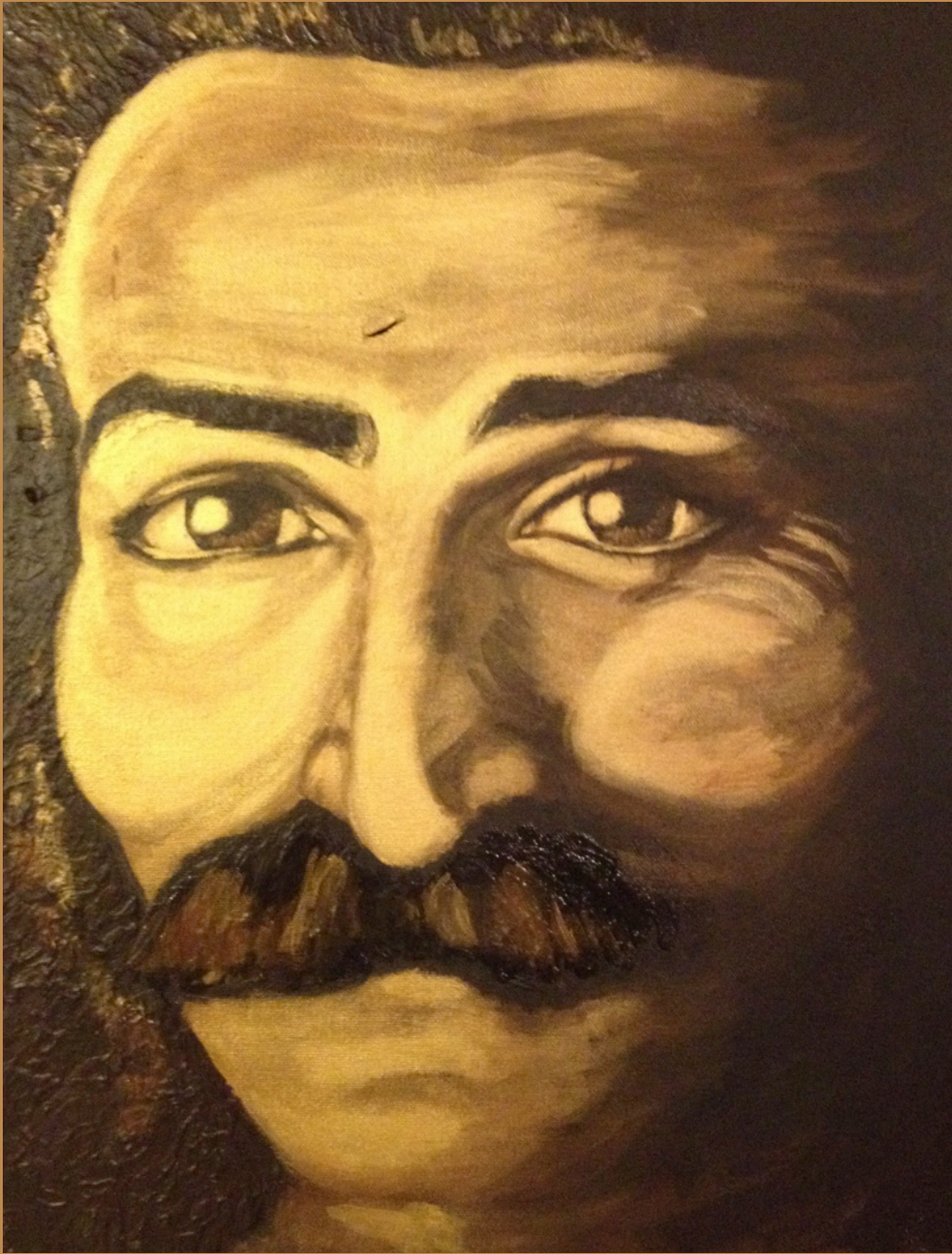


OMॐPOINT

INTERNATIONAL CIRCULAR • ISSUE 16 • SUMMER 2015





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Jeff Wolverton told me that Eruch Jessawala said:

**"Live such a life on the stage of this world
— to such an extent —
so that when you depart
Baba gives you a standing ovation."**

~ Laurent

Rumi & Vanessa
Myrtle Beach, SC
April. 18, 2015

Rumi wrote:

**"Be a lamp, or a lifeboat, or a ladder. Help someone's
soul heal. Walk out of your house like a shepherd."**

Vanessa interprets: "The lamp is like the mind, the life boat is like our heart, the ladder is like our body. Step outside of yourself, serve your fellow man like a guide of love and light."

MORE MEHER BABA STORIES

BY REBECCA HAZLEWOOD

From Don Stevens' March 2002 review of the article, "Thirty Years with Meher Baba," by Rebecca Hazlewood (In Glow magazine, February 2002):

"I received The Glow with Becky's wonderful recounting of her early years with Baba. Frankly, I think it is one of the best articles... of this class of writing... I have ever read, with a truly extraordinary balance between the simple and highly personal and a wonderfully keen insight which never becomes ponderous."

Part I: 1952

In April 1952 Meher Baba made His first visit to the Meher Spiritual Center in Myrtle Beach, South Carolina. The Center had been in the process of being gotten ready to open and Beloved Baba was going to preside over the dedication celebration. Now all had been made right for the Avatar of the Age to dedicate his new home in the West. Elizabeth Patterson, Norina Matchabelli and others had been preparing the center since 1941 when the property was located as suitable meeting all of Baba's requirements.

After a month of activities at the Center, Baba made plans to travel by car to Meher Mount in Ojai California. The night before they left Baba had asked Elizabeth Patterson to get her insurance papers, "Where are they?" Baba asked. Elizabeth said, "At Youpon Dunes." Go get them and keep them with you." They left for the cross country road trip on May 21, 1952. Elizabeth was the driver of the lead car with Baba beside her and Mehera, Mani, and Mehru in the back seat. Twenty years before at Harmon-on-Hudson He had handed Elizabeth a pink wildflower and asked her to remember the day, May 24th, 1932. She pressed the flower in her Bible and found it after the events of May 24th, 1952. The second car driven by Sarosh

Irani carried Kitty Davy, Dr. Goher, Rano Gayley and Delia deLeon.[1]

On a highway outside Prague, Oklahoma, the car carrying Baba and his party flipped and crashed while traveling at high speed. No one was hurt in the second car, but they were aghast when they caught up with Elizabeth's car and the accident scene and found Baba and Mehera thrown from the car; Elizabeth had been crushed against the steering wheel and had two broken arms and broken ribs. Sarosh had disobeyed his Beloved Baba; Baba had told him to keep up with the first car. He had not done so and he was sobbing inconsolably. The other passengers in the second car were grief struck that they had not shared in Baba's suffering.[2]

Meher Baba and the other accident victims spent 13 days in the hospital at Prague, Oklahoma, the nearest town to the accident site. Then they traveled by ambulance back to Youpon Dunes, Elizabeth's home in Myrtle Beach, where they spent additional time recovering. While there Baba worked on the Sufi Charter and renamed the group Sufism Reoriented. Baba & the women – Mehera, Mani, Dr. Goher and Meheru and others were accompanying Him back to New York and some more meetings with new and old lovers. They left America in July, 1952 not yet fully recovered, and went to Switzerland for additional treatment for Baba and Mehera.

From the years 1967 until 1970 the world was a magical place in which the Avatar returned to our planet to help us.

Our young family left post war Europe in 1952 and landed in New York on May 29, 1952. My father had gone over as a press officer for The US Forces in Austria, my mother went over to teach illiterate soldiers. They met in 1947 and married and had three daughters in rapid succession. Priscilla was 2 years old; Victoria at 1 year old; and I was 3 years old when we came over. We disembarked from the troop ship we had taken from Europe to New York and picked up our car. According to Austrian poet, Traudi Portisch, a family friend, my parents had been among the few in post war Vienna to have a car. During June 1952 we gradually made our way to Chicago in that car to visit with my father's family and then onto San Francisco to visit my mother's family. California was to become our home.

Part II: Meher Baba & Mrs. Miller

Eruch Jessawala in a talk in 1979 titled, "The Lover & the Beloved" started out by saying, "But how to remember Him?"[3]

Eruch related what Baba said about the topic, "Now you have seen Me, you can remember Me. If you have not seen Me then have a picture of Me, visualize something about Me, have a photo, a card or picture on your wall, in your living room, even in your bathroom," Baba says, they will remind Me (Baba) to remember you...Then when your whole place is covered with pictures, when your whole body is covered with buttons!-they remind you to remember Me. Even your clock is set to remember Me. Twelve noon – yes, oh Baba, Baba! It's time now to remember You! All these help.

The hippie generation leant itself, for those who were interested, in finding a guru. I had entered into such a search also. It started with a picture

of Baba taken early in His Divine mission. It was November, 1966. A really stoned out hippie showed me this picture and said, "He's God man." I accepted what the hippie said and began to collect Baba cards, photos, buttons, posters, pamphlets, books, God Speaks. I had heard that special blessings were available to those who read God Speaks while Baba was in the body. I was happy to do that and did so over the winter & spring of 1968.

During that winter I took a job light housekeeping after school with weekends and evenings free in exchange for room, board and \$35 a month. It was near Sacramento City College which I was attending. The house was a lovely older home in upscale Land Park. I could ride my bike to school and had a nice bedroom painted sunny yellow. In the evening, after I was done doing the dishes, I would go up to my room to read God Speaks. I enjoyed the spiritual discipline of reading a little each night although my understanding was limited it was part of the discipline of obedience to the Master.

I was going back & forth to Berkeley and San Francisco to attend Meher Baba activities, meetings and Sufi classes on Baba. I had been put on the list to receive Mani S. Irani's Family Letters in 1967. In January 25, 1968 Mani sent out the 76th Family Letter.[4] It included a circular that Baba dictated and had sent out by both Mani and Adi. Mani was responsible for sending the Family Letters and all circulars dictated by Baba to the West. Adi was responsible for sending out all information to the Easterners.

"Just before this letter was posted," Mani wrote, "Beloved Baba directed a circular to be issued ...and given here by me for the ...Westerners..."from the 76th Family Letter dated 25th January 1968 (page 308):

"Avatar Meher Baba wishes all His lovers to know that His Seclusion which was to continue until 25th of February, 1968 will continue until the 25th of March, 1968 ... when He will complete His seclusion...to help Him in this work, Baba wants all His lovers to recite once daily the Master's Prayer ... and the Prayer of Repentance ... from the time they receive this circular until the 25th of March, 1968...and also to observe complete silence for 24 hours from midnight 16th of March, 1968 to midnight 17th March, 1968...

The Circular of 1st March 1968, carried more instructions from Beloved Baba. "I want all my lovers to know that my Seclusion will not end on 25th March 1968. My Seclusion which was to end on 25th March 1968 will therefore have to continue until the 21st of May 1968 ... to help me in this work I want all my lovers to continue to recite once daily the Master's Prayer and the Prayer of Repentance. The 77th Family Letter dated 12th May 1968:

"I repeat something great will happen that has never happened before ...

"I also repeat that the fate of the universe hangs on my Seclusion and the redemption of mankind depends upon my Manifestation."To help me in this work, I want all my lovers to continue to recite once daily the Master's Prayer and the Prayer of Repentance...until the 21st of May 1968; and also to observe complete silence for twenty-four hours on Sunday the 19th of May ... consequently, the silence on Sunday the 17th March should not be observed."

Baba was stressing to His lovers, to continue to keep in mind that he wished to remain completely undisturbed including no letters until 21st May, 1968. In May I was initiated into Sufism Reoriented along with some of my Sacramento Baba friends who had made the weekly ride from Sacramento to San Francisco to Sufi class. Baba made His instructions very clear for those who read them in Mani's Family Letters, I wanted to obey them. It was a gift to us, though many had not met Him, to participate in His work. Baba indicated that He wanted us to help Him with His Seclusion. He said in the Family Letter of 12th May 1968, "Obedience is a gift from Master to man." Francis Brabazon wrote to one of the new lovers about coping with the separation. "...The only way out of our plight is to become perfect in waiting...let us become perfect in waiting until our Beloved has the Whim to end our separation..."

Reading the Family Letters when I was a new student at college, obedience was on a lot of people's minds those who had spent time with Meher Baba and those who had not met him, but were trying to practice obedience. In the 77th Family Letter dated 12th May 1968, Baba continued, "... the fortunate ones who know me now, before I manifest universally. Baba and the Mandali loved hearing reports about all the activities going on around the world and never more dedicated than those so close to him physically, the Easterners. These activities were also speeding up in the West. But Mani was even a little worried in 1968 about the many categories of gurus in India and wrote "...Like the shells swept ashore when the Tide comes in, at Avatavic times they appear , in profusion. A few among them are genuine..."

Part III: Learning to Obey

It wasn't that difficult, I thought, to carry out my new spiritually dedicated life to Meher Baba. Baba had so much love radiating from Him. He had so much to offer me. I was drawn without not from the mind but from the heart so it seemed like I could just soak it up. These first steps must have been baby steps in obedience as I was not questioning but doing and also at the same time doing the job for Mrs. Miller, which was going to begin my path of Mastery in Servitude. I had not done the basics for Silence Day – arranging with those I lived with that I would be silent on

May 19th. My room was upstairs and I wondered if I could be overheard saying the prayers each night. Small problems like that. There was no point in getting bogged down. I anticipated that following Meher Baba would be a lifetime's work.

Mrs. Miller asked me if I would help out one evening as she was having some relatives over. Normally I had the evenings off but I reluctantly agreed. When the day came, a Friday, I had finished my tasks when Mrs. Miller asked me if I would take her 16 year old granddaughter to see Planet of the Apes which had just come out. Apparently this girl had been giving back talk to her parents -typical teenage stuff. I reluctantly agreed. This was true service as I was acting as a downstairs maid having cooked, served and cleaned up. After dinner the granddaughter cornered me and said, "How can you stand to work for my grandparents?" I mumbled something. These housekeeping positions were not models for unquestioning obedience, but they were a good start. The granddaughter and I went downtown on the bus and she was trying to talk to me. I did a lot of mumbling. Learning how to handle life's situations was tested. I didn't understand myself enough to make sense of what was going on, but I just kept doing it.

May 19, 1968, Silence Day I made plans to spend it with some of my Baba friends in Sacramento. I was trying to get out of the house without being observed, which I thought was the solution to not breaking my silence, when Mrs. Miller appeared and asked me some questions. I gave her a wide-eyed stare and determined to exit flew out the door even though she was standing right next to me. Later she told me that I had left the front door wide open. I got through the Silence Days, the daily recitation of Beloved Baba's prayers and faithfully attended Baba meetings in Sacramento, Berkeley and San Francisco.

The daily prayers continued and when school was over for that year I made plans to move to Berkeley. I left Mrs. Miller's employment with a very good reference. As a grandmother from another generation she had old fashioned ideas and manners going back to the thirties even earlier probably. But she was a good step in the right direction for me.

In Berkeley I managed to find a cottage two doors down from my sister Priscilla and her family. We would get together most days and sometimes we would say the prayers together.

Baba said (77th Family Letter, p. 316): "The whole world will come to know who I am when I break my Silence." Baba has also said that "The fortunate ones are they who know me now, before I manifest universally ..."

Part IV: The Honeymoon

My cottage in Berkeley was very homey and a gift after knocking around for a year. I started doing a lot of Berkeley things: acting like an earth mother, baking bread, eating macrobiotics, decorating the place with all sorts of Baba Memorabilia; buying cheap goods at second hand stores and Pier 1 Imports. I did feel very fortunate to have found Baba. And I learned through study of Baba's works that He, in fact, had found me. One thing about studying Meher Baba, is that in one lesson I could expect this and in another lesson I would get the opposite or so it seemed to me. Later I came to understand that this was part of the process of shaking up impressions. There were no hard and fast answers it was a

Poem by Marla Faith

Birthday

Tomorrow is the birthday
of Avatar Meher Baba
Hard to conceive of my life
without His
What path of salvation
I might have taken
Grateful He came
during my lifetime
handed me a flower petal
let me be a piece of
the fragrance
in the giant chrysanthemum
surrounding Him
Who would have shaped
my desires without Him?
Who would have helped me
to unclothe everything
that was not me?
My very own conscience
and lover all in one
Who but You dear Baba
could marry me to my own self
and dance with me never
ending?
Happy birthday to us both
You are the one
who keeps giving the gifts

matter of what I needed. And as a former Catholic I was used to being told things that I did not understand. I never held it against Baba that my understanding was limited.

We were still under orders to say the prayers every night. One evening my sister Priscilla came over and we decided to say the prayers together. We stood up in front of a picture of Baba and started in and suddenly we both started laughing. We got ourselves under control and then started up again but broke down laughing once again. After this happened several times we made a decision to facilitate saying the prayers and it did work out, but I had been getting concerned about being able to say the prayers and felt relieved once we got them out.

This period was a honeymoon for me in the heart of Meher Baba, better than a honeymoon. From the years 1967 until 1970 the world was a magical place in which the Avatar returned to our planet to help us.

Part V: Holding on to Baba's Daaman

I don't know how many times I had heard that leaving Sufism was equivalent to dropping Baba's daaman. This hurt me as I began to understand the message here, I was in Sufism for life no matter how much like the Catholic Church it seemed. But more importantly I did not want to drop the daaman. These thoughts started arriving after we got back from Darshan and settled into our lives. It was like an millstone around my neck. One thing after the other was getting to me. It started with not wanting to attend Sufi Class as much. The topics of the Friday meeting were of little interest to me; then I did not want to read the Gathas at the weekly meeting with the preceptor. In 1910 Hazrat Inayat Khan (1882-1927) had been instructed by his Murshid to carry Sufism to the west. He had prepared the Gathas and Githas for his many Sufi groups around the world and Sufism Reoriented was still making them the basis of a weekly lesson. I found them to be very old fashioned and not nearly as dynamic as Meher Baba's teachings. The Universal Sufism practices and activities were oriented to a different generation who had taken tea with Murshida Rabia Martin and before that Hazrat Inayat Khan. There was a kind of early 20th century gentility carried on by those who had been Sufis during this sedate and polite time. And Murshida Duce was cut from that cloth.

Don Stevens moved to London and had formed his young people's group. To my way of thinking he was part of the newer generation absolutely devoted to the Beloved and with

contemporary ideas. His absence was a big loss to me as Don had been the one who would say, among other things, "You have to separate the Murshida from the little old lady." I felt like the little old lady had taken over. Most of the preceptors seemed rigid and authoritative. I could not talk to them as I thought they would not have any empathy for my conflicts.

