstrates that people are naturally inclined to imagine what Tremlin calls "supernatural agents" in human form. Tremlin calls it the "personal template." I like to call it personification. If one communicated Meher Baba's concept to a cognitive scientist of religion of "God in human form," he or she would likely just say, "Of course." More work needs to be done in neurotheology on the brain's propensity to see God in human form. At this point in answering this question we would have to assume that the personal part of the experience is generated in the pre-frontal cortex, the AAA.

To conclude we see that current neuroscientific research accords with and explains Meher Baba's point that there are no specially-dedicated centers for subtle consciousness. We also see that neurologists identify mystical

experiences as occurring through firing of neurons among multiple parts of circuits or networks in the brain. While Cognitive Scientists of Religion foreground a recognition of the naturalness of conceiving of God in human form, neurotheologists have not yet found a basis for understanding this human proclivity, except to suggest that through practice of meditation, contemplation, or visualization, the circuits developed for envisioning these forms are activated in mystical experiences.

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# What the Heart Wants, by Alice H. Klein

Myrtle Beach: Sheriar Press, 2013  
118 pages; \$14.95; ISBN: 978-0-913078-82-2

Reviewed by Laurent Weichberger  
Ashland, Oregon (December 21, 2013)

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This is the first book of poems by Alice Klein. I stumbled upon her poetry on Facebook, while surfing around one day. I instantly loved it. Then I asked her if we can have one for our magazine, OmPoint and she let me know about her new book. While visiting the Meher Spiritual Center in November, I picked one up from Sheriar Books.

In *Breath of Heaven* (p. 3) she talks about the mind and heart, and love, explaining their finer nature:

“The heart must love, or it will starve.  
Strike even a tiny match and fan that spark  
into flame.”

In *Love Guards the Gates* (p. 5) she continues with her insights, here is a bit of that poem:

“Guard the gates with Love,  
and let Love sweep the walk.  
It shall be Love who answers  
the rap at the door,  
and love who says yea or nay,  
welcoming the one  
and gently turning the other away.”

She writes of dancing, horses, and tennis balls, as all images are fair game in her beautiful self expression. When it comes to the poem *Reincarnation* (p. 10), she immediately starts off with her blood family, which struck a deep chord for me:

“So I cast myself into arms that couldn’t,  
or wouldn’t, or anyway didn’t  
hold me. I threw myself on the mercy  
of a mother who wouldn’t hear  
and a father who was frightened.  
I wanted to be safe in a circle of their arms

but any weight broke their clasp –  
and all fall down.”

Her use of the children’s game imagery is powerful and if not universal, it works well. Her couldn’t wouldn’t didn’t language could be cumbersome, but instead it comes off as adorable and approachable, as if I know her, but we never met.

She has the courage to tackle a poem about Baba’s Beloved, in *Mehera* (p. 13), and starts with the disarming:

“The way she looks at him  
in that old photograph

you can feel intentness  
such as you do not meet in this  
world.”

I did meet Mehera, in 1988 at Meherazad, India, and I can attest to what Alice is relating. You don’t meet people like Mehera in this world, unless you are invited to God’s Party, at His Home.

In the deeply personal, *Turn Me* (p. 21) she reels us in with the universal seeker experience:

“As far as I’m concerned, this world  
is too hard. And you, my love, are  
far,  
too far away. Everywhere I search  
is wrong. How is it I can know this  
and still repeat the same mistakes?”

Alice is a mystic, and she knows first hand of what she speaks, no other way she could write poems that say *Not Exactly Thank You* (p. 44):

“When you have stripped me  
and ripped from me everything  
and everyone I clung to,  
I sound your name.  
It isn’t love, and I don’t pretend.  
It’s more like desperation.  
In the end you are all that you’ve left me.”

And that is just a taste of what she has cooked up for this feast of mind and heart. What can I say? Well done Alice, your heart song has reached one soul and I am sure you have pleased the Real Beloved who knows exactly what your heart wants. I wholeheartedly recommend this book of poems to any and all seekers of the Truth.







### **Three Drawings by Helen Hill (2013)**

Prints are available for \$5.00 plus shipping and handling.

Titles: Beloved 1, Beloved 2, and Beloved 3.

Media: brush, pen and sepia ink.

"For prints, please email the name of the image, and your mailing address to  
Helen: [commonsmartweed@gmail.com](mailto:commonsmartweed@gmail.com)"



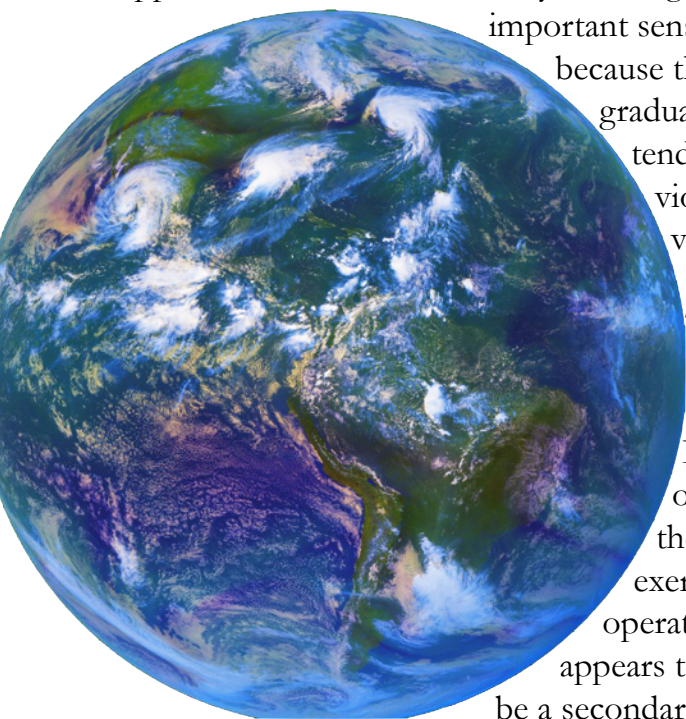
# A Noble Nation

## An excerpt from Meher Baba's Discourses

Suppose an aggressive nation invades a weaker nation for selfish purposes, and another nation, inspired solely by the noble desire of saving the weak nation, resists this aggressive invasion by armed force. Fighting in defence of the weak nation cannot be looked upon as either violence or non-violence, but can be called non-violent violence.

... Here the fighting involves offering resistance to aggression, with no selfish motive or personal interest, but solely with the purpose of defending the weaker nation.

This may inflict much injury and even destruction upon the aggressor nation, and the use of force is not only without its prior consent but against its deliberate and conscious will. Even in this situation we do not have a clear case of violence. In spite of the injury and harm involved, the application of force is not only for the good of the weaker nation, which is the victim, but in a very important sense it is also for the good of the aggressor nation itself, because through the resistance encountered to its aggression, it is gradually cured of its spiritual weakness or disease of having a tendency to invade and exploit the weaker nations. This violence is really not violent and so we call it non-violent violence.



The case of fighting with an aggressor nation is very similar to the case of surgery on an infected part.

In the case of fighting with the aggressor nation, the good of the weaker nation appears to be the primary result and the good of the aggressor nation (against which force is exercised) appears to be a secondary result. In the case of the operation, the good of the patient (on whom force is exerted) appears to be the primary result and the good of others appears to be a secondary result. But this is only a minor difference in benefit and when the two situations are carefully analysed and compared, it is found that both promote equally the good of the target of force as well as many others involved in the situation.