At this time I found some ideas that Lud Dimpfl and Aneece Hassen were talking about at Friday night meeting very disturbing. In addition to the implication that was being

bandied about that leaving Sufism was the equivalent to dropping the daaman, another one involved Lud Dimpf and an experience he had at the 1958 Sahavas at Myrtle Beach where he doubted Murshida's instructions when Baba had given him what he thought was a conflicting instruction. It was clear to him from what Murshida said that the misunderstanding was his not Murshida's and the conflict was of his own making, hence Baba and Murshida were always in agreement. I wondered why he would even need to check this; If there was a miscommunication between Baba and Lud talk to Baba about it, I thought. Baba was our Master. Some did not agree and said that Baba was Murshida's Master and she was ours. These attitudes that I was encountering were bothering me more each year and by 1974 I realized that I was going to have to solve this and Baba was not in his physical body to send me an order. Another was a dream Aneece Hassan had. The Sufis were in a train and Murshida was the engineer. Somehow he got the impression from that dream that Baba was Murshida Duce's master and she was our master. How they arrived at that interpretation I do not know.

I was working at a good job having graduated from college. My love for Baba was growing, but I had even heard Baba Lovers, some of whom were not Sufis, confirm that leaving Sufism was the equivalent of dropping Baba's daaman. I began to think strategically because I was not absolutely sure that this wasn't correct.

I had a lack of interest in many topics that were topics presented at Sufi meetings and I did not want to read the Gathas anymore. The Gathas were the lessons the Sufis received on a weekly basis that were written by Hazrat Inayat Khan during his tenure as Murshid of the Universal Sufism Movement. Inayat Khan traveled the world – east and west setting up chapters of his group headquartered in

Switzerland and introducing the members to the Gathas. They seemed irrelevant to what I was trying to accomplish which was to love Beloved Baba more and more; Meher Baba was not even mentioned. More relevant were books by and about Baba or His discourses; having meetings about Meher Baba; studying the discourses and God Speaks. On

... leaving Sufism was (seen as) the equivalent of dropping Baba's daaman.

Don Stevens said, "You have to separate the Murshida from the little old lady." I felt like the little old lady had taken over.

Friday night class she did show us Baba movies, including the one filmed by Charmian Knowles in 1958 of Baba's trip to Myrtle Beach and San Francisco. It was very well done and beautifully narrated by Charmian, Murshida's daughter. But I wanted another kind of path that involved strictly Meher Baba without the conflict. Instead of tasuwari Murshid I wanted to practice tasuwari Avatar Meher Baba. I knew I would be haunted if I did not do something to put an end to this conflict. I decided to write a letter to Murshida Duce laying out my dilemma. I had been fighting these demons since the beginning of 1970. In the letter to Murshida I wrote that there were certain things I did not want to do anymore and certain things relating to Sufism that I was willing to do. I laid them out as I wanted to give her the option of settling this for me. I did not want to drop Baba's daaman. Murshida called me at work and said "I received your letter. I am going to release you from your vows. Thank you for your honesty." She was kindly and I felt a bittersweet sadness but she and I had accomplished my main wish which was for her to bring me to Meher Baba in India.

"... I am going to release you from your vows. Thank you for your honesty."

Part VI: Meher Center at Myrtle Beach

I had a good job and continued with that. Living in San Francisco as I had been was exciting and allowed me to fulfill some of my desires, especially shoes & clothes shopping. I had a beautiful wardrobe fortunately I have been able to adapt to changing and have dropped this desire at least for now. Besides rereading a lot of my Baba books. Mehera, the model for the ladies always was beautifully dressed in colorful saris and Baba quite often commented how beautiful she was.



I decided that to settle this issue of letting go of Sufism is equivalent to dropping Baba's daaman I would go to the Meher Center at Myrtle Beach and ask the many Baba lovers there who had met Baba over the years were residents and some were former Sufis. When I called to make a reservation I was transferred to Jayne Haynes. She had a lovely voice and took my information. When she had all the information she needed there was a slight silence. "Aren't you going to ask me if I'm a Baba Lover?" "I already know. You are." Her voice was filled with warmth and I felt so welcomed.

At the Center I met Kitty Davey and Elizabeth Patterson. I discussed my conflict with Kitty and asked if there was anyone that I should meet with who understood this problem. She gave me a few names and phone numbers: they were Laura Delavigne initiated into Sufism by Hazrat Inayat Khan a year before he died in 1927 and then she was taught by Murshida Rabia Martin who was selected by Inayat Khan to take over the Sufi School. It seemed like a harmonious transition from The Universal Sufi School and Rabia Martin to Meher Baba as Murshida Martin had accepted Meher Baba as the Qutub-e-Irshad and turned the school over to him. Mrs. Delavigne moved to Briarcliff Acres and transitioned from Murshida Martin to following Meher Baba[5]; the Winterfeldts who had been students of Murshida Duce and left to devote themselves exclusively to Meher Baba; Edith Bradbury, also a Sufi who had met Baba in 1965 and moved to the Meher Center in Myrtle Beach in 1966. Kitty also suggested I drive down to Hampton, Virginia to talk with Henry & Kecha Kashouty. Henry, a lawyer and judge consulted with Meher Baba about the Sufi Charter. Kecha, Henry and I talked together for hours. Having never been a Sufi he had nothing to protect and gave me a candid look at his experience providing legal advice to Baba on the Sufi Charter.

I received a tour of the Center the grounds, beach and ocean. It was beautiful, peaceful and full of Beloved Baba's love. I felt so loved at the Center and spent time in Baba's house meditating. I also went to the beach nearly every morning and looked for shells. Baba went most mornings after breakfast with the women to the beach and looked for shells. I spoke with some residents about this and they said there were many more shells on the beach in the mornings when Baba & the women Mandali took their walk than were on the beach in 1972. But I kept looking and one morning I found one: a large intact shell that looked like it had rolled around in the surf for a time before landing at the Meher Center beach. It had retained its shape. I was thankful that Meher Baba had brought me to this place that was a repository of His love and that I had found the shell. For the first time Baba and His radiant love made me realize I did the right thing in leaving Sufism. Baba does not need bells and whistles to shine. I have had that shell with me

since. It is a prized remembrance. Looking at it I think about Baba and His love.

When I look back upon my days as a Sufi mureed, Sufism and Murshida Duce contributed to my honeymoon with Meher Baba, then I was no longer compatible with the Sufism of that day. Many who had transitioned successfully to Avatar Meher Baba had belonged to a different Sufism.

Part VII: I am not a writer

Mantras[6] are a part of my remembering Meher Baba. The mantra I first encountered was 'Don't Worry Be Happy.' I was told that this left off "Do your best," which Baba emphasized was part of the phrase. Even that fact, of leaving off "Do your best," was a remembrance. It was something Baba lovers talked about. It took a while for it to sink in; we are spiritual aspirants. And of course there was the Bobby McFerrin record that turned Don't Worry Be Happy into a mantra for all. "You and I are not we but one," is a great favorite. There are other beautiful Baba sayings that really tugged at my heart, "I am the Highest of the High," and, "I am the Ancient One, the One who loves you more than you can love yourself." As the years go on more mantras are added to my list of mantras that I meditate on. Sometimes one goes on the back burner while another comes to the forefront for meditation. There are powerful spiritual messages in these mantras given by Avatar Meher Baba.

I had to be dragged kicking and screaming to the door of cheerfulness.

one of His teachable moments and provided another of His helpful mantras. This mantra given by Baba has not been published yet but some people remember it as, "Remember, not liking is the same as liking," and "To not like is also to like," and the one I like is, "Not liking is liking." Fortunately they seem to convey the same message. I use, "Not liking is liking," because it has the least number of words. This mantra helps me to sort out my attachments and put them into spiritual perspective. Another mantra that I really like was one not intended to be a mantra but a special moment I had with Bhau. Bhau was giving an informal talk at the Talbots. He came a number of times in the 90s and I went to hear him speak; we were lined up to greet Bhau individually and when I got to the head of the line I volunteered, "Bhau, I'm a writer too!" Bhau quietly said, "I am not a writer." As I thought about what Bhau said it struck me as a good way to sort out all the labels the ego can find to put a wall between the Beloved and me. It took

some time meditating on this to begin to penetrate into the essence so I could grab hold of Him.

Part VIII: Cheerfulness

"Among the many things which the aspirant needs to cultivate there are few which are as important as cheerfulness, enthusiasm and equipoise and these rendered impossible unless he succeeds in cutting out worry from his life..."[7]

I had to be dragged kicking and screaming to the door of cheerfulness. I felt it was my god given right to be cheerful when I wanted to and worried, crabby and vigilant when I had to. I did not understand cheerfulness as a spiritual discipline even though Baba often talked about it. And then about seven years ago I started encountering some heavy-duty sickness karma. First it was this; then it was that. Nothing made me better. I was put on antibiotics unsuccessfully, and I kept getting worse. This went on for over five years; an episode and experience excruciating pain all sometimes resulting in going to the Emergency Room. After about three years of this an ER doctor had me take a cat scan (not my first) and came back and said I did not have the sickness, the diagnosis of which most of the medical people who worked with me had agreed upon. He said he did not know what I had but I did have something. The ER doctor handed me my bottle of antibiotics, "You can get rid of these." Once I stopped getting treatment for the non illness I still had episodes of the same problem which was growing worse, but I knew they couldn't help me so I just put up with it. In the midst of this it was when I was up against the wall I began to shake off attitudes such as negative thinking; ignoring depression, but still taking my anti-depressants, anxiety and despair to name a few.

First there was a welcome respite from certain irresolvable situations that caused me great anxiety and vigilance. I had not initiated the change but I now found it beneficial. Then there was a change in my attitudes around everyday living. I shrugged off the crabby episodes whether I was crabby or not. I was ignoring a lot of thoughts in my head that previously had rattled around and caused me to have painful insecurities. Then I found myself feeling cheerful more often. I heard His voice directing me to do such and such; smile; be particularly nice; offer my arm to a blind person; open one of those heavy doors for a senior. And I welcomed these gestures, rather than getting grumpy, because my inner voice was on the ascendance. As the empty space in my mind opened up spiritual phrases and remembrances of Baba took its place.

Delia DeLeon wrote in her book, The Ocean of Love: "Meher Baba helps us in so many way not to worry or fear and to develop this right attitude toward life. It sounds so simple yet most of us find it so difficult. "Don't worry," says Baba to someone and usually if that person is receptive he soon begins to realize what a worrier he is, even though it

may have been in the depths of his subconscious self; and the measure of the new inrush of life fills him is the measure of Baba's help.”[8]

Meher Baba provided me a hand up; I was hearing Him and thought what an opportunity this is. I took a different attitude towards the medical problems using them as a teaching tool all the while getting worse and worse; so much so that I couldn't walk; couldn't go up or down stairs. I stopped worrying as much and didn't even get all worked up about the situation I was in. I am grateful to Baba for the relief He can give me from worry and all the gifts He has left us to help and love us especially when my thoughts get to racing. My attitude towards worry has become far less bothersome as I spend less time courting it and I have been able to invite cheerfulness in; which lifts the sour look as Baba was quoted in Delia DeLeon's book, The Ocean of Love. Cheerfulness helps others.

FOOTNOTES

1. Elizabeth Chapin Patterson, by Filis Frederick, The Awakener, Vol. 20, #2, p. 27.
2. Recollections, Part III by Kitty Davy, The Awakener Vol 6, No 4, p. 38.
3. The Lover & The Beloved, transcription by Charlie Morton, The Awakener Magazine, Vol XIX, No.1, pg 24
4. All citations from Family Letters by Mani Irani are from publication, “82 Family letters, all rights reserved Avatar Meher Baba perpetual public Charitable Trust, published by Sheriar Press, Myrtle Beach, SC, 1976.
5. Interview with Laura Delavigne by Kathleen O'Quinn Havens, The Awakener Vol XIXm No. 1 page 32.
6. “A mantra is very beneficial to a neophyte on the spiritual path, particularly when it is given by the guru” From Lord Meher, The Spiritual Path, 1st ed Vol 6 & 7, pg 2506, Bhau Kalchuri.
7. Discourses by Meher Baba, 6th edition vol. 3 pp 121-122, 1967.
8. Delia DeLeon, The Ocean of Love, (Myrtle Beach: Sheriar Press, 1991) p. 125.



**Detachment is not that
you should own nothing.
But that nothing
should own you.**

Ali ibn abi Talib



"This is love; to fly toward a secret sky, to cause a hundred veils to fall each moment." ~ Rumi

Rachel Malmberg watercolor (2015)

Calligraphy by Terri Barton

SUCCESSION

MURSHIDA RABIA MARTIN

AND THE PASSING OF

HAZRAT INAYAT KHAN

BY KARL MOELLER
TUCSON AZ MAY 2015

Introduction

Now that Baba's Mandali have joined him, the worldwide Meher Baba community is possibly unique spiritually in that there is no formal hierarchy, no paid administrators, and no advertised focal point, other than Meher Baba and the various 'Baba centers' around the world. There is one exception, however, and that is the order of Sufism Reoriented. They have a living Murshid(a) (guide or teacher), a tight, hierarchical organization and require murids (students) to obtain residence in one of their two Sufi centers in North America.

How did Sufism Reoriented come about?


In 1910, under orders from his Murshid, the Indian Chishti musician Hazrat Inayat Khan sailed to America to spread the message of Sufism in the West. He encountered Mrs. Ada Martin in San Francisco, who became his first Western murid, and who was trained by him as a Murshida. Khan spent most of the next sixteen years in Europe and England, where he founded a dozen or more spiritual centers. After his sudden death in India in 1927, there was a three-year struggle within Khan's organization, mostly regarding the legitimacy of Murshida Martin's claim that she had been appointed Inayat Khan's spiritual successor in the West. She was ultimately rejected. She and her murids then spent another thirteen years in relative isolation in America, until Martin discovered the existence of Meher Baba in the early 1940s. She became convinced he was the ranking spiritual leader of this age, corresponded heavily with him, and offered the control of her two spiritual groups in California to Meher Baba. In 1952, several years after Martin's death, Meher Baba, Martin's successor Ivy O. Duce and murid Don Stevens created the charter of Sufism Reoriented. This oriented Martin's groups toward Meher Baba, not the Prophet Muhammad, as the Perfect Man.

New Information

When considering the roots of the Sufism Reoriented movement, I have heard and read that the reason Murshida

Rabia Martin was denied her proper place as the inheritor of Hazrat Inayat Khan's mantle was the prejudice of the Indian Muslim brothers and cousins of Inayat Khan. It is claimed they denied Martin because she was American, a woman, and a Jew. Add the apparent absurdity of claiming that Inayat's son Vilayat, all of eleven years old at Inayat's death, was an initiated Khalif, and the case for Martin and against those prejudiced Muslim males seems complete. Knowing the period, and the deeply held beliefs of Muslims, even advanced Sufis, this explanation seems to hold up over time. Take also in account that at the time of his passing in 1927 women in America had the right to vote for only seven years. A Jewish female head of a Sufi order in America shows Khan's incredibly advanced attitude, which his male, Muslim relatives might not have shared.

This paper will attempt to make Khan's Sufi Order's rejection of Murshida Martin more understandable, using sources including letters from Meher Baba, articles from Sufism Reoriented, and finally a very interesting source, Inayat Khan's grandson Pir Zia Inayat Khan, the head of the present-day Sufi Order International and Sufi Movement. Pir Zia's 377-page doctoral dissertation, presented at Duke University in 2006 towards a Ph.D in religion, is titled "*A Hybrid Sufi Order at the Crossroads of Modernity: the Sufi Order and Sufi Movement of Pir-o-Murshid Inayat Khan*," and is the history of Inayat Khan's life and

A HYBRID SUFI ORDER	
AT THE CROSSROADS OF MODERNITY:	
THE SUFI ORDER AND SUFI MOVEMENT	
OF PIR-O-MURSHID INAYAT KHAN	
by	
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Dissertation submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in the Department of Religion in the Graduate School of Duke University	
2006	

carries the story up to the present day. I feel it is a valuable document, a view from the inside, so to speak. It draws upon archives in India, Europe and the United States, and, most interesting to me, on the archives of Sufism Reoriented in Walnut Creek. A primary source for Pir Zia was the voluminous correspondence between Inayat Khan and Rabia Martin.

The dissertation begins with a brief history of the Chishti Order in India, then veers away to European spirituality including the Theosophical movement and Madame Blavatsky, and the phenomenon of Swami Vivekananda.

Inayat Khan's Early Days

Inayat Khan's musical development began early, being born into an accomplished musical family accustomed to playing for luminaries such as the Nizam of Hyderabad. Inayat's instrument was the vina, a stringed instrument played similarly to a sitar. His singing and playing placed him high in the musical hierarchy of Baroda.

Inayat was initiated and trained in the four Indian 'tariqas' or Sufi Orders - Chishti, Naqshbandi, Suhrawardi, and Qadiri. Abu Hashim Madani, his own murshid, also initiated into multiple Orders, presented himself and trained his murids as a Chishti.

Within the Sufi organizations he founded, Inayat's story is construed to distance him from a pure Chishti or Islamic tradition. A biographical essay published by the Sufi Movement in 1964 contends:

"Although his own Murshid and initiator (Madani) belonged to the Chishtiyya order of Sufis, Hazrat Inayat Khan *cannot, strictly speaking, be considered as a link between Chishti teaching and the West*, for neither his origin nor his education, culture, or esoteric training should obscure the fact that the essence of the Sufism he taught is the *product of his individual achievement and originality*." (italics mine.)

A few years ago the website of the European Sufi Movement had a detailed description of the heart-with-wings emblem adopted quite early by Inayat Khan. This emblem depicted a crescent moon and star (symbolic of Islam, or surrender) within a winged heart. The esoteric meaning is 'the surrendered heart grows wings'. The description on the website omitted any mention of Islam or even the Chishti Order.

Pir Zia's dissertation states the young Inayat, already a world-class musician, was given an 'injunction' by his Chishti Murshid, Sayyid Abu Hashim Madani of



Hazrat Inayat Khan



Abu Hashim Madani

Hyderabad. Madani granted Inayat a 'certificate of succession', known as an 'ijazat nama' or 'khilafat-nama' in 1907 and instructed him to travel to the West and disseminate the Sufi wisdom. However, Inayat did not depart for America for three more years, doing local pilgrimages and spending his time touring South India, Ceylon and Burma, recording music, and settling in Calcutta. The dissertation refers to a biography where Inayat's son and successor Vilayat wrote:

"When the time of his passing was nigh, Khwaja (master) Madani made Inayat Khan his successor in the Chain of Sufis, saying he had received from Khwaja Muinuddin Chishti (founder of the Order in India, d. 1236CE) instructions to tell him he was missioned to carry the Sufi Message to the West."

Note the disparity here. In one case above we are told that Inayat is NOT to be construed as carrying the Chishti torch to the West, essentially, because of his strong individuality. Yet here is Inayat's own son Vilayat claiming the most traditionally Sufi injunction of all, a command from the founder of the Order in India and what is now Pakistan.

The West and Meeting Rabia Martin

After his father passed on in 1910, Inayat booked passage to New York with his brother Maheboob Khan and cousin Muhammad Ali Khan. This departure from India was later called 'Hejirat Day' in the Sufi Movement and gives us an inkling of the stature of Inayat in the later Sufi view. This anniversary deliberately invokes the Prophet Muhammad's 'hejira' from Mecca to Medina.