In Discourses by Meher Baba, 6th Ed. Volume i, Violence and Non-violence, pp. 102-104 available on-line here:

<http://tinyurl.com/otur9f6>

## Theme of 2010 India Trip anonymous

I said I would write and share with you about my last trip to India, because I found it especially insightful for me. I have been to India many times, and each visit is entirely different internally; there are thousands of facets of the heart, and Baba seems to highlight in depth and with clarity a different facet in me during each trip, which becomes its theme.

Unbeknownst to me, the theme of my trip began about a month before I left for India. I had gotten into a serious confrontation with someone in our community, a person I have been at odds with for decades. It has been an ongoing conflict that I have learned to live with by keeping a polite distance from this person. As a rule, I don't usually get into confrontations with others because I find that it rarely helps the situation. However, in this case, circumstances somehow maneuvered themselves in such a way that I could not avoid a head-to-head confrontation.

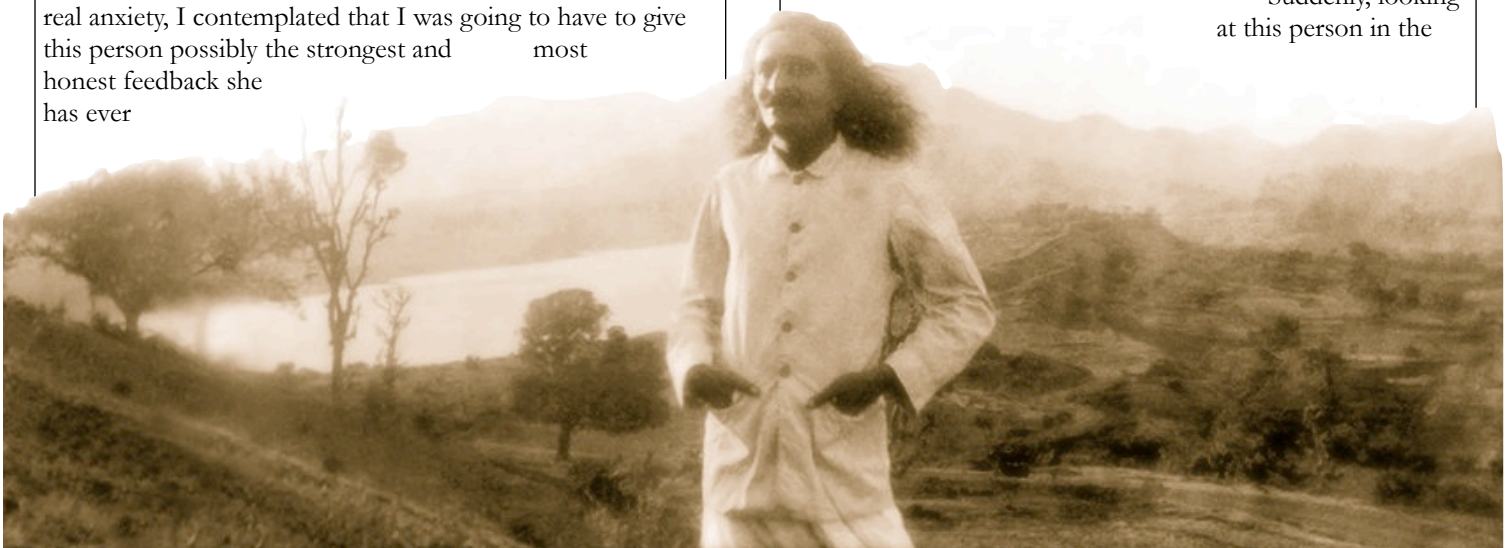
Over the years, I feel this person has been insensitive to others, indifferent to their feelings, justifying what she says and does with little concern for how much it hurts others, not just me but many others. Before we got together, with some real anxiety, I contemplated that I was going to have to give this person possibly the strongest and most honest feedback she has ever

when He says that the whole universe is within us. By loving others, they find their place within us, they are incorporated in our being, and those we are "yet to love," so to speak, remain outside of us for the time being. This was one such person I was yet to love.

About this person, I've known few people who are so absolutely different from me, in attitude, in personality, in sentiment, in approach to Baba—so aloof, so disinterested in others, authoritarian and impersonal, except with her spouse and children. (I would normally not cross paths so intimately with someone like her, any more than I would be likely to find myself face-to-face in a heated discussion with some high-powered Wall Street stockbroker.)

Before getting together with this person, I had insisted that she give me ample time to convey my concerns. In the past, it had been impossible to get anywhere in a conversation with her; she would just walk off. But, in this case, she agreed and we met, and I began venting my concern, which in the end took me about forty-five minutes. Part way into this intense conversation, I could see that I was getting nowhere; she was just dismissive and in denial, so I made the decision to talk directly to her soul, (whatever that means), because I felt that some genuine feedback was long overdue. This sounds self-righteous of me, but if you knew the real situation, you would agree with my serious concern.

Suddenly, looking  
at this person in the



received. (I don't mean to imply here that I am above reproach, that someone might be dying to give me similar feedback about my insensitive behavior toward them.)

Let me preface all this by saying that at this stage in my life, I have come to realize like many of us that, whether it seems so or not, we are responsible for what comes to us by way of experience. I have been fairly resigned with some measure of grace to my less agreeable karma, so to speak, if not in the immediate situation, at least in retrospect. That is, I believe that what we experience externally is a perfect mirror of something in our interior. Also, I might add that I have come to realize to some extent from my own experience and through the influence of Darwin Shaw and Eruch Jessawala, two of Baba's very close ones, the truth of Baba's words

midst of the confrontation, I had the feeling that I had been transported to some far-off, remote planet in my own universe, viewing it at point blank range, a planet I would never have seen if it had not been for this person; and for a brief moment, I had the distinct feeling that I was seeing a very strange, foreign part of myself that I had never observed before.

When the confrontation was over, I was thankful that I had had the courage to confront an unknown part of myself because of this person; prior to this, I had found it impossible to see myself in her or her in me. Nothing ever came of the conversation; at least she didn't acknowledge what it may have meant to her.

I left for India several weeks later, not preoccupied particularly with this situation afterwards; I felt I had been

honest with her and done my best; I had not been mean-spirited, although I didn't mince words about her insensitive behavior over the years. I didn't feel I had hurt her because she's always been dismissive and doesn't usually seem to take anything I or others say, seriously.

In India about a week and a half later, I was sitting one afternoon in Baba's tomb, relaxed and happy, taking in its warm, expansive, loving atmosphere. At one point, unexpectedly, the scene of the confrontation between this person and me floated through my consciousness, and Baba suddenly flashed something very profound to me. It happened in a millisecond, and I got its truth instantly. The flash contained volumes, and yet its meaning was imparted without words.

In an attempt to put Baba's instantaneous flash of insight into words, here is what He conveyed: "Take My word for it one hundred percent, not in this lifetime but in past, you were just like her. You were very unkind and insensitive; you had no regard for how much your behavior hurt the heart of others. Through your indifference, you hurt people deeply, and the thing is, you never asked Me for forgiveness, which I would have readily given. This person has been in your life all these decades to bring you to this moment when you would ask Me for forgiveness for how you had been."

I went inside my heart and re-experienced deeply the pain and suffering that this person had "made" me feel, so to speak, over the years. This awakened a genuine remorse in me, and I sincerely said to Baba: "I have made people feel this hurt, this miserable, Baba? Please, please forgive me." It was not an abstract plea for forgiveness, because I was experiencing the actual pain and suffering in that moment. And I found Baba more than happy to forgive me. I felt that asking Baba for forgiveness was not as humiliating as one might think, but ennobling; I was being honest with myself for the first time about my past insensitivity, an insensitivity I was unaware of, and who but Baba could forgive in the true sense?

In that flash in the tomb, Baba had made me feel with certainty, without knowing any details, that in the past I had justified my insensitive behavior without remorse, indifferent to its effect on others; I had not bothered to care how much it hurt others—their pain was their problem, so to speak. But Baba brought home to me that the fact that I had such a strong reaction to the insensitivity of this person in this life is a sure sign that it was still in my system, unfelt and unexamined. As the saying goes, "If you spot it, you got it."

As I mentioned before, the understanding of what Baba conveyed came to me instantly. And I realized that the world is infinitely more benevolent than I had previously thought. We are all helping each other to grow in love, to see ourselves more deeply, and to free ourselves of our past! When I left Baba's tomb that afternoon, I was ecstatic!

I asked myself, "Why didn't I see this truth before?" And I concluded that the reason is that it all seemed counter-intuitive. I was of the mindset that most of us have that it is the abuser who should be asking for forgiveness, not the one who is abused. And so this deep truth eluded me, an incredible truth for which I have been waiting decades. And when the one abused does not respond in kind, the circuit of

abuser/abused is broken, and the karma can't go anywhere. It becomes like a cart with one wheel; it can only go around and around in circles and cannot go forward in time.

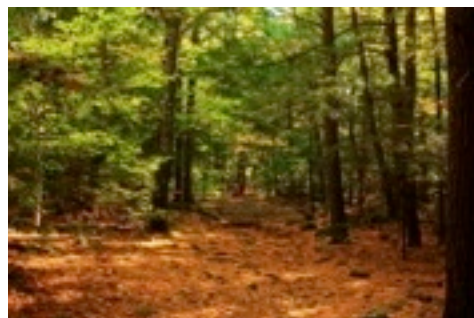
As a consequence, I now feel closer to this person than ever before, because I see myself in her, undeniably. A part of me is like her, and so she moves more into the inside of me. I realize more clearly than ever that she has played a vital role, whether or not she is aware of it, in helping me to see myself more comprehensively, that I have been in denial of a part of myself. That knowledge can only make me more compassionate and larger as a human being.

I want to make it clear that what I am talking about has to do with the inner response to a negative situation. The outer response is another matter, but I have found that the outer response is changed for the better with this new understanding; the negativity has been minimized. In viewing others as serving us by helping us to see ourselves more clearly and comprehensively, we are no longer victims; a negative situation becomes a doorway to liberating us from the past so that love can be released in the present.

The insight from Baba was not only invaluable in dealing with one person who was very difficult for me to relate to. It continues to be profoundly useful in dealing with present negative situations. Suppose, as happens often enough, a car on the highway cuts me off, and the driver just laughs in my face, instantly making me feel horrible and upset inside. What do I do now? I say to Baba, "You are reminding me how I used to be just like that, insensitive to how my behavior hurt others. Please forgive me." And I feel Baba's forgiveness. By doing so, the negativity of the situation is usually neutralized, almost miraculously. I have no one to blame but myself, and I feel thankful for being given the opportunity of getting a new insight into my past behavior.

In another example, suppose my father was an alcoholic and abused me when I was growing up. I can gather together all the hurt, the pain, the wretched emotions and the lack of self-worth that I was so-called "made" to feel and bring it to Baba, knowing that when I was a father, I was once just like him. And Baba is more than happy to forgive.

There are so many negative situations in life now that are transformed for me when I approach Baba in this way and ask His forgiveness. And so therefore, the theme of my visit to India lives on as one of the most surprising and insightful lessons I have ever learned, coming from the Master of Love Himself.





## FEATURED ARTIST MELINDA ABELES

Interview with Melinda Abeles, OmPoint Featured Artist  
By Laurent Weichberger  
Ashland, Oregon (February 2014)

Laurent Weichberger (LW): So Melinda, we just met at Meherana, in Mariposa, a special Meher Baba center. Where are you from originally, and when and how did you hear about Meher Baba?

Melinda Abeles (MA): I'm originally from San Francisco. I moved to Mariposa in 1994 for a job. (I'm a retired medical practitioner now). I met Jack and Becky Caraco in town one day, who became personal friends. I then went to Jack for an acupuncture treatment and saw Baba on the wall. "Nice guru," I thought.

I would ask him questions about Baba while on his table. He would tell me tidbits about Baba and what an avatar is, which as a Jew was something difficult. I felt very connected to God in His infinite and omnipresent form, and didn't "believe" in Avatars or personal Gods. Because I loved and trusted Jacko as a person, I was open to listening and considering the possibility of God smashing Himself into a human form.

One time while I was dazed out by the needles and Jack had gone to see another patient, Baba came to me and released a little blue bird from his hand. That's all I remember.

During another appointment with Jack I asked Baba for a joke. Jacko always told me great jokes so this time, while I was laying there, I wanted to get a joke for him. This is the joke that came that day:

What did Baba say to his Mandali? – Nothing..  
What did Baba say to his lovers? – Everything..  
What did Baba say to Arnold Schwarzenegger? – I'll be back!

Baba actually turned the key for me when I met a young lover named Walker. He told me his story of remembering Baba as a toddler. His parents put a video on the television of Baba one evening, and when Walker saw Baba "alive" in there, he began a hysterical attempt to get into the television to be with his beloved. It was so clearly a reincarnation story. It was the power of the Truth that came through Walker that opened my heart to Baba's living presence.

I then did nothing but read all the [Baba] books for the next few years. I had to catch up with the rest of you! About the facts anyway.

LW: I have seen some amazing bead work by Native Americans, and other types of indigenous art such as the Huichol Indians, and their yarn paintings. What inspired you to do your bead work, and drawings/paintings?



MA: As an only child, art was the blessing in my life. When I'm immersed into a piece, especially of Baba, I disappear for hours at a time. Like a personal little manonash![1]  
I was also adopted. When I searched for and found my biological mother, I discovered that she was a wonderful artist. Thank you Baba for those genes.

I started beading in my 20s. I was living on The Farm[2], an intentional community in Summertown, Tennessee, where 1500 hippies lived together on the land. It was the thing to do at the time. We all had long hair of course and so us ladies beaded lots of hair clips and ties for everybody. For me the love of the craft deepened into the form it takes today. I'm in love with beads, the colors and textures and infinite possibilities of creation with them. I also especially love colored pencils.

I work best either creating a personal vision into a piece of art, or creating custom pieces for others according to their inspirations. A picture indeed is way better than a thousand words.

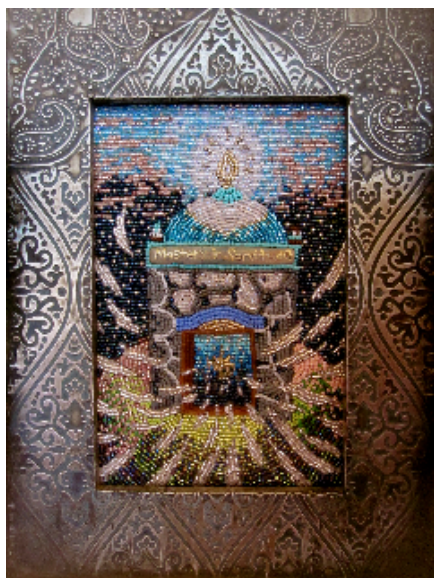
LW: In one of your pencil drawings of Meher Baba, there is what looks like a galaxy coming out of his forehead. Can you tell me more about that piece?

MA: This is Baba imagining Everything.

LW: In your round beaded piece, there is what looks like a woman in the ocean waves, what is that about?

MA: That's Baba in the wave! The King!!! (the golden rays are His crown). What I learned making this piece is that Baba's face has to be way bigger. But you can see His little mustache if you look closer.