It was also later termed "the birthday of the Message." A "prophetic resonance," as Pir Zia wrote.

Khan's musical troupe "The Royal Musicians of Hindustan" traveled with a famous dancer, Ruth St. Denis, across America to San Francisco. The group parted ways with St. Denis, as Inayat felt American audiences had, in that company, considered them mere entertainment.





The Royal Musicians of Hindustan circa 1910: Ali Khan, Inayat Khan, Musharaff Khan and Maheboob Khan



Murshida Rabia Martin

Khan was soon invited to speak at San Francisco's Vedanta Temple, where Mrs. Ada Martin first heard him, on Easter Sunday afternoon April 16, 1911. She followed the group to their next concert. Pir Zia wrote, "Soon thereafter Inayat initiated her as his first murid, granted her the honorary name (*laqab*) Rabia, and began her training. This was the beginning of Inayat Khan's Sufi work..." In other words, the actual Work in the West began with this one person's recruitment. Pir Zia continued,

"Several others were initiated in the wake of Martin, but *she was to remain Inayat Khan's primary student and prospective representative in America.*" (italics mine.)

Pir Zia's dissertation Chapter Three, "The Genesis of the Sufi Order, 1910-1920," is spent describing the circumstances of Rabia and Inayat's meeting and the development of her spirituality under his guidance-by-letter. It is also clear that by late 1911, Inayat already considered her the front-runner as his successor in America. No other American murids are even mentioned in this chapter by Pir Zia, except Samuel Lewis, who appears only as a witness and sometime-secretary to Martin.

Pir Zia describes the intense exchange of letters between Rabia and Inayat, in which Inayat began instructing her in standard Chishti training, such as so many Zikr (repetitions of the names of God) daily, watching the heart, etc. Pir Zia reports on Martin's progress in some detail:

"By the end of 1911 Martin had received instructions in all of the basic practices. Inayat wrote (her), 'You have now to continue your practice of wayalat [*amal*] with Zikr, Fikr (silent repetitions), shagal and darood forever.' The focus of his letters now shifted to the mission of establishing Sufism in America, and Martin's important role in this. From New York he wrote: '...I want somebody to undertake my mission as my successor in America before I would leave (for Europe) ... I find you the most suited of my murids ... All this shows that God almighty and all Murshids

in Chain* have selected you to bestow upon you this honour...' *(*'chain'* is a direct translation of the Arabic-Sufi term '*silila*,' the Sufi succession back to 'Ali and the Prophet.)

Pir Zia then states:

"...it is evident that ... Rabia Martin in particular received an intensive and systematic course of esoteric training that *differed little in form from the Sufism practiced among Chishti initiates in India.*" (italics mine.)

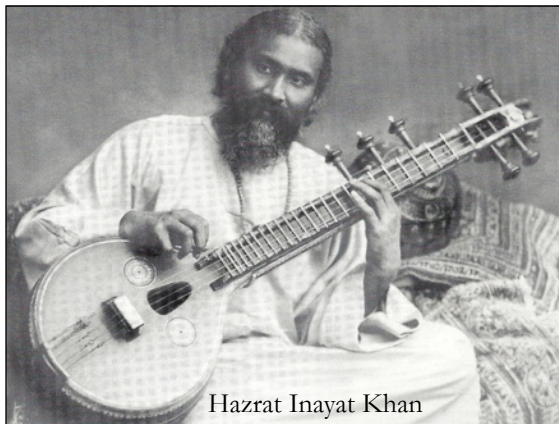
Inayat spent little time in California, and most of his subsequent years were in Britain and France, leaving Rabia and her group isolated, teaching a traditional Muslim Chishti spirituality; Inayat had instructed Rabia to learn Arabic and study the Qur'an.

Building Sufism in Britain and Europe

Chapter Three then follows Inayat Khan to Britain in 1912, and gives a background for what Pir Zia terms "Occidental Sufism," and the formation of the 'Sufi Order In The West' in London, 1917. He discusses the inherent contradictions of introducing Indian - Islamic Sufism into a "secular Christian milieu."

The influence of the West grew perceptibly on Inayat personally and on his methods of imparting the Message to the West. In 1913 Ora Ray Baker arrived in London. She was a cousin of the founder in America of the Christian Science movement, Mary Baker Eddy. Ora Ray was dubbed 'Pirani Ameena Begum' (Female master, Knower, and Princess) by Inayat and they married that same year. Inayat began meeting well-regarded artists, musicians and royalty, and wrote to Rabia, "I have already started the Sufi movement in Paris and now I am going to spread it in England." A meeting with Claude Debussy led to an invitation for his group, the Royal Musicians of Hindustan, to play in Russia, where Inayat "...lectured to large audiences and was widely introduced in musical circles."

During this period Inayat and his extended family lived in Addison Road in London. Brothers and cousin Maheboob, Mohammed Ali, Musharaff, and Inayat's new wife Ameena Begum were all trained intensively by Inayat, and were considered to be the core of the Sufi Movement in England. This group was essentially stranded in London when WWI broke out, temporarily severing ties with groups in Europe and Russia. They moved to another London home in 1915, which was dubbed the Khanaqah (headquarters) of the Sufi Order. Two of Inayat's four children were born during the war, Vilayat in 1916, Hidayat in 1917, then Khair-un-nisa just afterward in 1919. A close



Hazrat Inayat Khan

friend of the family at that time, Gujarat native Abdullah Yusuf Ali, later gained fame in the Muslim world as a translator of the Qur'an.

However, the Western influence continued. Pir Zia notes that "beginning in 1915, 'God' began to replace 'Allah' in Inayat's articles [in 'The Sufi', their English periodical]," and "...as time progressed Islamic references consistently diminished in all of the Order's publications." In 1920 Inayat wrote to Rabia Martin:

"... by experience I can work with the Western people much better than before. I have studied their psychology and I know what they like and what they do not like and how to approach them on these subjects and therefore I have been lately successful too."

One possible reason for the diminished role of Muslim terminology, Pir Zia proposes, was rising anti-Islamic sentiment among the English due to the failed Gallipoli campaign in 1915, shortly after the London Khanaqah was formed. Hostility toward the Turks extended to all things Islamic and was fanned by the press. Rabia and her group, isolated in America and Australia, were not exposed to this Westward slide of the Sufi movement.

During the war years Inayat spread the Order in the British Isles through lectures and appearances, sometimes hosted by various local Theosophical Society groups. Small lodges opened in Harrogate, Southampton, Tottenham (later home of the Who), Brighton, and Luton.

Pir Zia points out in the very next paragraph that Rabia Martin "... was making progress in San Francisco. In 1918 she opened a center on Sutter Street, and a second center, Kaaba Allah, in rural Marin County." In the dissertation, along with the history of Inayat Khan's travels and creation and dissolution of groups, Pir Zia never loses sight of Rabia Martin. He often indicates what's going on in Inayat's

mind by including excerpts from a massive volume of correspondence between them from 1911 to his death in 1927. Pir Zia gives more attention to Rabia Martin than any individual besides Inayat Khan himself. Inayat's regard for Rabia Martin is never downplayed by Pir Zia, neither overtly by editorializing nor covertly by omitting her from the narrative.

At the end of WWI in late 1918, Inayat and extended family incorporated the Sufi Trust Limited. The group had been appealing for a building to be used as a "permanent Khanaqah" (center), and a wealthy murid donated the lease on a "palatial property" at 29 Gordon Square in central London. This center soon dissolved due to financial disputes.

A Universal Church

Possibly in reaction, in 1919, Inayat moved his family to Tremblaye, France. He determined that the Sufi Order's new international headquarters should be established in Geneva. Pir Zia sees a connection between this move of the Sufis to Geneva and the transfer of the League of Nations from London to Geneva. Following the brutal and murderous War to End All Wars, the League of Nations was then seen as the hope and promise of world peace.

Sufi Order membership in Britain and Europe grew slowly in this first decade. Pir Zia characterizes it as:

"... the result of many factors. Muslims soon felt uncomfortable within the Order's quasi-religious but not specifically Islamic framework. Jews and Christians were sometimes ill at ease with the Order's hybrid mix of Theosophy and Islam. Theosophists were attracted by Inayat Khan's resemblance to the legendary oriental 'Masters' and piqued by the possibility that he might be the awaited 'World-Teacher,' but were, in many cases, disappointed to find he did not fit the mold of their expectations."

In letters to Rabia, Inayat recommended she delay legalizing the American branch of the Order. He wrote her from Geneva that he wished to return to America to help her "rebuild," but said he must first work on the affairs of the European branches.

In 1920 the Khan family moved to Wissous, France, and a Parisian Sufi group was formed. Khan visited Britain twice in 1921. One of the marked changes in this period was the creation of the "Church of All." This heterodox organization showed the movement away from a Sufi esoteric tradition into a new religious movement, and the phrase "Universal Worship" was coined. Inayat created a class of officiants called 'Cherags' (from the Persian for

'lamp'), and created certain prescribed rituals for services.

During this period there was more mention and awareness, within the various European Sufi groups, that Inayat Khan should be considered Messenger of the age, seen on a level with the Prophet Muhammad. The remaining strict Muslims within the Order could point to verses in the Qur'an, 40:78, 10:48, 16:36, and 35:24, which seem to allow subsequent Messengers to mankind. Pir Zia states:

"On the basis of this verse [40:78], the 18th century Naqshbandi shaykh Jan-i-Janan wrote: 'When the holy Qur'an has preferred to remain silent about many prophets, it is incumbent on us to adopt a liberal attitude with regard to the prophets of India.'"

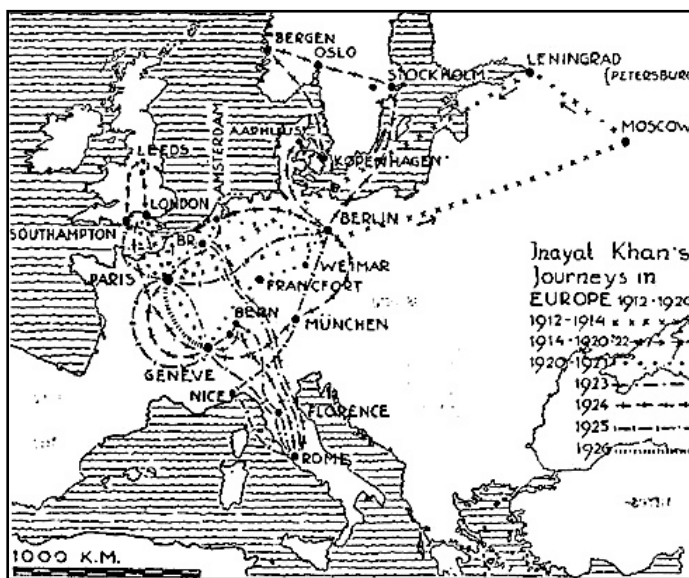
Pir Zia also writes: "In an unpublished compilation of personal narratives by 46 original murids titled 'Memories of Murshid', Inayat is variously referred to as the World-Teacher, Christ, Christ-man, Prophet, Messenger, Rabi, and Rasul." Inayat Khan is alleged to have acknowledged these perceptions in private. Any Sufi order, regardless of founder or location, would say that its goal is to reproduce the heart-states of the Prophet Muhammad in the followers who are capable. Pir Zia continues reportage of the perceptions of Inayat's followers for several pages of Chapter Four. He points out that, since Inayat was a full Murshid, having undergone the complete Sufi training, beginning with 'fana' (annihilation) into his master Madani ('fana fi-shaikh'), who transferred his consciousness to the Prophet Muhammad ('fana fi-Rasul') who in turn handed him to God ('fana fi'llah'), then in a sense Inayat Khan was indeed one with the Prophet. However, this ignores the fact that any Kamil Shaikh (perfected murid) could claim the same state and status.

Inayat Khan returned to America in February 1923 intending a three month long tour. He remained in San Francisco for seven weeks, giving public lectures and private classes for murids. These lectures were edited and later published under the title "Gita Dhyana".

Later that year Inayat traveled to Geneva, and began a revision of the Sufi charters. He merged the Sufi Order

into the Sufi Movement, which included the Brotherhood and the Universal Worship. He handed the creation of the new 'constitution' to Enrique Zanetti, a Harvard-trained lawyer. Inayat continued to Germany and Holland, where brother Maheboob Khan lived with his new bride, and on to Belgium. He continued travel through 1924, offering lectures across France, Switzerland, Italy, Germany, and England. New centers sprouted in his wake. His lectures were transcribed and transmitted to Geneva headquarters.

A new center was created in Suresnes, France. Several leaders and murids had homes or second homes in Suresnes. Earlier Inayat wrote Rabia that the little town "will become a Sufi colony"... and it did.



In Europe and England, as Pir Zia describes, Inayat created new levels of certification within the Esoteric School, giving four Circles of Initiation, each with three internal grades, and so on. He contrasts this with the comparatively simple structure of Orders in the East: the 'bayat', initiation of a murid, and 'khilafat', the movement to 'junior murshid' status. Inayat had clearly moved the European organizations far away from the original Chishti model. These changes were notably

absent in the groups led by Murshida Martin.

What followed could have been foreseen and prevented. As the number of centers in multiple countries grew, there was an added bureaucratic level of administrators, all the way to the highest level within the Sufi Movement. Inayat Khan found himself simultaneously the Pir-o-Murshid of the Esoteric School, functioning as an Eastern-style spiritual master, endowed with the authority of 'insan al-kamil' (perfect man), and also as the administrative head, the 'Representative General' of the international Sufi Movement. In late 1925 at an annual council meeting at Geneva Headquarters, while Khan was traveling, a constitutional proposal was made to abolish the Representative General's vote in the Executive Committee, since that position held both four votes and the power of veto. Politics and voting. As Pir Zia puts it:

"Did the Sufi Movement exist to serve the Pir-o-Murshid's agenda, or did the Pir-o-Murshid exist to serve the Movement's agenda?"

Essentially they were defining the difference between esoteric and exoteric authority. Some within the hierarchy of the Movement felt strongly that as Khan was the Messenger, that all such politics was destructive, since the Murshid was in a state of 'fana fi-illah', he essentially was the voice of God, infallible. Of course this attitude implies total dependence upon that individual. Others believed that Khan was so absorbed in the spiritual that he had neither time nor interest in the temporal, using his frequent absences from meetings as evidence. A response to that was "... a mystic is not dependent on what various people tell him." The result of this particular vote was ten in favor, seven against. When presented to Inayat Khan, he cast his four votes against, and the attempt to limit Khan's constitutional powers failed.

In a subsequent letter to his wife, he wrote, referring to the vote:

"When a disciple begins to judge the teacher or his actions, to criticize his teachings, or try to test his inspiration or power, however cleverly he may do it, he ceases to be a disciple in the right sense of the word. In may not seem very bad to many, but there is a thin thread connecting the pupil with his spiritual guide, and at any moment this can easily break, once broken it can never be mended."

Pir Zia states at this point in the narrative that family lore has it that Inayat wished to return to India, and was only forestalled by the pleading of his family, who feared if he left Europe he would not return. Clearly needing a change of scene, he sailed for New York, intending another tour of America. He wrote to Rabia from New York,

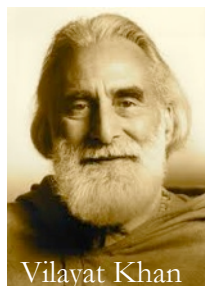
".. After the Geneva council, if not for the cause I would have left the whole affair and gone to the East."

In the book Lord Meher by V.S. "Bhau" Kalchuri we read about Vilayat Khan's visit to Avatar Meher Baba in 1959:

Baba then said (to Vilayat Khan, Inayat's eldest son, then 43), "Since you have come all this distance to see me, I want you to do one very simple thing. Spare five minutes every night at twelve o'clock and meditate on Baba. Concentrate on my face."

Vilayat said, "This would annoy my Murshid."

Baba replied, "If your Murshid



Vilayat Khan

were a Perfect Master, he would never get annoyed. And if your Master were to be annoyed over this, he could never be a Murshid!" (It is clear the Murshid referred to was not Inayat Khan.)

Meher Baba has indicated that Inayat Khan was a genuine fifth-plane saint.

Prior to his departure for New York, Inayat performed an initiation and investiture of his sons Vilayat and Hidayat, age eleven and ten, as Khalifas, lieutenants in the Sufi Order. This would have important future repercussions. This event was echoed many years later when Pir Vilayat appointed his own son Zia as the future head of the Sufi Order.

America and India - the Last Days of Inayat Khan

Inayat Khan was hampered by ill health throughout the 1926 American tour. By now expert in gaining the attention of newspapers, he met such celebrities as Henry Ford, and gave several standing-room only lectures in the Detroit area. By February 1926 he was in northern California, reunited with Rabia and her groups. He met Nyogen Senzaki, a famous Zen teacher, through Rabia. Senzaki later published an article about their meeting titled 'Mohammedan Zen: Sufism in America.' Samuel Lewis, who claimed to have been initiated in the astral planes by Inayat Khan, was granted six interviews. Lewis later stated that in the second of these, Khan bitterly complained about how few loyal murids he actually could claim; if true, he was still showing disapproval of the recent Council meeting in Geneva.

Inayat returned to Europe, but clearly no healing had taken place between him and the Executive Committee. He was determined to leave for India, accompanied only by a secretary, and boarded ship from Italy on September 28, 1926. Landing in Karachi, he traveled to Lahore and then Delhi. Khan had been away from India for sixteen years. Recounted in Pir Zia's dissertation, Inayat Khan wrote his wife:

"My impression of India is not altogether good; perhaps it is partly owing to my condition [his health] and partly by staying in Europe for so long. I have become more critical. They seem to me neglectful, dreamy..."

"My impression of India is not altogether good..."

Inayat Khan did seek help for his physical ailments, and while in Delhi reunited with Khwaja Hasan Nizami. Nizami

was a prominent Chishti, keeper of the famous Dargah of Hazrat Nizamuddin Awliya, and proprietor of his own Sufi newspaper, in which he published an account of their visit, terming Khan as "our Murshid."

In January 1927, after some travels in northern India, Inayat traveled to Ajmer, Rajasthan, to attend the 'urs' (death anniversary) of Khwaja Moinuddin Chishti, founder of the Order in India. Pir Zia reports, "Soon after optimistically reporting 'Coming to Ajmer has done my broken spirit good,' he was overtaken by severe influenza." Inayat returned to Delhi in mid-January and went downhill quickly, possibly from pneumonia.

He passed on at his Tilak Lodge residence in Delhi on the morning of February 5th, 1927, at age 44.

The Succession

A nineteen-page article was printed in the November 2004 issue of *Glow International*, 'A Journal dedicated to Meher Baba.' The authorship is unclear, although it begins with a page-long letter from Murshida Carol Weyland Conner, of Sufism Reoriented. In the body of the text, we are told that Inayat Khan informed his dear friend, fellow Chishti and spiritual advisor Hasan Nizami ('... the most prominent Sufi leader of India') that he had appointed Rabia full Murshida, a fact affirmed by Nizami when he (re)appointed her full Murshid in Delhi in 1939:



"Seven days before Inayat Khan's death, he (Inayat) told Hasan Nizami that he had named Rabia Martin, the American Murshida, as his successor."