LW: The Coming Home painting of Beloved Baba's Samadhi looks like there are many people coming from all directions. Can you share more about this painting, besides the story which accompanies it?



MA: This is a colored pencil drawing originally, done at the samadhi. I drew lots of it in the dining hall of the Pilgrim Center by the – I am at Meherabad – painting in that little corner there. I was crying a lot. The idea of it came pouring out the same day I had the actual experience at the

samadhi with Baba there. That experience of the Divine Theme where every soul on earth and in the universe and beyond beyond ... was right behind me heading Home. I don't know what else to say. It was the definition of profound. It was beyond any shadow of doubt. It's just Truth. Here's a beaded version. Hard to get the best pic of it ...

LW: I love the Mischievous Chicken beadwork (and the funky frame!), it looks like the Earth is inside the broken open shell. So, what is the story behind that work?

MA: That's the New World just born. If you look close you can see the samadhi in India. If you look really close you can see the New Humanity. This piece was inspired on the eve of winter solstice, December 21, 2012 ... the end of the Mayan Calendar.

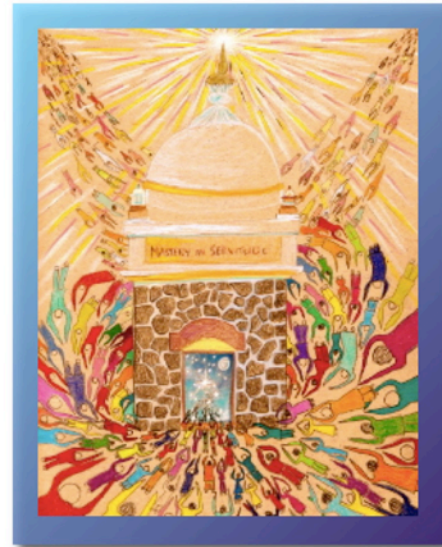
For many decades I had been engaged in indigenous spirituality, including the study of prophecy. Many ancient cultures intersect in a common Great Change, which seemed to synchronize around that date. There was even science that backed up many of the ancient stories. I myself, believed God was perfectly orchestrating it all, and that I would be one that would be on earth to see it through and I'd better get ready ... on all fronts. I moved to Mariposa and created an off grid life on a ridgetop, with a root cellar and garden/orchard etc. Horses complete the cycle of manure fertilizing the plants and trees and will be here to ride when Baba has the oil production stop or we run out first.

I'm one who understands that our consciousness, which exists in the mind of God, the imagination, co-creates the manifestation of our world. Thus, changing our thoughts, changes the actuality of the gross world. It's simply a Truth of the universe, the law of Mentalism (7 Hermetic Principles), where thought precedes everything manifest and thus is the cause on a vibrational (subtle) level to the effect in the gross. Therefore the New World is a consciousness shift. The New Humanity is a consciousness shift that happens when one's Heart is calibrated to Baba's Love, and one's mind has released its false thinking which has created this situation now. Then the Heart can again entrain the mind into a new consciousness and humanity will live in a new way on Earth.

It's those moment by moment choices that are the evolving edge of a New World. I get that it's Me as a drop soul from the Ocean Infinite. I get it that the New World and the New Humanity are not some future conditions but here now if we choose to make it so. That's the power we have as human beings. I'm clear that it's my own thoughts, words and deeds, when aligned to Baba's Love and the Discourses[3], that change the world. It's a universal law that this is so ... because I am a drop containing the ocean and what I think, say and do affects everything.

That's what this beadwork is about for me. It's a constant reminder that the New World is alive and well, and I strive to keep my awareness on Baba and what He would have me do in each moment to nourish this newborn. To be honest, the





Coming Home

I was sitting in the pandal beside the Samadhi, reflecting on the most profound experience of my life. It was mid February 2011, a few days before Baba's birthday celebration. This was my first trip to India, and a few days before, I had lain my head down on Baba's tomb for the first time.

I had arrived at Meherbad in the afternoon, about teatime, greeted by that amazing painting of Baba above the door of the dining hall that almost sent me to the floor in tears. After settling into my room and having tea, it was time. I had an appointment with God...

All my life had led me to this moment, and it felt like a long convoluted line of dominoes that began at Mt. Zion Hospital in San Francisco at the moment of my first breath this time. He had now flicked this first tile with His index finger, and they were falling fast.

With my red sandals and wet scarves around my head, covering the red rose clip in my hair, I followed the path across the field of India bareness towards and through the living forest of flowering bushes and trees. I cannot explain the feeling other than I felt like a POW who had been in exile for 55 years, who was finally released to come home.

Passing other pilgrims on the path, the only words spoken in whispers were, "Jai Baba... Jai Baba...", eyes meeting in acknowledgement, and onward my feet stepped as the dominoes were falling just behind me. The closer I came to the Samadhi, the closer and faster they fell.

Suddenly in disbelief the Samadhi was there. I placed myself at the end of the queue as the tears of unbelievable release and relief began. Someone beautiful in front of me heard my sniffing and handed me some tissue which I had forgotten to bring... and slowly I moved forward towards the end of the long road home.

My turn came and abit confused with unknown formalities, I stepped onto and over the threshold, leaving a dusty footprint behind. Each breath of my life had led to this moment... the last domino falling as I walked forward and kneeled and placed my forehead onto the edge of the marble. I was immediately pulled out of my body into the universe of stars. I was formless and merged and I knew beyond any shadow of doubt, that every soul in the universe was right behind me. Every soul on Earth and everywhere, was on their way Home.

So here is the drawing of that experience, done that morning a few days later in the pandal next to the Samadhi. It expresses that moment in the best way I know how to express it, as only a picture can. As I was drawing, a group of shining young boys from the Meher English School, came to watch. I gave them all pieces of paper from my book and offered them to use my pencils. They were thrilled at the opportunity to draw and all drew the samadhi in their own way. I was way more thrilled than they were!





Discourses are my instruction manual for New Humanity 101. But it all extrapolates down to this: good thoughts, good words, good deeds, pay attention, and respond.

LW: Then you made the OmPoint Vagina bead work with the Samadhi again, and the lotus, wow. What inspired this one?

MA: This piece was inspired by the Feminine and Masculine aspects of God/Baba. The unformed nothing with everything in latency is what I see as the Great Womb of Creation which sends out through the Om Point[4] represented by the Lotus, through the vaginal opening into the world of forms in which is the Earth on which is the dear samadhi in which rests the human body of God. Is that not unbelievable?

8. Having come to Baba more recently, what are your observations for those in the community that have been around for in some cases decades now? I personally feel you are one of the New Humanity, and that we need to listen carefully to those who have experience of Meher Baba directly, now. Please share anything you would like to say, I am listening, and I know our readers would love your fresh perspective. Anything goes.

MA: Cool Laurent. Great opportunity, thank you. This doesn't exactly address what I observe, but says a lot about my perspective. So much I'd love to say. For me it's not just the Eleventh Hour on Earth anymore. It's 5 minutes to 12. We as humanity, and all living creatures are at the crossroads. We are being given the opportunity to choose to let go of the unworkable forms that perpetuate selfishness and separation, or to continue them.

Compromise will not work, it's time for radical consciousness shift, including all false values and beliefs that hold this current paradigm in place.

So that's what I'm personally working on in the moments of the days. And just like how overwhelming it was at first to answer this question because I didn't know where to begin, it's also overwhelming to think about working for the spiritual freedom of all of humankind. So you know – let's calm down Melinda, and focus on first myself, and then my community of Mariposa, California. That's what I can have an affect on.