Inayat Khan's attorney, Enrique Zanetti, who had revised the constitution of the Sufi Movement, invited Rabia Martin to a meeting held in Suresnes. Both Zanetti, the Executive Supervisor, and Talwar Dussaq, General Secretary of the Sufi Movement, seemed ready to accept Martin's claim as Khan's successor as the Representative General, seen as an administrative, exoteric position. Pir Zia states:

"Dussaq's reasoning was threefold: 1. Martin was the senior Murshida, 2. Martin had proven administrative ability, and 3. Inayat Khan had praised Martin's devotion to the Message."

Martin's internal map and perceptions proved to be quite different. Her actions and words in her only visit to the

complex political infighting in the Sufi Movement headquarters proved quite maladroit. She misread the entire situation. She lost the support of both Zanetti and Dussaq in one event, the Sacred Readings of The Master. She began by addressing people she barely knew, some of whom had worked for the past sixteen years to rise in the European Sufi Movement, as "my dear murids." She then declined to read the prescribed Sacred Words of the Master, and declared: "I have not crossed the ocean to read to you from a paper, but to give you a solid teaching!"

Her actions and words in her only visit to the Sufi Movement headquarters proved quite maladroit.

She lost any chance of acceptance at that point. The International Executive Committee met at Geneva Headquarters in September of 1927. The primary issue on the table was to appoint a Representative General, which was the highest administrative post available, political head of the Order. Inayat's next-younger brother Maheboob Khan was elected unanimously "for an indefinite period of time."

Two years later, in a letter from 1929, Rabia wrote General Secretary Dussaq, challenging the recognition of Maheboob Khan as the *esoteric* Pir-o-Murshid of the entire Order, stating:

"The Pir-o-Murshid in his Esoteric rules says, 'Pir-o-Murshid makes rules, his successor is designated by him.' This you must admit is definite. It is not a matter to be *voted* upon. And the spiritual reason why it cannot be voted upon is that it is a *Mystical* degree, and *it is only the Pir-o-Murshid who can recognize and confirm this Mystical degree of attainment*. This state of Hal, as you must know comes only by the divine favor of Allah ... In 1923 when Holy Murshid came to America after an absence of eleven years, he remained as a guest in my home for more than six weeks. During that blessed and holy time he conferred an Initiation upon me as a preparation for the one he completed when he was with us again in 1926. On March 16, 1926, he conferred another, most holy Initiation, his last, and that Initiation made me his *Esoteric successor*. ... Can you refer to a single Messenger whose Successor was *chosen by vote*? Either we draw our authority from God or from man — it is one or the other." (italics and emphasis hers)

In her indignation, Rabia had utterly forgotten the events following the death of the Prophet Muhammad.

As powerful as that letter was, she never received an invitation to the next (1930) Executive Committee meeting. That summer Samuel Lewis sent at least one letter to the Committee, stating that Inayat Khan had asserted to him in 1926 that Rabia was indeed his successor, and that he, Lewis, was to defend her and prevent her from defending herself. However, she could never resist getting a word in, and Lewis wrote, "... and this led to her downfall."

"... and this led to her downfall."

In 1930, before the meeting, Rabia was requested to provide some 'tangible proof' supporting her claims, and sent them a letter termed by Dussaq as containing 'slanderous allegations'. Further, the Initiation she was given by Inayat Khan in 1926 had also been given to Maheboob Khan. Dussaq also pointed out that the norm for an appointee is to possess a 'written', an 'ijazat nama' or 'khilafat nama', a document mentioning the Order's silsila and the specific abilities and duties of the appointee. Martin offered instead a turban given her by Inayat Khan. Dussaq pointed out that Khan's son Vilayat had been given his father's *personal* turban.



The 1930 Executive Committee was fully attended, except, as usual, for Rabia Martin. Rabia's letter was read, and one of the members, Shahbaz Best, commented her language was 'forcible'. Pir Zia recounts:

"In her defense, Best stated, 'I would, however suggest that we should, as it were, exonerate her, because I understand that *one of her race* employs traditional language, and if we would understand that it is not necessarily personal, but an individual method of expression, we would be less moved by those words.' Though offered in Martin's defense, Best's identification of Martin's shortcomings as *symptomatic of her Jewish identity* evokes the conviction of Martin and Samuel Lewis, apparently never committed to writing but communicated orally that *racism was a significant factor* in the rejection of Martin's claim in Europe." (italics mine)

That 'defense' was faint praise indeed. I honor Pir Zia's honesty on the point of racism and possibly sexism. However, note that the blame does not fall on male Indian

Muslim relatives-of-Inayat, protecting their sources of income, but upon the voting members of this Executive Committee, who were mostly white Europeans. He also says there is anecdotal, not written, evidence, that both Martin and Lewis believed there was anti-semitism involved in the Executive Committee's decision.

Pir Zia reproduces Dussaq's reply to Martin in full:

"This statement seems to me most extraordinary for is it not strange that Pir-o-Murshid kept all the Murshidas, yourself included, and Khalifs and Shaiks of the Sufi Order ignorant that you were to be his Successor, but made the disclosure of it to Mr. Samuel Lewis, who has no standing in the Sufi Order, for whatever be the value, in your eyes, to be a 'Khalif by spiritual degree'. However let us admit that Mr. Lewis' statement was true and that he did not misinterpret the Master's words, or that he did not imagine it, which is likely—for is it not well known that certain visionaries are subject to strange delusions and hallucinations, and you have declared, as well as Mr. Lewis himself, that he has *visions*—even supposing his statement to be correct, we cannot take it into consideration, for we happen to have in this office written instructions from Our Blessed Master urging us never to act upon anyone's saying, 'Murshid has told me,' but only to act upon what Murshid himself had told us."

This is an extremely interesting letter. Dussaq says Samuel Lewis had 'no standing in the Sufi Order', and proceeds to mock Lewis for his 'visions,' even though Inayat Khan himself had said that Lewis could indeed channel him (Khan) regardless of time or space. The 'visions' comment seems to illustrate the gulf between the arid political environment of Geneva and Martin's geographically isolated Order. She had created, under Inayat Khan's direction, an Indian, traditional, spiritually-oriented group, where there was a direct link between members' rank and their level of illumination. (The reason Murshida Martin did not simply appoint Samuel Lewis as 'khalifa', or lieutenant, or why this was not recognized in Geneva, may not be recoverable.)

The traditional Chishti 'sama' or qawwali singing is designed to invoke 'hal', an ecstatic, visionary state, in the participants. General Secretary Dussaq's dry and biting wit is hardly indicative of an ecstatic experience. However, in his defense, since the 1880s, the popular press had colored and confused genuine spiritual



Samuel Lewis

movements with Spiritualism and Occultism, with their myriad fake mediums and apparitions. Dussaq may have heard entirely too much about 'visions'. But he did manage to completely discount the perceptions of both Martin and Lewis — Khan's apparent protégé in America, and one of Inayat's hand picked and trained murids.

The 1930 vote to elect Maheboob Khan as esoteric Head and Pir-o-Murshid of the Sufi Order failed, and the Committee split somewhat acrimoniously, with several European and British members severing all ties to the Sufi Movement. When Rabia Martin received the news in San Francisco, she declared herself the Representative General of the Sufi Movement (the exoteric administrative title she claimed not to want) and announced that she 'no longer recognized the authority of Headquarters.' It seems paradoxical, to simultaneously separate from an organization and announce oneself as its head.

FAILURE TO COMMUNICATE

What could have caused such a series of apparent missteps from someone groomed to be Inayat Khan's successor? It is clear from all accounts that Khan prized Rabia highest of all his trainees on both sides of the Atlantic.

Pir Zia's dissertation goes on for hundreds of pages, many of them describing at length the multiple Centers, the Byzantine political and organizational structures, created in Europe by Inayat Khan over time. 'Cherags,' untold committees and administrative sub-sub positions, all of it held together by Khan's Rasul-like charisma.

For years on end, Murshida Rabia Martin's only connection to the Sufi work was the occasional instructional letter from Inayat Khan, now gone. She was over six thousand miles away in California, in an era where long distance international phone calls were a generation or two away, where she studied Arabic and the Qur'an and trained her own murids in the traditional Chishti manner, in a simple, two-layer organization. She had been busy, with Inayat Khan's emphatic approval, recreating a medieval, spiritual Sufi Order in San Francisco.

Her error in misreading the status-conscious hierarchically-oriented Europeans, and committing personal faux pas, led to being shut out of the succession deliberations almost completely. She only visited Europe once between 1927 and the final break in 1930, and was not present for the infighting in the many subsequent meetings to choose Khan's successor. She was the apparent victim of a political process and structure she simply did not understand and was not a part of.

Rabia never had a chance.

For all the voting, factions, and meetings the Europeans had, it strikes me how ethnocentric they were in the search for Khan's spiritual and temporal successor. Did it occur to no

one in the Sufi Movement, especially the Indian relatives, to journey to Ajmer or Delhi and lay this at the feet of the Shaik ul Mashaik? (the world leader of the Chishti Order.) The answer lies between the lines in Pir Zia's history. The European Sufis had deified Inayat to the point where they referred to him as 'Rasul', i.e. one with, or on a level with, the Prophet Muhammad. Therefore there was no one in India, in their view, worth turning to. It's possible no one could have measured up. They may also have had the European subconscious and unspoken contempt for (brown-skinned) Colonials from the Subcontinent. So their own psychology limited their search for a temporal and spiritual replacement to within their own ranks. Thus Maheboob, the next younger brother, held the position of Representative General until Inayat's son Vilayat was old enough.

Every sign points to Martin's understanding of her role as Khan's *spiritual* successor. Note her understandable disdain of the European group's process and especially of *voting in a successor*. "Either we draw our authority from God or from man — it is one or the other," she said.

WHEN FAILURE AND SUCCESS ARE THE SAME

For those who know their Muslim history, she was Hazrat 'Ali in a community which had elected Abu Bakr after the death of the Prophet. The Prophet had declared, "I am the city of wisdom, and 'Ali is the door to it." 'Ali was the vessel carrying spiritual knowledge to the world. Abu Bakr was

**If rejected Rabia was that
generation's rejected 'Ali, carrying
the spiritual charge,
where does that leave the various
other Sufi Order/Movement
branches?**

older, an established part of the Muslim community, and became the First Caliph, successor to the Prophet, because he simply *got more votes*. To his credit, Pir Zia acknowledges the similarity of Rabia Martin's situation to the Abu Bakr - 'Ali schism (that is, the Sunni-Shia split) in the early Muslim community. This Sunni - Shia (Shiati 'Ali' means supporter of 'Ali) divide survives to the present day and is the cause of much suffering in the Muslim world.

What Pir Zia appears to have missed, or at least did not discuss, is that all Sufi orders, Sunni and Shia, except for one (Naqshbandi-Haqqani) have 'Ali right behind the Angel Jibreel (Gabriel) and the Prophet in their Silsila, the chain of succession. Fourteen hundred years of Sufis have considered Hazrat 'Ali to have something crucial for the spiritual

development of mankind, conveyed in the traditional transmission of knowledge from Murshid to murid, the goal being the illumination of the student. Pir Zia may not have wished to introduce this thought because it inevitably proceeds to the next idea: *if rejected Rabia was that generation's rejected 'Ali, carrying the spiritual charge, where does that leave the various other Sufi Order/Movement branches?* Famed author and Sufi Idries Shah writes about what he terms 'remnant cults', organizations which persist, sometimes for generations, long after the 'baraka', or original spiritual charge, is gone.

On March 29, 1948, Meher Baba dictated a letter via Dr. Ghani Munsiff to Murshida Ivy O. Duce, successor to Rabia Martin as the head of Sufism Reoriented. It included this passage:

"The spiritual worth of Rabia Martin consists in being appointed as Murshida by Hazrat Inayat Khan personally and directly. Hence the effort on the part of Rabia Martin to obtain a written investiture from Hasan Nizami was altogether superfluous and unnecessary."

As a Meher Baba devotee, I am reminded that all this unfolded during His lifetime according to His wish and will. It was no accident. There is no injustice in the Sufi Movement's rejection of Rabia Martin.

On the contrary, it freed her to find Meher Baba.

Source Material

Biography of Hazrat Inayat Khan, letters between he and Rabia Martin

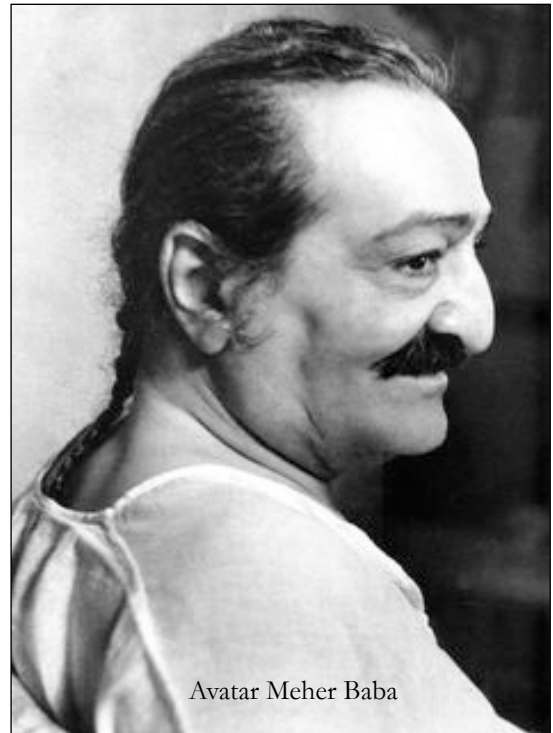
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<http://tinyurl.com/nsbrh2z>

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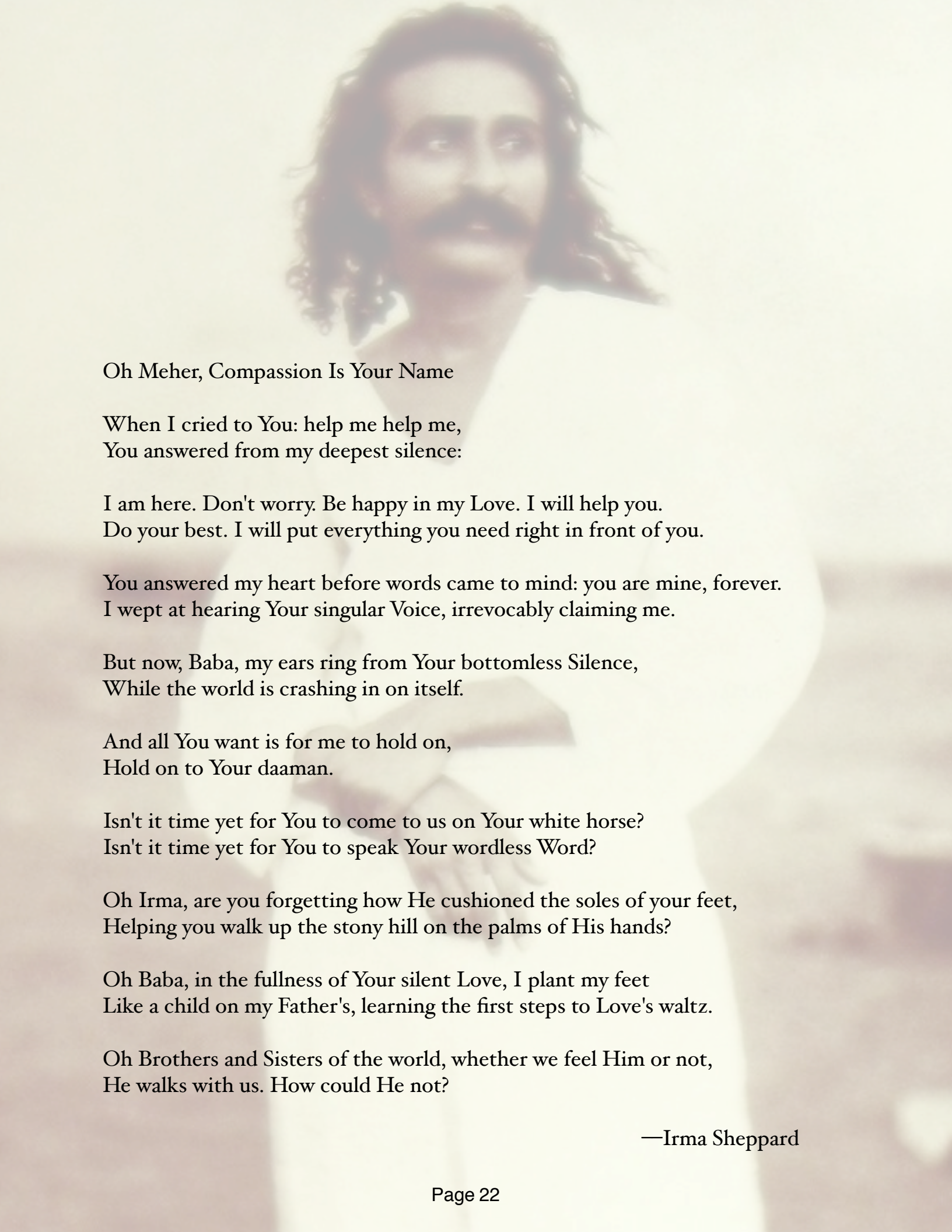
There is no injustice in the Sufi Movement's rejection of Rabia Martin.

On the contrary, it freed her to find Meher Baba.



Avatar Meher Baba





Oh Meher, Compassion Is Your Name

When I cried to You: help me help me,
You answered from my deepest silence:

I am here. Don't worry. Be happy in my Love. I will help you.
Do your best. I will put everything you need right in front of you.

You answered my heart before words came to mind: you are mine, forever.
I wept at hearing Your singular Voice, irrevocably claiming me.

But now, Baba, my ears ring from Your bottomless Silence,
While the world is crashing in on itself.

And all You want is for me to hold on,
Hold on to Your daaman.

Isn't it time yet for You to come to us on Your white horse?
Isn't it time yet for You to speak Your wordless Word?

Oh Irma, are you forgetting how He cushioned the soles of your feet,
Helping you walk up the stony hill on the palms of His hands?

Oh Baba, in the fullness of Your silent Love, I plant my feet
Like a child on my Father's, learning the first steps to Love's waltz.

Oh Brothers and Sisters of the world, whether we feel Him or not,
He walks with us. How could He not?

—Irma Sheppard

From: Daniel Ladinsky

Subject: **Baba & Hafiz & Eruch: To Be Natural - YouTube**

Date: April 22, 2015

Cc: Nancy Barton, Laurent Weichberger and others

I sent this to a new friend (a lovely, very hard working single mom) this morning in Taos, NM, with the enclosed note to her. She (and her children) were kind of raised around Amma[1], who some call the hugging saint, and Amma may indeed be a saint and might even be perfect. Interesting to me that someone who might be perfect these days ... would basically have little to say and basically only hug people and "rock them in an invisible cradle" as it appears she does when she hugs some. For indeed I would think a saint sees most all of us as babies ... needing some kind of adjustment.

<http://tinyurl.com/ma8837k> (Youtube.comvideo link)

(This was my note to my friend)

Here is a five minute excerpt from a longer interview with that man Eruch Jessawala, whom I have spoken about and is mentioned in a couple of my books.

*** If you change the word Baba (and Him) - to God this will probably be easier to listen to. The word "mandali" is a Indian dialect term meaning ... the close ones to a master.

"The doer, the cause and the deed ... are all emanating from God and are God."

That is a big one (said in this video), giant for us munchkins down here on earth who are running around crazy and beating our heads so often against so much. Those words seem worth (to me) - a lifetime of contemplation ... 'cause therein I feel ultimately a great realization and ultimate enlightenment and freedom. So, I personally chip away at what is said here ... but feel often far, far from really knowing and acting ... living/feeling it.

(My note to her ends)

Then this to you all:

The famous words of Hafiz:

I guess some of the most famous words of Hafiz over the next few centuries will become those that Baba sooo, sooo, sooo endorsed in those couplets that begin:

Befitting a fortunate slave ...

And I remember being in Mandali Hall alone one day, my first trip to India. I think it was Baba's birthday and everyone else had gone to Meherabad for something at Baba's tomb, but I wound up riding my bike out (from a hotel in town) to Meherazad and was alone there till the mandali came back a couple hours later. So I am sitting

in Mandali Hall (it is 1978) and looking at those Hafiz couplets that are posted here and there at Meherazad and Meherabad and I look at that one line in particular that goes (I think I've got it right, or very close):

Whatever my Master does is of the highest benefit to all concerned.

And I guess this becomes my first rendering in a way (at least in my mind and heart), because I see with the word Master being capitalized as I think Baba made it ... the word is then synonymous with God. And then it also immediately occurs to me (for a second) ... well ... there is really only God as the Doer & the Being/Existence - WHATEVER HAPPENS. But then I get grounded again - and know I could walk off to the mountains with just this one line of Hafiz and probably never fully live it and or incorporate it. That is: I could contemplate just that one line of Hafiz for the rest of my life as a genuine & worthwhile lifetime spiritual practice.

And just now today - for the first time: I realize Eruch is saying the very same thing that Hafiz did ... but Eruch has broken it open more for us munchkins ... babies; he expounded upon & rendered it. He is trying to help "rock us," adjust our vision, our minds. He is trying to get us out of our cradles where we can cry so much in so many ways and can war with ourselves & others. Eruch says in the video - and with such a beautiful emphasis of hand gestures I have so rarely ever seen in person:

"The doer, the cause and the deed are all emanating from Him and - are Him."

Wonderful, remarkable words, and my guess is 99% of most everyone's suffering would end upon that realization or true belief. You are most welcome to share this with any in its full text here.

Thanks,
Daniel Ladinsky
April 21, 2015

(The below was added by Nancy Barton; thanks to her)

"Befitting a fortunate slave, carry out every command of the Master without any question of why and what. About what you hear from the Master, never say it is wrong, because, my dear, the fault lies in your own incapacity to understand him. I am the slave of the Master who has released me from ignorance. Whatever my Master does is of the highest benefit to all concerned."

—Hafiz

Notes:

[1] "Amma" is Mata Amritanandamayi. See: Amma.org.
[various] See Lord Meher pp. 4549, 5310 & 5401



For Khayla

*Enter the depths of Khayla's Heart and hear it.
Hear her heart still beating in mine.
Hear her heart beating in you.*

*In memory of our Beloved,
chai "mischievous" gatewalla*

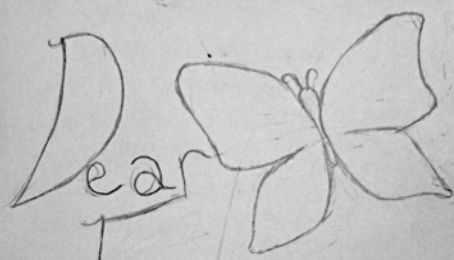
"Being free and happy is the only way
you can truly learn."
~ Khayla Choi



Our prayers for the families of Khayla Choi and Christina Jarrett

To, the Faeries and other mystical creatures

From, Khayla Choi ♥



Faeries...
and other mystical creatures

Okay, so I'm Khayla. And I'm not sure if I believe in you exactly. I believe in a lot of things but I'm most interested in faeries. What is this world? Who is god? Who are you? I want to know yet I don't. Is the world going to end soon? What is going to happen to man? This is not just a letter to you but to all. To all mystical creatures and a letter to myself. I want to learn about what this world is and where we are going to go. But all is god's will and

all must happen as it will. I wish I was capable of loving everything the same way I love my own. Will you help me? My BIGGEST wish in the world is to protect my family, my animals, and Meher/Haven. They are the MOST Important things in the world to me. So please, protect them. I love them more than anything and I pray and pray for them everyday. So please... So if you are reading this please please respond. I want to know

what this is. What is everything? Please tell me, I need help. But if you don't all is good and it is your will for we are all one and that one is god. So either way all is good.. There are so many wonderful things in this world and I'm just one of so many... But hear my words and thank you for everything! I love you.

Love, Khayla Choi

"Hear My Heart"



Adrienne Shamszad

Adrienne Shamszad is a musician, singer-songwriter, poet and actress from Oakland, CA whose life's work is to explore unseen realms of the heart and soul and to communicate the truths she uncovers through poetry, voice and music. Her work is deeply influenced by her study of Indian Classical music and her many trips to the country, as well as her Persian heritage and obsession with folk-poet-soul songwriters and singers of the 60s and 70s. She has released one full-length album entitled "*A New Life*" and is currently in the studio recording new material for an EP trilogy.

By Laurent Weichberger (May 13, 2015)
Ashland, Oregon

Adrienne Shamszad is a singer-songwriter living in San Francisco. I met her there last year for the first time, and we talked over dinner with my partner Vanessa, about Baba and the world, success and struggle. I caught up with Adrienne again on the telephone at her apartment in San Francisco, for this exclusive interview.

Laurent Weichberger (LW): So, when did you first hear about Meher Baba, and where were you at that time?

Adrienne Shamszad (AS): I first heard about Meher Baba when I was in high school. I was taking guitar lessons from Cindy Lowe in Oakland. I had noticed pictures of Him around her house for years, but never thought much about it. It was actually a photo of Mani on her refrigerator playing violin that sparked my interest. I asked her who she was, and she told me about Mani, her being Baba's sister and also a master musician and entertainer. That was the first conversation we ever had about Meher Baba. She mentioned something about Him being "the Avatar," but it didn't really sink in with me, until I went to India (with Cindy) in 2003.

I had no expectations when I went to India and was very nonplussed by Cindy's obvious devotion to Baba. All I knew was that I'd longed to visit the country since I was a girl, which is what led Cindy (and her husband Jeff) to invite me with them on one of their many pilgrimages to Meherabad. On the last day of being in Thailand (we stopped there on our way), the words, the conviction, the intensity with which Cindy referred to Baba hit me harder. I went from having no impression of Meher Baba to suddenly feeling very weird about the fact that I was traveling the world with people who might very possibly be members of a strange sort of cult and who believed

something that was so obviously not true. Now my adventurous mind was filled with doubt, a subtle repulsion and also a sort of mysterious understanding.

When I arrived at Guruprasad, I walked up to the threshold of the little room there, I immediately saw the picture of Baba that hung from the wall by some string. I sensed Him, I saw only Him, all else was wiped out with light, I clearly felt His Presence! I heard His voice in my heart (in my mind). I asked Him: "Are you who you say you are?" And He responded, "The answer is in the question." Which meant to me: you are asking Me, so you trust Me to answer. Why would you ask Me, if you don't believe in Me?

I am not a joiner. I don't join clubs or things. I was on a spiritual path, I was perfectly content to be my own guru. Before India, I really thought I had spirituality basically figured out. And then Baba... I wanted Him so badly...

I didn't tell anyone about the experience, until I was really sure that is how I felt, that I wasn't going to change my mind.

LW: Your Album is called *A New Life*, was that title inspired by Baba's New Life? Are you starting a new life?

AS: It is named after the title track, "*A New Life*." I think that I named the album after that song because the lyrics pretty much summarized how I feel about life – all the time. Every day, every moment, I wake up and I am in this prison of life, the prison of all my habits – all of my patterns, denial of my true self.

We are on this journey, through prison to liberation. Through love and devotion to Baba and reliance upon him, continuing to turn to Him every day, that action aids in eliminating the sanskarsas that keep us hooked on the ego. Attachment to Him is the only attachment that is healthy to have, attachment to the Master. That is what the New Life is





about to me ~ Complete trust and obedience to Baba. I don't think I am at that level but I am working on it.

The album is about that – trusting Him, denying Him, going back and forth... feeling alone, feeling connected... really wanting to lay my life down at His feet. So that's why the album is called *A New Life*.

LW: The title song, A New Life, is very jazzy and smooth, and has these lyrics: "These days I dine alone, I don't apologize to anyone." What is that about?

AS: That feeling of being a young single woman: the blessing and the curse of solitude. I hate dining alone! And I also love NOT having to apologize to anyone. It's about just being me.

LW: The second song is "A Love Like Yours" and it's kind of a bluesy railroady song with harmonica and everything. In it you sing, "I've never known a love like yours..." and then you go on to sing about being 8 years old, and then 13, and then "ancient at 21," and then, "... independence had its cost." Tell me about all that?

AS: That song is about Baba.

It's about ~ it has many meanings, it can be referring to a lot of things. Originally, I wrote it using "I" and was reflecting on my process as a kid. I was always deep and thoughtful with an undercurrent of depression, but also expressive, outgoing and social. When I was 8 I felt this load of self-hatred. I went from being an innocent kid, to feeling this massive amount of pain that was pulsing through the whole world. I turned it on myself. I am the youngest of 3 and I had a sense of growing up fast, and being kind of a loner in a lot of ways, definitely spiritually and emotionally.

When I replaced the "I" with the "we" in that song it was my way of connecting Baba to every point of my life, He was with me when I was 8, before and still now. When I turned 21, my brain was just tormented constantly. There was turmoil at home, in my heart, I was lost and grieving. I was 20 when I got to India for my second trip. I went through this whole journey through myself and Baba; He was truly with me every step of the way. And I felt pretty broken, even though Baba was with me. I felt really scared of myself and of the world around me, but I remember thrashing around and taking a ton of risks. I wrote that song when I was 21 or 22.

LW: The third song is "Stay with Me" and is very smoky and KT Tunstall-like. You sing, "You came for our sanity, God and man together... Stay with me forever." Where are you going with this?

AS: That song directly comes through Francis Brabazon's song in his book *The East-West Gathering*. It is an interpretation of one of his poems that starts with "Take my eyes away." And the line in the chorus, "Stay with me," is a shout out to his book *Stay with God*.

LW: Did you know that *Stay with God*, was about him "staying with" Baba at Meherazad. It was a counterpoint to his earlier book, *Journey with God*.

AS: No I never heard that, that's cool. In the song, I am begging him to stay with me, don't leave me, stay with me forever! The song is about – kick everything from me, I don't need anything. If I don't have you then I don't have anything, nothing else matters.

It's a love song too. When you fall in love so deeply, you realize this highest-potential in you. If you lose that love, or its taken away, your potential for experiencing life shrinks. There is less incentive to participate in the experience of life.

This is so fun to talk about these songs!

LW: Song four on the album is "Past the Gates," and it's kind of Norah Jonesy and with a lot of piano. You sing, "Will they let us in past the gates to Heaven?" Tell me more about what that question means.

AS: I wrote that song after a relationship had ended. In relationship we are seeing someone's flaws just splayed across the floor. It is easy to feel like a demon when you get to the end of these types of relationships, especially if being with the person brings out the worst in you. We're so flawed and filled with so much raw sewage, and are we even worthy of crossing that threshold into light and the beauty of the Divine? The answer is somehow, yes, but this is the deep, sad confusion for all humans I think: wondering if we are worthy of the Love we crave.

LW: In “Not Just Roses,” which is song 5, I hear echoes of “The Cat’s in the Cradle.” It’s almost got a Shaker feeling to it. The lyrics are, “Let me lay them down at your feet...” about all the good and bad, nice and naughty things, laying down “everything that keeps us apart.” What can you tell us about that?

AS: That one is Brian Darnell’s song. He is poet and songwriter in Athens, Georgia and I asked him if I could use it because I love that song! It’s so good. He’s awesome, and one of the things I love about his song writing and his poetry is the way his muse is so focused on Baba. His music is all about Baba in this very tender yet terrifically confident way.

There is no question about what he is talking about. At the time, I was still a little more guarded about writing about Baba, and he is NOT that way, at all. I was happy to put his song on the record and honor his southern roots with the fiddle and the banjo.

LW: Song nine is “Brightness on the Hill,” and you sing and play guitar. One line is, “I saw you first in the garden, a smile on your face.” What is this about?

AS: That was the one piece I recorded playing guitar and singing at the same time – singer songwriter style. I love that song, it’s one of my favorite songs I’ve ever written. It’s the story of me seeing Baba for the first time at Guruprasad. That’s what that was. I did feel Baba just smiling at me, welcoming me. It’s a song about a morning-to-evening love affair, you know.

LW: Adrienne, your music is obviously Baba-spiritual music. How hard is it to play publicly to a secular audience ~ say in San Francisco? Or do you keep your songs lyrically generic enough that you don’t really feel concerned about that?

AS: I used to keep my lyrics somewhat generic so I wasn’t exposed when I played out to the non-Baba world. But as I’ve gotten older and more comfortable with myself, I’m a lot more brave with my lyrics. Plus my world view keeps expanding as I age and that gives me more content to write about, to feel about. I want to share more than just my voice with the world, I want to share the little wisdom I’ve gained about being human, loving, letting go, being with God, being lonely, supporting people in pain, speaking up for what matters... To me that’s all about Him, but it’s also about everything else. Still I have songs that are just about Baba, and I feel they are sacred songs that should only be shared in the right settings. Those songs very rarely make it to the club scene unless my intuition tells me to go for it. Maybe in my future there won’t be separate set lists- songs for Baba shows and songs for everyone else- but who knows.

Just to flip that question, I’ve played non-Baba specific music before at Baba gatherings (when I was younger and

didn’t know better) and definitely caught some heat from disapproving members of the community. It was a little hurtful because I felt I could not express my complete self, which was a crummy feeling. But I also respect people wanting to keep Baba as the sole focus of Sahavas and formal get togethers. The point I’m trying to make is that It’s important as an artist to know your audience... we needn’t give our good away to people who don’t really care about what we are offering...

LW: I know you have mentioned that you wonder about people moving to Meherabad, India to live there. Can you say more about that?

AS: Well, it’s happening so I guess that’s what’s supposed to happen, right? It definitely changes the experience for me as a pilgrim. Here are all these people buying condos in this poor-poor part of India, and that energy is now somehow associated with Baba, and that part of it is a little intense for me. Plus all of the people living there in the colony have their own culture and community, which is lovely, but it shifts the atmosphere. I have heard residents and ‘employees’ of the trust say, “Mani would never have



allowed all these people to come and live here.” But who really knows?

Loving Baba is separate from the communities and cultures that we assemble in His name. So, I have judgments about it, but everyone has their own karma and ultimately my opinions are coming from my own karma as well so...

LW: Now you have a new album in the works. What is it the working title, and what can you share about it for our readers?

AS: The title for now is, *Rare* – as in, a steak. And it is really different from *A New Life*. It will be eight songs, and the songs I’ve chosen are a combination of love songs, and spiritual tunes (and break up songs), and it’s a good mix of content. I’m just really excited to reveal new music to people. It was 2008 when *A New Life* came out, and I’ve written a ton of music since then.

With *A New Life*, I released an album and really didn’t know what to do with it. Now I am ready to make this album really happen and do it the right way. This new record will be an authentic expression of me as I am right now, a more mature songwriter and musician than I was in ‘08. Once I get in the studio, I imagine the floodgates opening. I have at least four albums worth of material that needs my attention. In terms of the style of this album, I’d say it will be in some ways a departure from my more acoustic sound, while still capturing the intensity and intimacy of a live show. It’s gonna be different and I’m super excited about it!

LW: Great! So, what is the hardest thing about taking your career to the next level right now? You are beautiful and an impossible talent – as polished as Norah Jones, or KT Tunstall, so what is next for you?

AS: Awww thanks! Well, I’ve been working with a business coach. She’s been helping me create a map for my big life dreams. I’ve struggled with debilitating-perfectionism. I’ve been working on myself so intensely that I’ve been guarded about exposing myself to the world. But all that work has paid off and now I am as ready as I’ve ever been to put my heart out there to this beautiful, super troubled world! I am actively seeking management and booking agents, and the team that I need to get things rolling.

The purpose of my music is to offer healing, medicine, creativity, and inspiration to people. And love. It’s for anybody, anyone.

My hours of just processing things, working on my voice, studying music, writing more and more and still more has created a clearer pathway from my heart and spirit – through my mouth – so I can better communicate my love. I really want to be a channel for Love and Truth in this world. And that’s what my music’s purpose is.

It’s taken me a while to have the confidence to say that. I don’t want to stop at anything, I want to take my music as far as it can go, and keep trusting my muse, trusting Baba and trusting myself. And I don’t feel I ever did really trust myself before so... I’m kinda raring to go here!

LW: Wow!

AS: Hehe.

LW: Is there anything else you wish to share with our readers?

AS: Well, I guess..., one thing that I am excited about in life is how Baba is integrating into my life in such a way that I don’t feel as separate from Him as I did when I first found Him. I feel Him without thinking about Him. He is just such a normal part of my life now. And those moments of inexplicable...bliss, earth-shattering connectedness with ALL-ness... those moments that HE curates... they are so much easier to drop into. And I feel the sweetness of those big moments in quiet ways for more of my days...

To anyone who is new to Baba – That this is such a journey. We show up at his doorstep, and we get this infinite experience of him on some level, and then this tiny pea-pod experience of him. I experience him in all aspects of my life now. I don’t really talk about Baba. It also feels kinda edgy and scary talking to you right now, outing myself even in a Baba magazine. Nothing I say can really convey my feelings.

But sharing about Baba with others is a way to deepen my relationship with him. Yeah. I feel deeper in my relationship with Baba after talking to you. It’s true, it’s true!

LW: Thank you, Adrienne.

AS: Thank you, what a great way to spend the evening!

Adrienne may be reached at:

adrienne.shamszad@gmail.com

www.adrienneshamszad.com

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mNkBp5YkuV8>
(Adrienne Sings with Coleman Barks)
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Fjc53lFNNVI>
(Home Video - When I'm Tired of Myself)
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gCe-J0bchaE>
(Home Video - Barely There)





Adrienne at a party in San Francisco
(Sept. 10, 2014). Photo by Laurent.