That said, I have been blessed to have found a circle of people here, dedicated to bringing all people together like beads on one string with the focus on Unity and Love. We are just a great group of well meaning human beings dedicated to loving God in our various ways. And ... we are a group that doesn't just talk, we each are doing our best to Live the Truth.

It's a group that was started by a B'hai couple in their home and has continued for decades. It has no name and anyone can come. We come together weekly for spiritual discussions on topics that unify us and address our commonalities as human beings on earth. We listen carefully to each other, and treat each other lovingly and communicate honestly with each

other. We are consciously creating the New World together right here. We come together for deep conversations as well as put many ideas into action for the benefit of the greater community. I feel like this circle is Living Baba's Truth. We each feel that with simply a different name for God.

This is the situation Baba has placed me in. It is an opportunity to live one of Baba's wishes, of seeing Baba in everyone and trying to help and serve them. This is the perspective of all members of this circle, though they use a different name for God. It does not matter to me. They are lovers of God. I am very happy and content in this circle, and together we really work to bring spiritual understanding to the greater community of Mariposa. I know I shall go home to Baba from their loving arms.

This to me is becoming and being the New Humanity and living in the New World. Both of these are not some future manifestations after Baba breaks His silence in my humble opinion. It's Us, who can choose to align our consciousness with Baba's Discourses and other directives and live them out into the world, thus changing it. We have voices that when our Hearts are aligned speak Baba's words. He is not silent. He speaks through our hearts every day. Why is everyone waiting for Baba to break his silence? I am reminded of an old Jewish saying: "If not now, when?"

We really are the ones we've been waiting for. Baba has our generation here. We've all experienced things no other generations of people had the opportunity to. We have seen this world unfold at lightening speed in our lifetimes. We know the history and can see what has become the world right now. We have been given the key by Baba. I know now, that it's my choice and I can turn that key, because I am here alive with the consciousness of a human being.

So that's where I'm at. It's time. It's time to let go of all the forms and traditions that are binding the freedom of the great unfolding taking place. Baba said many times, "I am not this body." That to me says that ultimately I cannot be attached even to His human form, because it was ephemeral and will take another shape in the future.

My focus now is only on the Love and Unity ... where brotherliness or fellow-feeling is the link that exists. Baba will do the rest. Like I said above somewhere, it's now about: good thoughts, words and deeds, paying attention and responding. I'm making a lot of chicken soup for people.

He will show each of us what to do and say and become. It's time for each of us as individuals to do the work of clearing our hearts of pasts hurts and resentments and clean it up. Each person has an opportunity to come to a place of forgiveness which is pure love restored outside of time and place, and recalibrate one's heart. We know our stories and interactions are merely our sanskaras and karma playing themselves out in illusion ... and we are all going home. So, I strive to keep that in mind. I then can be fully available to

Baba for his great work. (He may not need me, but He does seem to use me anyway).

So that's the news from a "New Waver." Thanks for being your beautiful God-seeking selves in this world with me. Carry on everyone and ... Jai Baba!

LW: Now that you live near Meherana, a great spiritual center dedicated to Meher Baba, you must be experiencing all kinds of lessons that come with community. What more can you share that you feel we could benefit from in your experience?

MA: I am blessed with a wonderful bunch of Baba folks here in Mariposa, most of them with Him for decades, who have given me wonderful insights and perspectives. I find this community to be a microcosm of the world in way, each of us different, bringing a wide variety of personalities, expertise and challenges into the mix. We are actively learning together by shared experience, to be harmonious and loving with each other while also continuing to create Meherana together.

What are some of the lessons I am learning that come with community? I am finding that being myself is the important thing, and what Baba made this creation to be. I thought at first that I had to let go of some of the pieces of myself that did not seem to fit into being a Baba Lover. And actually I did for a few years, until I found validation for those pieces of myself in Baba's words, and gradually Baba brought those things back in to my life again. I'm much more clear now that instead of having missed the connections with the Mandali and long periods of time living in India etc. that being a New Wave person and thus my self and bringing my life's experiences in to this Baba world, is part of the greater unfolding of Baba's advent. I feel like if Baba is the fresh oatmeal, then I am a bowl of that oatmeal. Not having the history most of you do with the Baba community from the beginning, I get to live my life with Baba directly without so much influence from others. It's pretty great and I don't miss what I missed. It's all okay and actually good and has its purpose.

LW: What do you mean by the phrase, "Being a New Wave person" exactly? What is the New Wave that you speak of?

MA: I read a book early on called Meher Baba's Next Wave – ordinary people's encounters with God, edited by Carolyn M. Ball. I use the term New Wave in reference to being a person in a new era of Baba Lover, which will have a different reference point.

LW: Thank you so much for sharing with us Melinda!

MA: Jai Baba and Love.

Melinda can be reached directly at: [bheart-melinda@sti.net](mailto:bheart-melinda@sti.net)

Notes:

1. Manonash is a term used by Meher Baba to mean the annihilation of the limited (false) mind. See Manonash discourse by Baba in this issue.
2. For more about The Farm see: [www.thefarm.org](http://www.thefarm.org)
3. Discourses by Meher Baba, available from Sheriar Books here: <http://tinyurl.com/qfg4vqm>
4. For more about the Om Point, see Discourses by Meher Baba, Vol. II, p. 98, "The Place of Occultism in the Spiritual Life." here: <http://tinyurl.com/lmrw2ap>



# Love Poem to the Avatar

by Josh Dreyfuss

Don't think I don't recognize what you've done to me, Baba.  
Why do you think I've been driven to write this?  
I want a love poem  
to capture this feeling,  
to share the possibility  
of a whole-hearted "I love you."

But what words can I use  
to express the weight of your presence?  
The surge that passes through my head in the Samadhi?  
Maybe this would be easier  
if you didn't constantly remind me  
how primitive a form of communication  
language is.

But I'm a poet.  
Certainly I can find some way to share my love.  
Don't think I'm above leaning  
on the thieves and moonlight  
of Hafiz.

You have made me  
electric with tenderness,  
expanded to my limits,  
my breath clouding a vulnerable sky,  
heart adrift on your ocean  
like so many messages in a bottle.  
Cast  
away.

And I have made the fatal mistake  
of trying to write,  
forgetting,  
my love,  
how silencing you are.

I struggle to write  
through the flimsy barrier of this earth  
while the whole time  
I've been so fully yours  
long before I was even aware of your gaze.

How foolish I must look  
trying to project eloquence  
to the wrinkles of your lake  
while you stand there with open arms,  
saying so much more  
than I ever could.

You are my love poem, Meher,  
and I?  
I am just  
wasting paper.





Every once in a while  
The sky tears n' tears  
Up  
Scattering that which cannot  
be contained.  
And when I walk through the blue  
I wonder:  
Why does the lightning  
Not strike me?  
NOW  
For if it were seeking for a better place  
Than the top of my head  
It would not find it.  
I am  
A conduit for your love.  
Let me  
Shake your ground and light up your  
world.  
Come here.  
Make the journey  
Up that mountain  
And meet me with  
Water in your eyes.  
Washing everything  
seen and been clean  
ANEW  
Let me hold your hand for you.  
Let me hold you in my heart  
While the lightning  
Considers selecting its new home.

When I am the Seer  
Of your radiant  
Love,  
I blink  
To remind me  
That you are the wild sparkled darkness I  
desired.  
The atom and star,  
spaces in between,  
Both breath and buddhi: intellect.  
The Highest Form.  
Beyond the blink.  
I will meet you there;  
It is your call that wakes me wide  
Eyed and breathless.

Three Poems to my New Lover  
A Muse for me to see the Divine  
By **Jan Michael Meade**  
Flagstaff, Arizona  
August 2013

My heart is wandering  
This world and I  
Cannot stop it.  
A kite cut loose upon the sighing wind.

"Forget the past, and make the most of the present. Keep your own hearts clean. Learn to love each other first before you tell others about my love for one and all."

~ Meher Baba (1955 Meherabad, India)

### Doors

I know you want to walk with me today.  
I love it Baba, you are always  
gentle, direct and heart felt.  
my heart full.  
come on, Baba, Let's go up to the  
edge of sun and sky.  
let's walk gently hand in hand, let's open the door  
together to a new way, a new day, your way  
over the threshold we go  
you are my guide  
my heart is happy  
as we go forward together.

thanks, dear  
Baba.

Anne Weichberger

**0011**

**In the darkness**

**I can hear you breathe**

**You whisper something**

**Then into sleep**

**The moonlight bathes the room**

**I whisper those things you will never hear**

**Like the shadows that move across the floor**

**Daylight comes**

**And you read those words**

**That run so deep**

**I close my eyes so I can see**

Katherine Iseley



Since Your greatest act of forgiveness  
is not seeing our faults

Then forgive our hearts  
for their greatest worth  
is little in value!

Hafiz

Translated by Mehernoush McPherson (Feb 14, 2014)

ALWAYS

Baba waits in the shadows

Takes my hand  
stays with me

Through this labyrinth  
of love  
and life  
and fear  
and death

It is all one, he tells me  
We are all one

Do not fear  
I am with you

Always

Sarah Weichberger  
Flagstaff Arizona (December 2013)

**Your Being  
Present  
in the moment  
is the "I Am"  
of the Now.  
Eternity is here.  
Time collapses  
And the world trembles  
Like a mirage.**

Sarah McNeill  
September 2013  
England

Prayer as shared by Shonto Begay on Facebook  
Flagstaff, Arizona ~ October 11, 2013

At the Break of each dawning, we walk out toward the eastern direction and place our offerings of Corn Pollen, Precious Stones, Tobacco , Coins or Cornmeal. This gifting to the base of a young Pine Tree (grandmother) with our sacrament in hand, we speak gently and humbly as we petition the Mother, the Earth, the Father, the Sky, the all encompassing grand master, the Sun.

The recognition of the spirits sets the stage for our blessings. We ask for assistance in our struggles, we extend gratitude , we especially place our kinship with all the beings that call the Earth, "Mother". All the elements and the light in which we walk. Four times we extend the arm gathering the new light of a new day as we breathe in that light. We sprinkle our offerings tracing the path of the sun's journey. Clockwise we turn in our closing. Thoughts cleared of all negativity and be truly in bliss with the Blessings. Acknowledge the sacred peaks of the West and cast the prayers upon her breeze. Always.

Move so close  
that you feel  
Me sitting beside you  
at all times

Let there be  
no space  
between us

(I am the pillar of fire  
that guided Moses in the desert)

Imagine Me sitting beside you  
our shoulders touching  
breathing in unison  
the warmth of our hips

You can rest your head  
upon My shoulder  
I will let you know  
when the next stop comes

Poem by Marla Faith  
September 2013  
Nashville, TN







## I am the Canopy That Embraces All

Open your winged heart, My friend  
unbutton the cape of righteousness  
let it fall without a sound  
Cleanse your furrowed brow  
Tell Me, where do you think I dwell?  
Ever fluid, the connecting link between all beings  
You can't catch Me with a butterfly net  
nor put Me in a glass jar  
Every time a foot touches the earth  
I am there  
My presence is so big that  
you are not even aware of it  
like the fish in the ocean  
I am the canopy that embraces all

# A Blood Drenched Song

(from Wilberforce Clarke - 421)

If I cared about the insults of those who speak against me  
I would not follow this path of sin and debauchery  
This discipline of drunkenness is hopeless for me  
I've become infamous, and there is no remedy

O breeze won't you sing this song to my friend  
this blood drenched song to my friend

he has cut open my heart with just one slash  
of his beautiful black eyelash

don't let my blood spill on you  
or you will be infected with this madness too

O breeze won't you sing this song to my friend  
this blood drenched song to my friend

Beloved, please believe me, and for God's sake pass it on  
so all will know I wear the garment of a non-holy one  
upon your forehead paint a beauty mark with my hearts blood  
to show that my only religion is my Beloved One

O breeze won't you sing this song to my friend  
this blood drenched song to my friend...

They call me foolish, the king of tormented mad men  
but my foolishness has lifted me far higher than them  
am I a sinner or a saint, which one shall it be?  
Hafiz holds the secret of his own mystery

O breeze won't you sing this song to my friend  
this blood drenched song to my friend...

## Meher Baba's Discourse on Manonash

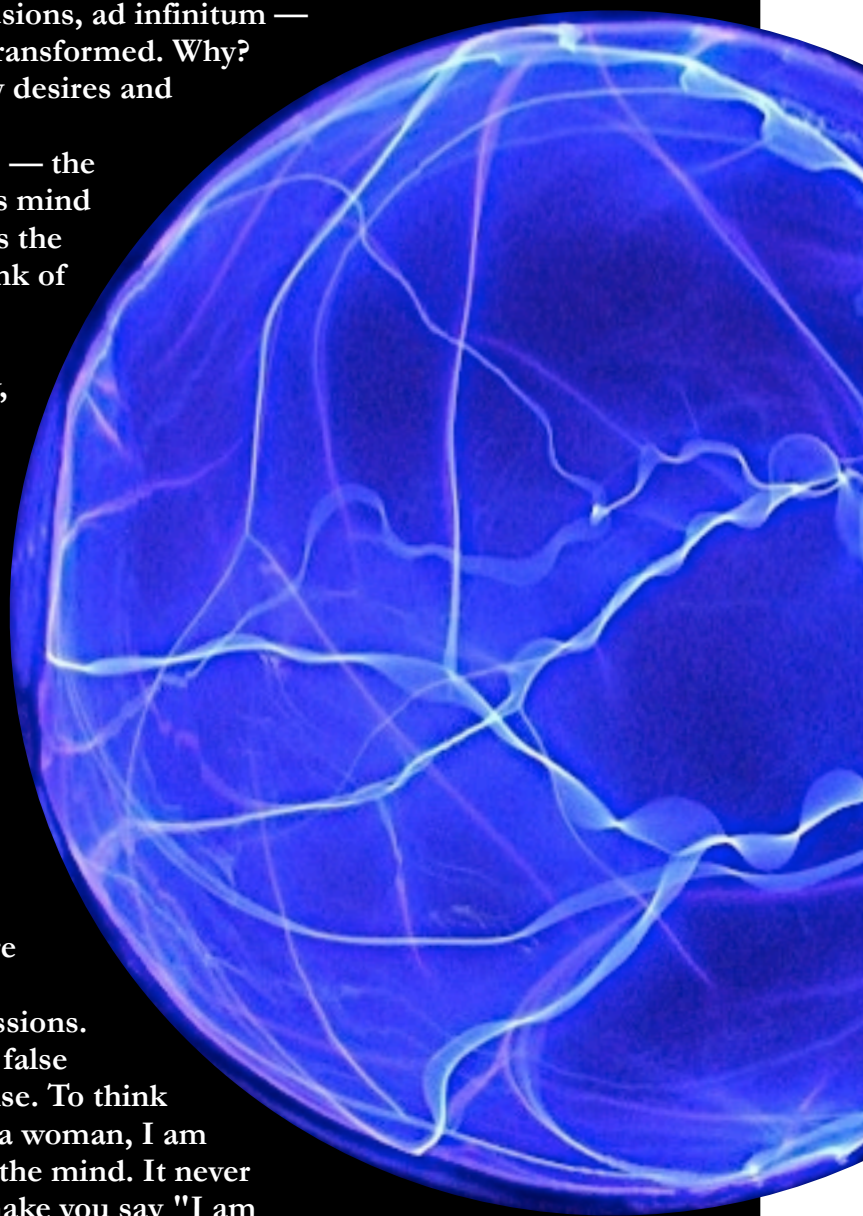
from Lord Meher, by V.S. Kalchuri, p. 2992-2994