That Feeling

A. Shamszad 3/2/15

that feeling in your solar plexus like
molten metal, iridescent and brutal.

that sense upon inhale that the air is
electric, that it could carry you

up and away were it not for the weight
of your bones.

that repulsive sense of desire, the
wanting of something unknowable and
unseen

is love

is nostalgia

is a sign of the loosening of certain
bonds

and the tightening of others.

the feeling of change,

of the everlasting.

the feeling of knowing

what you don't know

and of not enough, but still too much,

time alone.

that feeling of wondering

and resenting curiosity;
of giving and taking and fearing
and
aching

for something unhaveable,

unachievable, yet

worth striving for.

that feeling in your throat like
swallowing sea water, evidence of living

that sense upon exhale that you could
annihilate the planet
if only your melodious moan would
upturn a bellow, a scream.

that alluring sense of hurting, the
mystery of opening one door that you
have kept closed for years

is Love.

is pain.

is loss.

is gain.

is human.

is God.

is why I sing.

The Great Change Project

Ghazals of Bhau Kalchuri

by Gabriella Tal

This recording endeavor is a group of 14 of Bhau Kalchuri's ghazals which he wrote at Baba's order. I was privileged to put them to music. Before he died, Bhau told me to record them. I always liked to listen to Bhauji's advice and he never has steered me wrong. I realized when he went to Baba that was one of the last things he suggested I do. And it made me joyful to think of remembering Bhau as well as Baba while preparing and recording these ghazals.

I went to work with Phil Ludwig as a producer and David Miotke as a pianist. These are two primo folks in the Baba music community and I was really amazed how it all fell into place. We recorded in Asheville this past summer and got down my vocals and David's incredible piano-playing. Quickly my funds exhausted themselves, however, and I found that to put in the harmonies, add David's vocals and mix the whole project was going to be beyond my ability to handle financially. So I started reaching out. And this is the fundraising video I put together.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vEA8VL0HmtM>

We were very grateful that some wonderful people were able to help out. It got us through the next phase of the project. We wanted to offer back a gift to them and to the community and update them on what had been done with their monetary support. We also needed to ask for help for the next phase. (See below: "Where We've Been and Where We're Going") So I took one of the songs I especially liked which reminded me of the Mandali and made a video on that topic to the song "Shedding Tears".

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fYwlaVD6mTs&feature=youtu.be>

These sort of projects right now are so important. We are at such a crucial point in history, having received so many gifts from Baba with such immediacy through the Mandali, I feel those of us who were lucky enough to know them have a responsibility to share these gifts with those who come after us. This is especially true at this time during Baba's Manifestation period. I chose the name "Great Change" because it was the name of one of Bhau's ghazals which we sing and it seems we are really living in or at the edge of that "great change" Baba spoke of.

WHERE WE'VE BEEN AND WHERE WE'RE GOING:

In its ongoing progress, the "Great Change Recording Project" offers this full song and video "Shedding Tears" by Bhau Kalchuri. Music and vocals: Gabriella Tal and Piano: David Miotke. We appreciate so much all the loving support we've received from the community to record these 14 ghazals of Bhau's. As of now, Mark Malachi has added lovely harmonies and The Chapel Hill Chorus lent exhilarating voice to several songs as well. Phil Ludwig our producer tries to keep track of everything!

Donations are still needed to record David's vocals and to do the mixing (for 14 songs!) Please help out if you can: We need about \$1000 to complete the project.. Donations should be made (by check) to Gabriella Tal and sent to Gabriella Tal, Great Change Project, Box 4224, Chapel Hill, NC, 27515-4224. When the project is complete, you'll receive a free CD or digital download – your choice!

You can also reach Gabriella through e-mail: godaloneisreal@gmail.com
Thank you! With love, Jai Baba!

GREAT CHANGE

Ghazal by Bhau Kalchuri
adapted by Gabriella Tal

Oh Beloved I glimpsed what you were doing
For the world in your seclusion
And when as a result of your work
People everywhere awaken
They will repent for having ignored you –the world has to accept you
-And they will accept you – MEHER!

CHORUS

There will be a great change, a great change, a great change
When the aroma of your wine, spreads its love so divine
Throughout the world
There will be a great change, a great change, a great change
When the aroma of your wine, spreads its love so divine
Throughout the world — there will be a great change!

Oh Meher, I know that You have opened Your wine shop
And it will remain open during Your advent.
I do not know how many will come to the wine shop
Your wine's aroma will spread throughout the world —

CHORUS

Oh Beloved, the intoxication of Your love so endures
It goes on increasing, ushering us into eternity,
When its aroma intoxicates and purges the atmosphere
Of the entire world – there will be a great change!

BRIDGE

People of the world, the time is coming – coming soon
When the rays of the Beloved's smile - will touch your hearts
People of the world you have no idea how fortunate you are
The aroma of His wineshop
Will bring a new era of awakening
It will bring a new era of awakening
It will bring a new era of awakening

CODA

Oh Bhau – the world inevitably forgets
Forgets the Beloved – but the Beloved
Never forgets the world, never forgets the world
He is the Father and He takes care of His children.
He never forgets the world, never forgets the world
He is the Father and He takes care of His children.



David Miotke, pianist, with Gaby





The Two Crucifixions of Meher Baba



By **Marc Molinari** (Marseille, France)

Translation by Ken Stermer

Following repeated intuitions and after researching two historic events, which I explain in the text, I have come to the conclusion that there is a divine link between these events and Meher Baba's two automobile accidents called "Two Crucifixions."

THE FIRST CRUCIFIXION, 24 May 1952

Some history:

Initiated by the President of the United States, Andrew Jackson, the bill to expulse the Indians from their land was ratified by a small majority in the Senate and the House of Representatives on 28 May 1830. More than 100,000 Indians (amongst them 16,000 Cherokees) would suffer the consequences.

EDWARD EVERETT (1794-1865, Governor of Massachusetts) told the House of Representatives: "Have we ever seen such a project? Ten or fifteen thousand families are going to be uprooted and transported one hundred, no one thousand kilometers to the desert! There is nothing comparable in the history of mankind."

JEREMIAH EVARST (1781-1831 Lawyer and writer William Penn-Evarst) felt that this bill ordered by the president, was contrary to the morality of the constitution and created a danger for the Indians as well as the United States.

WAS IT WITH THIS ACCIDENT
THAT MEHER BABA TOOK
RESPONSIBILITY FOR THE ACTS
OF THE UNITED STATES
GOVERNMENT?

The United States Supreme Court judgment of 3 March 1832 (Judge MARSHALL) concerned the reinstatement of the Cherokee rights and condemned the injustices inflicted upon the Cherokee Nation when the state of Georgia confiscated their land. Indeed, following the state of Georgia's sentencing of Cherokee leaders to prison, this judgment stipulated that only United States Federal law should be applied

to the Cherokee Nation. President Jackson ignored the rendering of this judgment and did not provide the Supreme Court of the United States with the means to enforce it. This strengthened the State of Georgia in its attitude to not comply with this law.

The resistance of the Cherokee Indians lasted until May 24, 1838, when this mass population displacement was implemented. More than sixteen thousand Indians and two thousand slaves were expelled. The Indians refused the food, clothes and tents proposed by the military. They were convinced that their acceptance would be interpreted as an approbation of their forced exile and a betrayal of their honor as free men. In this great exodus there were no tears, no complaints, only the silence which reflected the acceptance of their fate. More than four thousand people perished on this route which has since been named "The Trail of Tears". It is mainly the northern route which is referred to as "The Trail of Tears" because it is the longest (1,500 kms) and the most difficult.

My conclusion:

Meher Baba's car accident in Prague, Oklahoma took place on 24 May 1952. The same day that the treaty deporting the Cherokee Indians was implemented by the white men (24 May 1838). I think that Meher Baba utilizes historical events and their precise dates to develop and mark His universal work in creation.

Meher Baba told us that this accident was His first crucifixion, with all the physical and mental suffering he had to endure.

Was it with this accident that Meher Baba took responsibility for the acts of the United States government? All the suffering endured by Meher Baba diminished America's responsibility so that its karma would not delay the spiritual dynamic that God had planned for the leader of the New Life, "if it awakens", as Meher Baba said. God permits this Nation to remain "the beacon of goodness" (Jeremiah EVARTS), for a time that He alone knows.

It is interesting to note that Meher Baba said that His spiritual work in the Occident would be accomplished by women, and that only the women mandali were with Him in this accident.

In this light, what appears to have been a tragedy is in fact the inevitable will of God.

SECOND CRUCIFIXION. 2 December 1956



The prominence of the United States in the New Life will be shared with India. It was exactly there, near Satara, in India, in the second automobile accident, on 2 December 1956, that Meher Baba lived what he would call his "second crucifixion".

This accident coincides with the early December 1655 departure from Puna of the Marathi Emperor SHIVAJI and his army for the conquest of Javli. (I have not found the exact date, but I believe it to be 2 December.) The Principality was a barrier in fulfilling the creation of his Hindu state. The conquest of JAVLI (or JOALI) tainted the renewal and expansion of Hinduism for all of INDIA since Shivaji attacked the family MORE which was also HINDU. The MORE family history goes back to the third century as it is a descendant of a younger branch of the Maurya Emperors. None the less, this annexation enabled the birth of the great Marathi State that Shivaji wanted to create to counter the Mogol Empire.

Shivaji was a veiled Avatar who was under the control of the perfect master TUKARAM (born in PANDHARPUR 1598 -1650 or 1608-1649) then under the control of SARMATH RAMDAS* (born in DESHASTHA 1608-1681). Shivaji's actions realigned (as Meher Baba told Don Stevens) a sort of "programming lapse" by the



I look around and see
You
Everywhere
The peace of the
moment
Opens my heart
Wider
As if you are
Sitting here too
Babas love
Lifts the eyes
Toward prayer
A chair
A bouquet of blue
flower
Quiet reverence
To you
Dear Baba
Amen

*By Anne Weichberger
June 8, 2015*

preceding Avatar MOHAMED MUSTAPHA regarding the Muslim expansion which wanted to eradicate Hinduism in India. The paradox of the situation was that a minority wanted to forcefully impose their religion upon the majority.

SARMATH RAMDAS' Samadhi is located in Sajjangad (formerly Parali) near SATARA.

My conclusion:

Following this accident, Meher Baba endured great physical and mental suffering. I believe that through this suffering, Baba accepts the responsibility and compensates (balances) for the tragedy of Shivaji's conquest of JAVLI in 1656 as well as the assassinations of the leader of this principality CHANDRARAO MORE, his brother, followed by the decapitation, in Puna, of his eldest son.

Meher Baba assumes the responsibility for this tragedy as Gods inescapable will.

In so doing, God permitted India to free itself of this action, and to escape from or diminish its karma and remain the leader of the new spirituality in the Orient.

Meher Baba said that His work in the Orient would be accomplished by men. Only the men Mandali were with Him in this accident.

One cannot imagine that such decisions and actions not have direct consequences on the destiny of these two great countries: the United States of America and India, their inhabitants and consequently all of creation, as every action has its reaction. In the Orient this is called Karma.

Summary:

All of creation functions in duality and perhaps using this principle Meher Baba wanted to diminish the karmic consequences of these two great nations devoted to the role of spiritual leadership in the creation of The New Life. Even if some of us have been wounded in car accidents, no one can imagine the importance and intense suffering that Meher Baba endured for us. Meher Baba, himself said, "It had to happen. It was the will of God."

We can also draw a parallel between the two accidents and the crucifixion of Jesus, who was crucified for our sins.

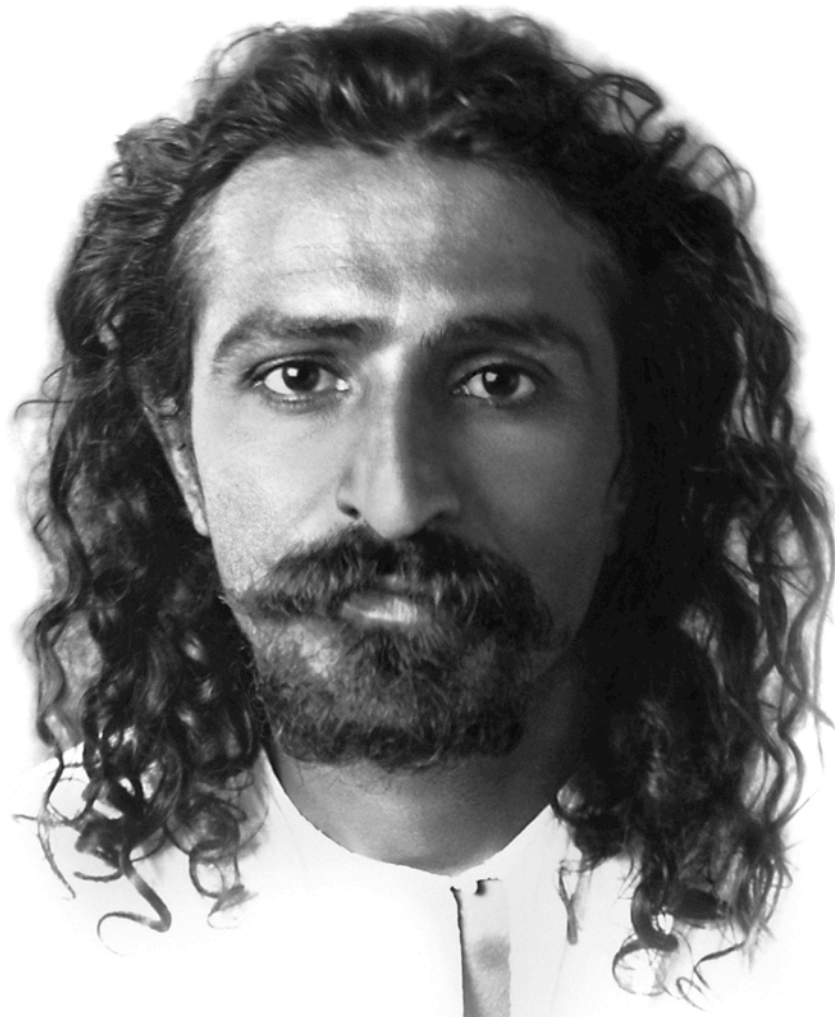
**(I believe that the perfect master SARMATH RAMDAS controlled the action of Shivaji.*

A group of musicians, a 'country pipe band,' played for Meher Baba at a darshan at Masulipatnam. Baba spelled out on his alphabet board,

"I feel very happy to hear that music. It reminds me of the first song that was sung ages ago, and that song produced this phenomena called the universe. God will make me soon break my silence, and that first original song will be sung again, and then the world will realise that God alone is real, and that every one of us is eternally one with God."

~ Meher Baba
22 February 1954,
Masulipatnam, Andhra, AD p26-27





**“I tell you on my divine authority: I am the Ancient One,
I am the Lord of the Universe.”** – Avatar Meher Baba

Chapter Three of Christ Come Again

By Ed Flanagan

Chapter Three

Beyond Religion

Beloved God in everything and everyone is deaf to formal rituals, ceremonies, prayers in mosques, churches and temples. [1]*

As to religion – most prefer menu-chewing – over eating the food –a Zen saying

Where Religion ends, Love Begins

These three things prevent one realizing true spirituality: 1) The church of every organized religion deals in the past, fighting every inch of ground before adjusting to times and circumstances. 2) The educated delude themselves thinking they've done their part and laid the whole creation and the Creator under deep gratitude by mere talking on the subject from a purely intellectual point of view. 3) The masses have a totally mercenary, superstitious attitude toward saints and spirituality. [2]

To gain God, everything, even *religion*, must be sacrificed without hesitation. To go beyond religion is to first know the meaning of real love. Baba gives a lucid explanation between real *love* and *falling in love*, or what is called “Hollywood love.” [3]

Give everything to me – your sins, weaknesses and virtues; but give. I wouldn't even mind one falling in love with me. I can purify this; but when you fall in love with anybody else, you really can't call it love. Love is as pure as God. It gives without *ever* asking; that needs my Grace.

Himalayan yogis with long eyelashes and beards meditate for years sitting in samadhi have not this love. It is so precious. A mother dies for her child in supreme sacrifice, yet even this is not love. Heroes die for their country, but that's not love either.

You only know love by actually having it. You can't understand it theoretically; you have to experience it When you love, there's no thought of self, but only of the Beloved, every second, continually You couldn't have this love even if you tried. It requires grace. But trying leads to this grace. What is God? Love. Infinite love. [4]

Happiest is he who expects no happiness from others. Love delights and glorifies in giving, not receiving. So, learn to love and give and not expect anything from others. You should feel and consider yourself the happiest and most fortunate among men that you've renounced illusion and surrendered to a Perfect Master But your mistake is to again place the burden on your own head;

Place it on the head of One who accepts it with full responsibility. But you keep it hanging over you, hesitating to give it up lest you lose something oh so valuable! You don't allow it to rest on the head of the One who wants it – Baba. You keep it hanging between the two, putting both under suspense and aggravating your suffering. Either keep it or give it up entirely! [5]

In the 1920s, Meher Baba first revealed himself only as a Perfect Master to his most intimate disciples; then in 1931 to Mahatma Gandhi, guiding him spiritually from behind the scenes. He taught both Gandhi and Mother Teresa, and through them Albert Schweitzer and others by his own example how to love and serve the lepers in India with true compassion.

Mother Teresa instantly intuited his Christ-likeness, but was wary and concerned about the Vatican, realizing it could never understand. She asked a Meher Baba disciple, V. Ramarao, to whom she revealed her experiences of Baba, that he not speak of this to anyone until after her death. He met with her several times while driving a truck to deliver goods donated by his company to her orphanage. The following is from his diary:

That Sunday alone in her room, after seeing a Baba photo button on my coat lapel, she asked me if I were a Meher Baba lover. She then said in a very reverential manner, “Meher Baba is the most Christ-like” Here she broke off and was silent for a few seconds, and then said:

“I'm a Roman Catholic nun governed by Vatican dictates, but I know this: Meher Baba

♣ Numbered reference citations are listed on the last page of this chapter.

worked with lepers, and then we four also became involved: myself, Baba Amte, Gandhiji [Mahatma

Gandhi] and Albert Schweitzer. Following that, India is now pursuing leprosy eradication.

“The World Health Organization has a program to wipe out the disease by the end of the century!” After further affirming her feelings about Meher Baba’s divinity, she asked that while she was alive I should never tell people her acknowledging Meher Baba’s Christ-like life.



Mother Teresa, 20th century servant of the poor who met Meher Baba. deeply seeing his Christ likeness.