<http://tinyurl.com/lcmr7kf>

Mind is never transformed. Ego is transformed once only. (By Ego is meant *Astitva*, meaning the Real I.) The transformation should clearly be understood. Today you feel that you are a man. Tomorrow you die and then your mental impressions give you the feeling that you are a woman. All this is false. Mind's attitude is changed according to circumstances, but mind remains mind, whether it is lifted up or goes down. Mind can be happy, and it can be miserable. It is the attitude of the mind which thus changes. Mind creates worlds, delusions, illusions, *ad infinitum* — but mind remains as mind. Mind cannot be transformed. Why? Because it is not One itself. Mind survives by desires and thoughts, and it is made up of impressions.

Ego is One in itself, but this Real Ego — the Real I — is now bound by the mind. And this mind which is made up of false impressions makes the Real I think itself false. Mind makes you think of birth, death, happiness, misery, *et cetera*, as real things, but nothing can be more false than this. You are now here, alive in the body, in your senses, and why? Because you always were. Have you any impression of how you were born and how your birth took place? No. Because you were not born at all! Mind gives you this impression that you are here, there, and so forth. It is the mind which gives you the impression according to which you say: "She is my wife," or "He is my husband," and so forth. Mind always keeps [you hopping] at a tap dance! If you knew that your wife, children, *et cetera*, are One, and if you knew that you never die, never suffer, you are then All in all. But the mind is there to baffle you! Mind says: "Beware, she is your wife; they are your children; these are your things," *ad infinitum*. Mind creates such types of impressions.

Therefore mind, which is made up of false impressions, makes the Real I think itself false. To think I am the body, I am young, old, I am a man, a woman, I am this or that — are all impressions created by the mind. It never makes itself feel "I am God." Mind might make you say "I am God," but it cannot make you feel "I am God." So long as mind is there, ego cannot be transformed from its false attitude to its real state. Mind thus also makes you say that you are infinite, all-powerful, and so forth, but you do not feel it. Why? Because mind, which is made up of false impressions, makes you feel the I as small, limited I. Now what has happened? If the false ego is to have its real, original state, the mind must go. As long as the mind is there, although its outlook is changed, the real "I-Am-God" state cannot be experienced. In sound





sleep, mind has temporarily gone. Ego is there, and the impressions again make the mind wake up, and mind again makes the ego feel false. And so, in innumerable lives and forms, the ego is there.

The mind is there, but the mind's impressions change and so, accordingly, body changes — and also accordingly, experience changes. Therefore, for the false I to become Real I, mind must go. The real goal of life is not death of the ego, but of the mind! Therefore when

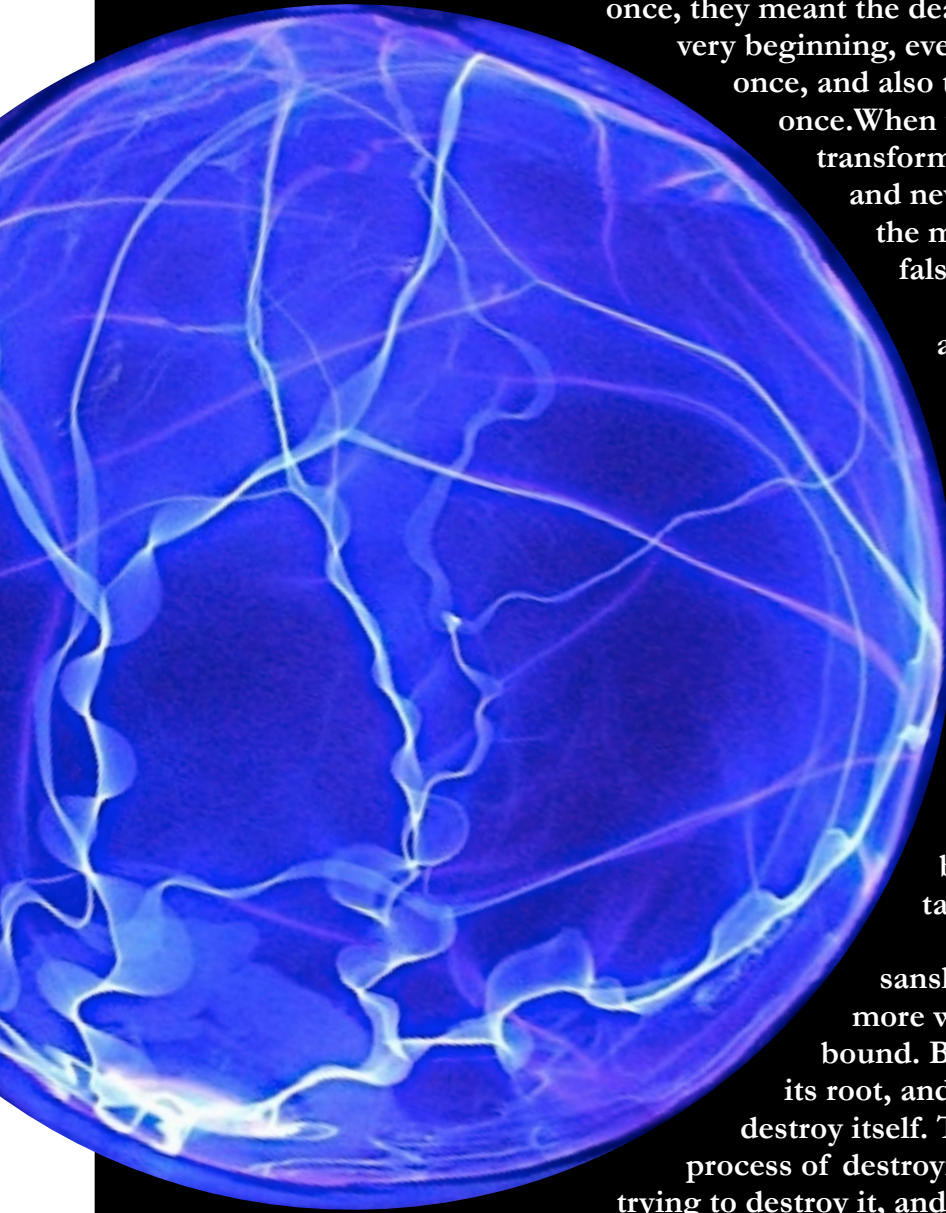
Muhammad or Zoroaster or Jesus talked of being born once or dying once, they meant the death of the mind. Mind is born from the very beginning, even before the stone state. This birth is once, and also the death of the mind takes place only once. When the mind dies, the false ego is transformed into Reality. Real Ego is never born and never dies. Ego is always real but due to the mind, it feels and acts as limited and false I.

Now mind goes on taking bodies according to its good and bad impressions. This taking and leaving the body is not the death either of the mind or the ego. After physical death the mind remains with its impressions. It is the impressions which make the mind take bodies, in order that the impressions might be wiped out. Consequently, the mind takes bodies according to the impressions, and the ego witnesses this. When one body is [discarded], another comes up [and forms], though there is a certain amount of time lag between the giving up of one body and taking up another.