While depending on the Vatican for continued support of her orphanage, she was concerned Rome would consider her Meher Baba experience as heretical. My American acquaintances Judy & Gary Kenny followed Meher Baba for decades serving the poor in India. They’d run into Mother Teresa at different rallies. One day, they handed her a photo of Meher Baba. Clasp it to her breast, she cried, “*Of course, He is Jesus!*” [6]

However, it was only when he came to the West to personally meet and uplift troubled Americans in the great depression era of the early 1930s that Meher Baba revealed himself privately not only as a Perfect Master but as the *Avatar* – the return of Christ in this age – a revelation that would not take place openly and publicly in India until 1954, and then most openly in America during an NBC television interview on July 22nd 1956.

And now at the beginning of the second millennium, only a short time since his reappearance, the conviction that he is the most recent incarnation of the Avatar for modern times has spread to countless hundreds of thousands worldwide and is growing daily. It will reach a global heightening around the third-quarter of the 21st century, the expected time of Meher Baba’s Universal Manifestation. Commenting on his Avataric claim, Baba said:

When I say I am the Avatar, there are a few who feel happy, while some feel shocked. And many hearing me claim this, would take me for an total hypocrite – a fraud, a supreme egoist or simply *mad*. If I were to say every one of you is an Avatar, a few would be tickled, but many would consider it blasphemy at best or maybe a joke. Being One, God is Indivisible and equally in us all.

So, we can be naught else but **One**. But this is too much for duality-conscious mind to accept. Yet, each of us is what the other is. I *know* I am the Avatar – in every sense of the word – and that each and every one of you is an Avatar, in one sense or the other.

It is an unalterable, universally recognized fact since time immemorial that God knows everything, does everything, and that nothing happens but by His Will. Therefore, it is God Who makes me say I am the Avatar – that each one of you is an Avatar. It is He Who is tickled in some and is shocked in others. It is God Who acts and God who reacts. It is He Who scoffs and responds. He is the Creator, Producer, the Actor and Audience in His own Divine Play. [7]

Against the Idea of “Church”

Meanwhile, it is important to re-emphasize that Meher Baba never wanted, promoted or allowed propaganda; nor was there even the slightest purpose to create creeds, dogmas or converts. On the contrary, his mission was to literally demolish such things, explaining that the various religions are like patent medicines – over-the-counter remedies which may at best alleviate one’s symptoms, but never cure them. Baba explains his advent relative to rituals:

The Illusion of Rituals

In the early phases of awakening, the aspirant is often concerned about established religions with their rituals encouraging the spirit of love and worship. These can help, but only to a very limited extent in wearing out the thick ego-shell in which human consciousness is trapped. And if followed unintelligently and mechanically without heart, the inner spirit of love and worship dries up.

They then harden the ego-shell, instead of wearing it out. Unintelligently followed, rituals and ceremonies cannot carry one very far towards the path, as they bind like any other unintelligent action. When deprived of all inner life they're far more dangerous than other unintelligent actions.

They're pursued, believing they help towards God-realization. And so, lifeless forms and ceremonies are a self-deluding sidetrack to the spiritual path. By habit, one can become so attached to these external forms that intense suffering may be required to dispel their imaginary value. [8]

The Ancient One now repeats his advent and puts his seal on all rites, rituals and ceremonies – *ending them*. His very advent among man is the sacrifice of all sacrifices; His very being in human form surpasses all these existing rites; His very presence on earth is the very Seal, sealing all in the external world, and at the same time unlocking the gate leading to the very core of one's being. [9]

When they are informally spontaneous, expressions of worshipful devotion praising the Highest of the High constitute true worship of God which reaches and is acceptable to Him. But when the mind expresses itself in patterns of formal rites and rigid liturgies, it's no more than an empty echo of countless generations of habits, performed automatically without "heart." Such worship not only does not reach God, but holds the worshipper more firmly in the grip of his own ignorance. [10]

Can one be a true Christian by *not* following Christianity's Dogmas? Novelist Anne Rice, raised Catholic, left it in her late teens only to re-unite with it in her fifties. She claimed: "Following Christ doesn't mean following His followers. Christ is infinitely more than Christianity and always will be, no matter what Christianity is, has been or might become. In the name of Christ, embracing Him, I quit Christianity; quit being Christian.

"I need no middle-men or fundamentalist 'quarrelsome, hostile, disputatious, and deservedly infamous' baggage – whether Catholic or Protestant." Anne and countless others are not divorcing God, but clearly skipping the false middlemen for a direct relationship with the radically compassionate Jesus. Thus it appears that one *can* be a true Christian by not following the dogmas of Christianity.*

To bring about the new era of spirituality it is clearly unnecessary to establish a new Church with its inevitable dogma and doctrine, rules and regulations, organizations and priesthoods who exercise a hierarchy of authority. These things bring about division, disputes and conflict. At the end, the Church exists for the sake of itself and its own survival.

In fact, Meher Baba was so expressly against the idea of "Church" that he gave an explicit mandate to his disciples that in the ages following his 20th century appearance on earth that they *never* start or allow a "new religion" to grow as a result of his current advent.

Organized religions, he said, were mistakes made by well-meaning disciples in each of his previous advents; but after 100-200 years, that particular religion had already become corrupt. Regardless from which advent it had sprung, it soon became spoiled by hierarchical priesthoods, dogmas and rituals – covering him over rather than revealing him.

Zoroastrians, Hindus, Jews, Christians and Muslims – he spared no priesthood of these individual religions. He said there was only one *real* religion: to love, find and experience God as one's own Real Self, and not merely as an article of faith.

God's Truth cannot be argued, defended or limited by scriptures. Now here's an old saying: "Before one realizes God, scripture is misunderstood. After Realization, scripture is

* <https://groups.google.com/d/topic/atheism-vs-christianity/3voiR1YdZCI>

totally unnecessary, for Truth is then experienced as one's very own eternal identity."

Like it or not, we will get God-Realization as our inalienable birthright coming from our very Divine Origin. We have come from the Divine and must *return* to the Divine. There is no other place to go. The great 16th century poet and Perfect Master, Kabir, put it this way:

*The sacred spas are fine for taking a nice bath, But take Kabir's advice and bathe at home.
It's far cheaper. And it's okay to visit shrines to see the idols, graven images and Shiva's phallus.
Some are beautiful art, but they cannot speak to you or open the doorway to your heart.
The Koran and Upanishads [and the Gospels] are mere words; inspired words, but mere words.
What do you seek: a clean body? a stone statue, a hundred thousand words? or the **One**?
Listen! His hiding place is so much closer than you think.* – Kabir

The journey takes as long as we want it to take and not a moment longer, based on our own individual choices. If you hitch your wagon to a star – like holding fast the Avatar – he takes you directly non-stop on the merciful path of love without detours. He clearly says:

“If you lose hold of the mantle of this guide, there is only despair in store for you. The gateway to the highest state of being One with God is firmly closed to all who have not surrendered their false minds to the true guide.” [11]

Or you can opt for various side-trips, layovers, and “holiday packages” as listed in the brochures of life. They urge you with their incessant mantra to “*obey your desires*” – any variety of addictions to drugs, sex, cyber, name & fame, a few lifetimes of hedonistic promiscuity or hyper-materialistic abundance/prosperity venture-schemes, as may be offered in such things as “The Secret,” invariably misapplied for egoistic, self-serving ends.

Any such packages provide endless exploration, misleading you about the true nature of your own consciousness and necessitating countless reincarnations. Or simply pick the wrong new-age guru or false messiah who will not smash but “deify” your false ego-mind.

The Avatar is not only in everyone and everything, but *is* everyone and everything. He is “*It*” from the very 1st moment of creation. This is the real meaning, as in the game of tag when kids say “*You’re it!*” And being “*It*” he is totally and irrevocably responsible for the entire creation, arising continuously and un-endlessly proceeding out from him:

Now listen to what I say on the Avatar. The Avatar comes after so many ages. Lawless God [unbound by law], comes down on earth to be bound in law. The law can never touch him, but *he* touches the law. He grasps the law of Nothing, acts like an ordinary human being, and uses his power, knowledge and Infinite bliss for those bound by the law – to free them from that very law.

That’s why I say “*When you go, I will come.*” This means that you should let go of this Nothing, so that I, the Everything, may reside within you. There being no “you” left, you become me! The Nothing is absolutely nothing, and the meaning of letting go of it is for you to realize that it is really and truly and absolutely nothing – that you can never be bound by it [12]

When summoned in each age by the five Perfect Masters for his scheduled periodic return, he is born again as the Christ-Avatar to suffer and put his very neck on the block for humanity’s final liberation. This alone allows him to declare himself as **Lord of Creation**.

The only reason for the very existence of the creation is that God can become conscious of himself in you, *as you*. And all the while this entire, seemingly endless amazing journey takes place purely and unbelievably in the realm of imagination.

“Just imagine,” Meher Baba insisted, “this whole universe, with all its vastness, grandeur and beauty, is nothing but sheer imagination.” He made a sign with his forefinger and thumb touching and making a circle, a sign which he always used for both “perfection” and also for “zero. Baba describes the universe as the playful whim of God’s own game: [13]

The universe is the outcome of the Lord’s whim. When He realized His own whim and

observed its outcome in the form of the creation, He took responsibility for the entire universe upon Himself, turning the creation into His playground for His own divine game . . . at continuously great cost to Himself. As mankind cannot recognize or understand Him in His impersonal, formless form, in His game, He visits earth in human form, born as a child to place His seal on humanity ONE.

As man, He works so that His seal is stamped into every aspect of life. And when this work is completed, He drops the body as an old man, so that creation may feel the universal push on all levels of consciousness The mischievous child who eternally feels the urge to play, visits our earth, and forms a circle of friends to play with Him in His self-created universal game. [14]

In 1953 when someone asked Baba how *old* Adam was. He replied:

If I were to answer that the first man [Adam] came on this earth 84 million years ago, what would that mean to you? But that explanation would help you understand how the first man evolved, how this first-evolved man has repeatedly, millions of times, been appearing not only on this earth, but on millions of earths [that have burned out and been replaced]. And so he is ageless – timeless.

But this must be explained properly. The Book I personally wrote in one year [1925-26] when I'd just stopped speaking . . . explains this point so clearly. It's important for the world and all the scientists to know, and therefore I have explained about cycles.

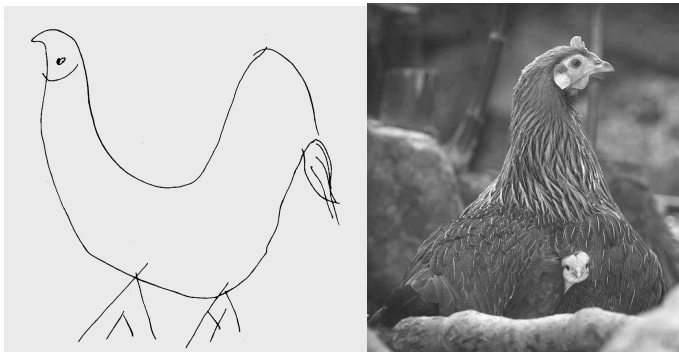
The position of the earth for Realization, the earth dying, and simultaneous evolution of another earth – not just any other planet, or when the first human being evolved, when was the first Realized Being – chicken or the egg came first – all is revealed in detail in that Book. [15]

The big book I have written will be the future Bible, Koran, Avesta, and Veda, and universally accepted by all castes and creeds. I have stopped writing anything after finishing this great work and hence it has force Never before have spiritual secrets been revealed in such a way as I have written them. [16]

It is this same Ancient One, the first Avatar, who comes back age after age as all subsequent Avatars that we celebrate on Christmas; whether the Christmas of Abraham Zoroaster, Rama, Krishna, Buddha, Jesus, Mohammed or any in the endless line of Avatars before or after them. Again, children understand this instantly in the allegory of the Pied Piper, an excellent story for grasping this infinitely complex yet utterly simple divine reality.

The first soul – Adam in Genesis – is known as Shiva in Indian traditions. Meher Baba humorously refers to him – meaning himself – as “The Mischievous Chicken” and narrates an amazing allegorical story of this chicken’s adventures in consciousness.*

It escapes from under mother hen’s wings to experience the world in all its illusory glory. Baba drew a sketch of himself as the Mischievous Chicken. In future ages, every child



Left: Drawing done by Meher Baba, July 30, 1953, of Himself as the Mischievous Chicken – the Ancient One. Right: Could this be the mischievous chicken peeping out from under its mother’s wings?

*This wonderful story is given in full in *The Nothing and the Everything* by Bhau Kalchuri, p. xi

will know this story and identify with this drawing, making their own copies of it.

If believing the Ancient one came only once is based on scripture or on any other tradition, then it is clearly a misinterpretation of that scripture and its tradition. We can only go back to Jesus' words that old wineskins of entrenched religious belief/traditions simply will not do here. This is utterly "new wine" for traditionalists, regardless of their creed. The old rituals of ancient religions are impotent to advance the human spirit into the New Age.

It is this new wine and its periodic new dispensation that always and inevitably came into conflict with the exclusive, traditional, fundamental religious establishment. And it was attachment to their own misunderstanding, derived from their misinterpretation of scriptures that became the stumbling block for the Jewish leaders in Jesus' time, thus attracting His crucifixion in the first place – something He actually desired beyond desire, as we will see.

Faced with the enigmatic reality of Meher Baba, traditional religionists now run the danger of falling into the same mind-set as the scribes and Pharisees of 2000 years ago. To some, Meher Baba may prove to be a similar stumbling block. He certainly was for me.

As Jesus was face to face with them, so that same Avatar faces them again today. They neither see nor hear Him. All they can see and hear is their past traditions and a limited understanding of Old Testament scriptures, already utterly compromised.

The New Testament is no different. It was originally intended as an inspirational text for converts, not a forensic historical document. Up to 800 AD there were hundreds of thousands of erasures, additions, corrections and substitutions made to the original texts.

Many have great theological significance, ranging from alterations of single letters to insertion of whole sentences, at times doing away with or giving rise to entirely new doctrines in the early church. The New Testament at best reveals a "Bible-in-process" – a very, very long distorted process, because the true Word of God is never a "*written*" word.

For as soon as something is written it becomes subject to endless scribbling and mutational distortions; so it must be false. The **living Word** is a Person whose Truth cannot be contained in any book, however exalted. Is there a lesson for us in these times?

And to say God *is, was and will be* is also wrong. For in saying so, we depict not God, but *time*. God simply **Is**. So we say that nothing has ever happened or will ever happen. All happenings in eternity happen **now**. Illusion says everything happens. God says nothing happens, as there is no time. This is a secret we cannot express, but will experience one day. We do what we can by intellect and words in attempting to express the inexpressible.

Books of inspiration like the Gospels, imbued with Hellenistic overtones, were at best a bare-bones outline for new Christians from classical "pagan" Greek and Roman traditions. They were intended to suppress all Eastern concepts and especially reincarnation.

Thus the famous Library of Alexandria was deliberately destroyed by a catastrophic fire, and the most priceless manuscripts of Israel's cabalistic lore and the secret teachings of Egypt and India perished along with the Gnostic traditions. And in this manner the Church destroyed her own roots and beginnings. What remained were bones without flesh.

These bones highlighted only certain time-lines and events during extremely limited periods of Jesus' life. And thus the Church finally managed to discipline her flock by means of craft, cruelty and credulity, all righteously styled under the name of "*orthodoxy*." Meher Baba said as he was the one who lived them, many of these so-called facts are totally inaccurate. Who could be a better witness to this truth? In 1960 he stated:

"Although truth can never be expressed in words, they do have their own importance with very certain limits. The effect of reading depends upon the kind of books and the value you attach to them. We find people quarreling in the name of religion over their holy books like dogs fighting over bare bones which have not a trace of marrow in them."

Baba then asked his disciple, Aloba, to repeat the lines of Hafiz referring to orthodox believer/fanatics, wherein Hafiz says: *O God, forgive the orthodox and fanatics, for they do not see the Truth*. Baba continued, “Real men [lovers of God] pay no heed to ritualistic books, but instill in their lives the truths revealed by the Perfect Masters.” [17]

As reported in the Gospels, all that Jesus said and did could be compressed into a very short time-frame. In fact, three of the canonical Gospels – those of Matthew, Mark and Luke – employ narrative accounts that cover only events that happened during the final year of Jesus’ public ministry in Judea, with only Luke’s narrative adding an account of His birth. John’s fourth Gospel deals only with the last three years of Jesus’ Judean ministry.

Where are the accounts of the other 30 years before the crucifixion, or the 50 years following it – over 80 years altogether? New historical revelations will now begin to boldly assert themselves about the length Jesus’ life on earth, not in His euphemistically termed “resurrected” body, but outside Judea in His gross physical body, extending at least five decades after and beyond the crucifixion.

We will finally come to a shocking but wonderful understanding of that in three later chapters. As a result, humanity will have to totally revise its understanding of Jesus, as given only loosely in the New Testament and the canons of traditional Christianity. Still, He remains the Christ/God-Man/Avatar of His age, and a Being whose all-encompassing glory even the most sublimely faithful Christians have totally underestimated and not grasped.

Additionally, the Gospels do not contain secret Gnostic teachings which Jesus revealed to His inner-circle of fourteen – twelve male apostles and two female inner-circle members [Mother Mary and Mary of Magdala]. He initiated them in a very different way from the masses whom he contacted. Don’t think for a minute Jesus gave the same inner wine to all.

Each was given what they individually were able to absorb; not a drop more. Those in His inner circle had a definite contact with him in His previous advent as Buddha. The rest He veiled, for they had not yet the capacity to contain His Truth. He said this very clearly:

“When he was alone, the Twelve and others around him asked him about parables. He told them, ‘The secret of the kingdom of God has been given to you directly. But to those on the outside everything is said in parables.’” (Mark 4:10-11)

As the Gnostic teachings of Christianity are hidden, so are they in the Sufism of Islam, as in the Cabala of the Hebrew tradition – not that they are forbidden, but because they require great spiritual maturity and insight to even grasp; and so they are reserved.

The Avatar – Always Born in Male Form in the East

Over the ages, the East played a most prominent part in shaping humanity’s spiritual history as home of Avatars, Prophets and Masters. Its contribution to the spiritual evolution of humanity is unparalleled. Someone asked if the West would ever produce an Avatar.

Baba clearly stated, “The Avatar has always been and will always be born in the East. This is due to the peculiar situation in the evolution of the universe and gross plane existence which necessitates the manifestation of the Avatar only in that particular region.”

When asked, “Will the Avatar ever be a woman?” He replied, “Never has there been a female Avatar, nor can there be one. The Avatar has been and always will be in a male form.” Yet he comprises within himself both male and female aspects. [18]

And so, it is the glory and exalted role of woman to unveil the Avatar’s human form as her ultimate gift to the creation, as from her loins he takes his priceless human birth. She is the tree of life producing the divine fruit. Such an incarnation as of Jesus, although conceived without lust, is always the result of the natural sexual union between woman and man.