This jadu [magical spell] of sanskaras has bound us so tight that the more we try to come out, the more we get bound. Because mind has to be destroyed from its root, and who is to destroy it? Mind has to destroy itself. That is an impossible task. The very process of destroying itself creates impressions of thus trying to destroy it, and so one gets more bound. As Hafiz has

said: You yourself are the veil, O Hafiz! And so remove thyself! Now, how to remove your self? The very process of removing creates fresh sanskaras. Thousands have thought of destroying the mind — the main [methods] being those of action, meditation, knowledge and LOVE. These ways have been chalked out by the Perfect Masters for the purpose of destroying the mind while retaining the consciousness...

<< Continued in Lord Meher >>



# Three SNAPSHOTS OF REALITY

## Three Snapshots of Reality Reviewed by Steve Esley, Oregon (January 2014)

Three Snapshots of Reality, by Don E Stevens with Wayne Smith, published by Companion Books, London (2014). Softcover. ISBN: 978-0-9565530-0-3.

Available for \$15, or 10 GBP, or 12 Euros, from Amazon.com, Barnes & Noble (barnesandnoble.com), and other fine bookstores as well as Meher Baba centers including but not limited to:

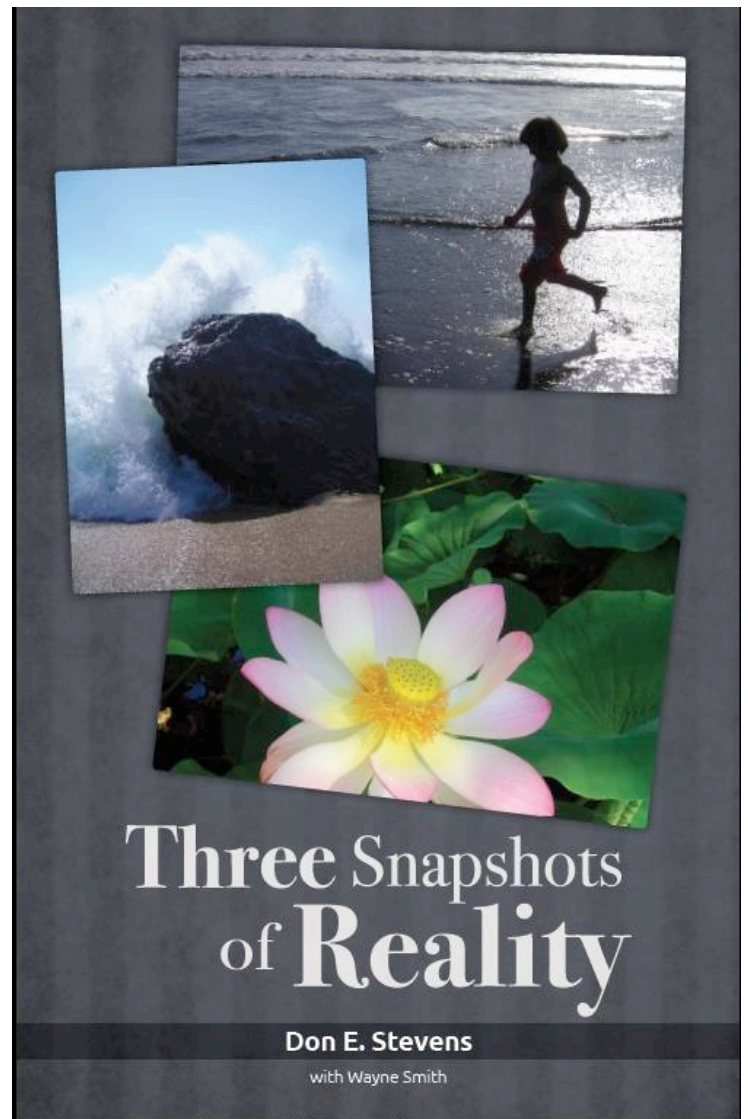
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Don Stevens, author of Three Snapshots of Reality, was a follower of Meher Baba. Baba is best known for saying "Don't worry, be happy." Baba also said the path of love is the high road of all paths to realization and oneness with God. Information on Baba is available on the web. For example, the video Meher Baba's Call is at: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5m2p-ZpAt5s>. A recent blog by a friend of Don's titled The Epic Life of Meher Baba is at: <http://tinyurl.com/ml2gogn>

Don Stevens learned of Baba in the mid-1940s, met Him in 1952, and followed Baba the rest of his life. He helped edit Baba's books God Speaks and Discourses (6th ed.). He wrote/edited several books including Listen, Humanity, which described his time with Baba in India in 1955, and Tales From The New Life With Meher Baba. All 4 books are available at: <http://www.ambppct.org/library.php>. Discourses and Listen, Humanity are also available on line as audio books at: <http://tinyurl.com/lw8zdn9>. Videos of Don are on line, including a recent one at: <http://tinyurl.com/n5gtefm>. Other audio recordings of Don are at: <http://tinyurl.com/ka9lcwk>

Three Snapshots of Reality is a transcript of Don Stevens' last recorded sessions intended for publication. The recordings were done from December 2009 to September



2010. Don fell a month later and never fully recovered. The "Snapshots" are visions Don had shortly before the first recording, which he describes in detail for about the first half of the text. His recall of the visions includes words like staggering, boggling, overwhelming. The visions were landscapes and sanskaras. Don felt there was a link to Baba setting up Avatatic power points in India that were in the Beads pilgrimage itinerary. These pages have the flavor of hearing Don in person.



Following the Snapshots are discussions centered around topics chosen by Don, beginning with Honesty, and ending with Bhau Kalchuri. For those who might not read all of this review, that final section ends with a sweet image of when Don last saw Bhau when he was meditating, and Baba's love for Bhau was coming "in great gulps."

The section titled Manifestation is important. Don asserts that Baba manifested in the 50s, or at least before Don began editing the Discourses (6th Ed.). Don begins with how he helped Ivy Duce with the influx of hippies interested in Sufism. Don told them about Baba and found they were interested in the Discourses. In a meeting with Baba, He suggested that they needed editing and asked Don to do it. Don asked Baba about the Discourses on meditation and why Baba hadn't encouraged Don to meditate. Baba told Don: "...the High Road of all paths is that of Love. But the path of love is not always open. When I manifest it is open, and it is fully open. And because it is now fully open...." Don offers his thoughts on why the manifestation probably happened in the 50's, and how it affected all of creation, including Don's pet dog and bird.

Don was/is at his best when he was relating details of his many meetings with Baba. The section on Meher Baba and Finances is a good example. At the 1955 Sahavas, Baba created a clever strategy to convince Pendu to allow some gate crashers to stay. Don's balance of head and heart help me feel what was going on behind the scenes.

The Body and Diet is another short sweet story of Baba telling a young man not to be careless with his body in pursuit of progress on the path. (This story also probably helped Don with his own preference for lamb chops.)

Much of the text gives insight in to Don's thought processes. The section titled Honesty is a good example. Don relates Baba's order of absolute honesty. Don's efforts to be honest in all things required him to remember Baba in the midst of his oil industry work, where absolute honesty was perhaps not so highly prized.

The book has a short biography of Don. In the late 60s Don came to an impasse with Sufism Reoriented, and wrote a lengthy letter to Baba about his struggles. The bio later mentions that some of what Don shared was highly` controversial. The text section titled Ivy O. Duce and Sufism Reoriented may for some contain one of those controversial items. But, I will leave details to Don's telling.

The short biography mentions in passing another controversial item, Don's boyfriend Claude. The short bio says there will be a full biography. Hopefully we will see the letter about Don's struggles with Sufism and learn more about his personal life.