In this sense, the Avatar’s nativity is never what has been termed a “virgin birth.” The Avatar’s birth is human in every sense of the word – fully God, become fully man. This is

the glory of human birth, as each mother gives birth to the Divine, however veiled. [19]

Only a Perfect Master who himself is the embodiment of that wine and Truth can shed real light on these matters. While we presumptuously limit Christ's consciousness to one historical persona/event, He has inhabited countless Divine-human personas in endless past advents, as different wardrobes of an actor and not simply that of Jesus – however much Jesus is rightly loved and worshipped as the God-man and the Avatar of His particular age.

Without intending to offend anyone, it will be clearly seen and felt by the end of this book how misunderstood the notion of “the one true Christ” has been in traditional Christian circles and doctrines; how limiting and demeaning to God's infinite love and wisdom, and how disastrous to humanity such misinterpretations of that sublime truth have become.

Baba said: “I don't want to be called Redeemer, Savior or Divine Majesty. Disciples, through love and enthusiasm, bestow such titles; while also many misunderstand me, calling me Satan, Devil, Anti-Christ. It's all the same . . . I know who I am.”

God saw the real fix religion got itself into and provided the only remedy – Himself come anew. Never has an Avatar – especially one who claimed, “*I've come this time not to teach, but to awaken*” – left such a legacy of information and teachings on spiritual realities previously and totally unknown by human beings; a veritable treasure house from A–Z, yet to be even discovered by humanity, let alone mined. [20]

Those secrets are contained in this work, defining the record of God's continuous, periodic appearances on earth, time and again for all. In 1922, three years before undertaking his lifelong silence, Meher Baba made clear that he wanted to set the record straight, so that no mistakes are made again as to his Reality. “In time to come, I will give you such writings that will convince you without doubt of the validity of my Reality.”

For ages, the world has pined for this knowledge, while now still ignorant of its existence in our very midst. But even such “book knowledge,” however illuminating, is incomparable to the inner-knowledge, the *gnosis* that only comes directly from the Master.

Only He initiates and imparts that gnosis individually. He said, “God is not to be learned or studied or discussed or argued about. He is to be contemplated, felt, loved and lived; fully experienced as one's own Real Self.” [21]

Meher Baba enjoined his disciples, “It's your job to place my name in humanity's ear. It's my job to bring it from there to here,” pointing to his heart. The journey to awakening is a very, very long one. The awakening itself happens in a flash.

The fragrance of his breathtaking life is just beginning to waft across the planet. With my dogmatic theological background that I was able to track his scent and sidestep my former shadow is a minor miracle itself. The reason this could even happen was that I loved Jesus in my own way as a priest and even after my disillusionment with that life.

And however much I stumbled over my own ignorant shadow, it was his mystical “Christ-scent” that brought me to Meher Baba. His followers are clearly an eclectic spiritual movement of mixed messianic communities – Zoroastrians, Hindus, Jews, Buddhists, Christians and Muslims. As Christ, He is at the center of creation and Lord of the Universe.

Here God works for the sake of God, the world, all mankind and all universal beings. He said, “Being blind and not knowing the way out of Illusion, seek the One Who knows the way.” Now, here's a story he told illustrating blindness and finding the Way.

Four blind men were sitting one day talking about elephants. “I've heard the elephant is a huge animal,” said the first. The second added, “So big that he needs tons of food.” The third said, “I'd really love to ‘see’ this big animal.” The fourth added, “Providing he's not too hungry!”

As they were talking, along came an elephant and his keeper who overheard the blind men

and decided to give them the experience of ‘seeing’ the elephant. “Not to worry, friends, I’ve brought you an elephant! Now you can find out for yourselves how big an animal he really is.”

And as the four blind men went to the elephant, one touched his legs; another, his tail; the third felt the trunk, while the fourth ran his hands over the elephant’s ear. They were so happy and thankful that they were given this experience. The keeper then led the elephant away.

As the men sat down to share their experiences, the one who touched the tail said, “The elephant’s like a rope.” The one who had touched his legs said, “No. The elephant is a pole. The one who had touched the ear said, “You’re both wrong. The elephant is like a carpet.” The one who had touched the trunk said, “Believe me; the elephant is just like a huge serpent. In this way the blind men fought about their individual experiences, each thinking the others were wrong.

In this way, each thinks his own religion and idea about God is the best. And people fight like hell to prove they are right, like the blind men who could not *see* the elephant. Illusion has made us all blind, and only the Master can restore true sight. Meher Baba’s sister Mani speaks of the one Avatar’s repeated multiple appearances down through time: [22]

In India it’s common to refer to God as “the One Upstairs” – as if God stays way up there in enjoying permanent retirement after creating the world, and only now and then answering a prayer or two. Lucky for us this isn’t the way it is. Luckily, God loves His creation so much that now and then He dresses up as man and comes “downstairs” to be among His children on earth.

To be seen by us He puts on the cloak of Perfect Man and stays and plays with us, laughs and suffers with us. But He keeps it all a secret. Only a few share this great divine secret. While He’s downstairs as man He’s called the Avatar, because being God + Man = Avatar [the Christ].

After some time with us, God drops His human cloak and leaves it behind for the world to worship. Yes, God leaves His cloak with us [buried in earth], but He doesn’t leave us. Though we no longer see Him, His Love and grace flow more powerfully than ever – available to everyone.

God is One, the One and Only One. But God’s cloaks are many. Each time God decides to come “downstairs,” He chooses a different cloak from His beautiful wardrobe. Through endless time God has worn so many cloaks for the sake of his children on earth.

As we know, the cloaks of God have different names, like Zoroaster, Rama, Krishna, Buddha, Jesus, Mohammed. And now as we know, it is Meher Baba. Not long ago I had a dream which illustrates this In my dream I was driving with a friend in a small red convertible, a sports car with a back seat just big enough for one. When the car stopped at a traffic light, I felt a presence behind me in the dusky light. Turning, I saw a figure in Arabian clothes, and instantly I knew without a doubt that it was Prophet Mohammed! He silently indicated He wanted to hitch a ride.

As I nodded, He got into the small back seat and we drove on. After a while, He signaled us to stop, got out and walked away. Curious about where He was going and why, I too got out and quietly followed. Keeping a distance, I followed Him through a maze of tents of different sizes and shapes, like on the grounds of a big circus.

At last He stopped before a big tent with a flat top, and as He pushed open the entrance flap, I saw a long row of costumes hanging along its wall. As the Prophet walked by the row of costumes, fingering them lightly before picking one for His next Act, I woke up from my dream.

My heart cried out: “Dearest God, I didn’t have to see the garb You picked. I know You picked the most beautiful One named Meher Baba. I know because I have seen You in that garb, love You as naturally as a fish loves water, lived my life with You – all I’ve ever wanted to do! Now there are many, many, many who haven’t seen You in Person but have received you in their hearts.

They follow You implicitly. Among them are those walking the long path of surrender, daring to climb the mountain of obedience to reach You some day by Your grace. O Beloved Avatar, Your lovers await You. No matter what costume you wear for Your next Act they will know You. Their hearts will recognize You and be ready to be received by You. They wait, sustained by their longing for You and You promising them: ‘I will come again!’ ” [23]

Putting his Avatarhood in the context of time, Meher Baba said:

The Avatar appears in different forms with different names at different times in different parts of the world. His appearance always coincides with spiritual regeneration, and so the period immediately preceding his manifestation is always one in which humanity suffers from the pangs of the approaching rebirth. Man seems more than ever enslaved by desire, driven by greed, held by fear and swept by anger. The strong dominate the weak; the rich oppress the poor.

Large masses of people are exploited for the benefit of the few who are in power, as the individual forgets himself in excitement. Immorality and crime flourishes, and religion is ridiculed. Corruption spreads throughout the social order. Class and national hatreds are aroused.

Wars break out as humanity grows utterly desperate. There seems no possibility of stemming the tide of destruction. Then suddenly, the Avatar re-appears as the total manifestation of God in human form – a gauge against which man can measure what he is and what he may become. [24]

I am merged in God the way Buddha, Christ and Krishna were merged in and had become one with God. In the same way, I live in God. As they knew God, so do I know Him! You yourself and others can know God in the same way and become one with Him!

I can't expect you to understand all at once what I want you to know. It's for me to awaken you from time to time throughout the ages, sowing the seed in your limited minds, which must in due course and with proper heed and care on your part, germinate, flourish and bear the fruit of True Knowledge which is inherently yours to gain On the other hand, you may be led by ignorance.

You may persist in your own way . . . that too is progress, however slow and painful. After innumerable incarnations, it is eventually bound to make you realize that which I want you to know now. Save yourself further entanglement in the maze of delusion and self-created suffering owing its magnitude to your ignorance of the true Goal – AWAKEN NOW. [25]

Now the Curtain Rises

Finally, the lights dim as we are in the late 1800's setting the stage for the era just preceding the 20th century. The Age of Reason's anti-spiritual cynicism and enlightenment philosophies are guiding the spirit of America's new rugged, self-centered individualism.

The Hindus say, "*Before dying, a snake's venom is at its most poisonous state.*" And so, the terrible Kali Yuga begins – the Machine Age – when the consciousness of life on the planet is at a total stalemate. The oceans of the spirit have dried up. The fulfillment of essential human needs has been removed from its organic matrix of nature and community.

Instead, it is taken over by heartless machine processes. Technological efficiency allows these needs to be met with decreasing human effort. Given such a gridlock of dense impressions filling the gross, subtle and mental worlds, consciousness has truly stagnated.

When the wick of righteousness burns so low, even the Perfect Masters cannot do their assigned work. They must again call upon and bring down the Christ Avatar. Only he can re-ignite the flame of Love in the world. The bow has to be pulled to its extreme before the arrow of Divine Love can be released upon the modern world.

In the darkness of the *Kali Yuga*, as low as it had descended, so high now is the possibility for its illumination and resurrection as the movie of Illusion cues up to its climactic and dramatic reel. All kingdoms of consciousness are poised for the push forward they so deeply yearn for – consciously or unconsciously – in "*the jump.*" Man cannot permanently escape his own Divine Self, and must inevitably yield to life-giving Truth.

Europe had geared up with the industrial revolution and all its attendant ills – child labor-slavery with its rampant sexual abuse, while in the Far East British sponsored opium wars were precursors of the modern Afghan wars. There was also deep trouble in the New World. Native American peoples were being systematically uprooted and destroyed.

How symbolic that a crack appears in the Liberty Bell on George Washington's Birthday in 1846, just 48 years before the Avatar's rebirth. It renders the bell dumb and soundless. In New York, the new-world's microcosm, life is practically synonymous with crime. Neighborhoods degenerated into debauchery are becoming gang-ridden turfs ruled

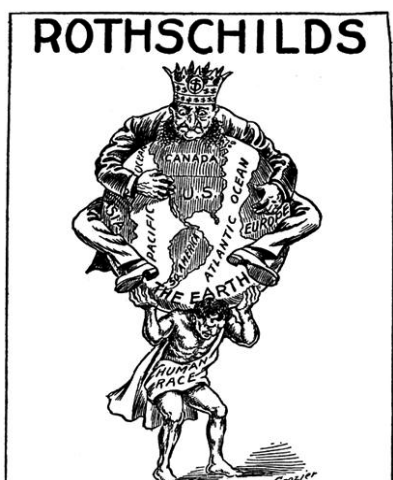
with deception, selfishness, hatred and greed.

Slavery inflames the South in a Civil War which for the first of many times fractures and devastates America's unity. Science is in the air with the dragon of electricity just around the corner, bringing with it electric lights, telephones, transatlantic cables, the internal combustion engine, the steam calliope, airplanes and all kinds of other "stuff."

Banks – The New Devils

In 1800, nine decades before the Avatar's birth, this dark tone was set when Nathan Mayer Rothschild, a London financier and founder of the international Rothschild family banking dynasty, infamously said, *"Allow me to issue and control a nation's currency and I care not who makes its laws."* In this era also arise the other elite dragon families – the Pierponts, Morgans, Warburgs and Rockefellers – referred to as the *"Illuminati."*

These extraordinarily secret, privileged banking families' sole and ultimately selfish interest is controlling the world through monetary strangleholds. Like royalty with "divine rights," these elite felt they ought to rule the world as much as possible, carefully insulating themselves behind their world banking empire.



A 1912 newspaper cartoon. **ROTHSCHILDS: FOR BILLIONS A YEAR AS INTEREST ON BONDS I RENT THE HUMAN RACE THE PRIVILEGE OF EXISTING ON MY EARTH. THROUGH THE PRIVATE CENTRAL BANK SCHEME, I'LL SOON GRAB THE UNITED STATES – THEN I'LL OWN ALL CHRISTENDOM. CZARS, EMPERORS, KINGS AND THE PEOPLE ALL MUST OBEY MY ORDERS, SUBMIT TO MY EXACTIONS OR GET OFF MY EARTH!**

Just after the Avatar's birth, the Kali Yuga would continue its insidious tenacity as the U.S. Treasury Dept. and the IRS enter the picture. Again, none are federal agencies, but all were equally designed to enslave the world's once-free people. U.S. President Woodrow Wilson fully admitted and damned himself as a traitor to America after he was forced, proverbial gun-at-head, to sign the Federal Reserve into existence in 1913:

I am a most unhappy man. I have unwittingly ruined my country. A great industrial nation is now controlled by its system of credit; no longer a government by free opinion, no longer a government by conviction and the vote of the majority. We have become a government by the opinion and duress of a small group of dominant men [bankers]. The biggest men in the U.S. are afraid of a power so organized, so subtle, watchful and interlocked, so complete and pervasive they had better not speak above their breath when they speak in condemnation of it. –Woodrow Wilson 1919

http://en.wikiquote.org/wiki/Talk:Woodrow_Wilson

A dollar was worth a dollar in 1913 just before the Federal Reserve was formed. 102 years later that dollar is now worth 4.26 cents. This is what the Federal Reserve did for

America and the world. It is 100% owned by the banks and prints fiat monopoly money from thin air and just as valueless. U.S. Congressman Ron Paul said, “It is no coincidence that the century of total war coincided with that of central banking.”

President Andrew Jackson cited as his slogan, not his truly great battlefield exploits as his greatest accomplishment, but “*I killed the bank*” – his victory over the hated Second U.S. Bank which sought to give full control of the nation’s currency to bankers – what the Federal Reserve then now fully accomplished.

President Lincoln believed the greatest threat to the Union was certainly not from “*those dammed Confederates, but from those damned bankers*” – a cabal designed to slowly and eventually overtake, control and forcibly unify the planet through monetary/political strangulation. Germany’s Chancellor Otto von Bismarck said prophetically:

Abraham Lincoln’s death was an utter disaster for the world. There is no man great enough to wear his boots. Many fear that foreign bankers with their tortuous tricks will now entirely control the exuberant riches of America and use it systematically to corrupt modern civilization. They won’t hesitate to plunge the world into wars and chaos, so that the Earth should become their inheritance.

These elite world banking empires slowly brought civilization, governments and all mass media under complete domination; keeping people asleep as to the real agenda behind worldwide economic collapses. Thomas Jefferson observed in 1802: “Banking institutions are more dangerous to our liberties than standing armies.

“If Americans allow private banks to control and issue their currency by inflation and then by deflation, banks and corporations growing up around the banks will deprive people of all property. Children will wake-up homeless on the continent their fathers conquered.”

In his *The Rise and Fall of the Roman Empire*, Edward Gibbon named the five basic reasons for the decline and fall of that Empire:

- The undermining of the sanctity and dignity of the home – the basis of human society.
- Rising taxes by the spending of public money for bread and circuses for the masses.
- The mad craze for pleasure, each year more exciting, more brutal and more immoral.
- Building great armaments when the real enemy was within.
- The decay of individual responsibility and the decline of religion as mere ritual forms, losing touch with life and the power to guide people.

We merely need look at Wall Street’s and the secret world banking empires’ multi-trillion dollar theft in the early 21st century, the relentless U.S. military-industrial complex’s permanent state of war with its 3 “B’s” – *bullets, bombs and banks*.

And with those came war/guns/oil/drugs. The humanly degraded modern mass culture feels the impact of how far man has fallen in this horrific Kali Yuga and the Avatar’s advent, funded by a banking system that exploits humanity with interest-bearing debt and the blind acquiescence of humanity to its own suicidal enslavement.

For an interpretation of modern civilization’s last days we can turn to another insightful spiritual teacher, little known in the U.S., but who taught prominently in France for forty years, Omraam Mikhaël Aïvanhov [1900-1986], a Slavic Bulgarian Christian and heir to an ancient line of spiritual teaching descended directly from St. John of Patmos who authored the New Testament *Book of Revelations*. Aïvanhov wrote no books.

However, his teachings are voluminous transcripts from his prophetic lectures. One such volume is entitled, *The Book of Revelations: A Commentary from Editions Prosveta: 1991*. Aïvanhov interprets the Revelations as relative to today:

The four Horsemen of the Apocalypse symbolize the cataclysms ordained by the four great

Angels of the elements on high. For these Angels are so powerful that the merest sign from them sets in motion other forces which devastate the face of the earth.

Why can't human beings understand that everything they do entails certain consequences [sanskaras], and that they cannot continue to transgress the laws of nature and interfere with the work of the elements with impunity? By their actions and also by their thoughts, feelings and their anarchical attitude, men exasperate the forces of nature, and in the long run these forces react and move to restore order. Nature is not something inert and insensate.

Christ is the Divine Lamb, the spirit of love that attracts, draws together and sustains all things . . . the bedrock and foundation of creation . . . sacrificed that the matter of creation should be impregnated with the divine fluid of his blood, the unifying bond ensuring universal cohesion to bind together all atoms, molecules and "letters" of this immense Book. In earth's stones and the sky's stars – everywhere, this love holds the structure together . . .

Mankind will never entirely disappear. Don't worry. Humans are very tough and can survive anything! On the other hand, there are certainly going to be all kinds of cataclysms and upheavals. At this era's end, be ready to enter a new heaven and walk upon a new earth. *

In his 1984, George Orwell – a total optimist – describes super state of Oceania, whose language of war invents lies *"passing into history to become truth."* Finally, before the mid 21st century, the accumulated evils of an oligarchic secret global government would come to the fore; things so unspeakable whose depth humanity could neither face nor fathom. One of my teachers, media "guru" Marshall McLuhan, stated this sad truth in 1964:

"Only small secrets need protection; the big ones are kept secret by sheer public incredulity." Even the FBI's J. Edgar Hoover warned, *"The individual is handicapped in coming face to face with a conspiracy so monstrous he can't possibly believe it exists."*

And again, William Casey, the treacherous 1981-1987 CIA Director put it simply: *"We know our disinformation program is complete when everything the American public believes is false."* Meher Baba also clearly warned:

"The world is drawing close to the great upheaval which must precede the breaking of my silence; an upheaval entailing great suffering to humanity to profoundly change the heart and sweep the world clean for the new and vital phase that must follow . . . Only when from his deepest heart man desires something more lasting than wealth, more real than power, will the wave of destruction recede." [26] [27]

Bloody racist revolutions took place in Italy, Ethiopia and the Philippines, with wars in South Africa, Cuba, Madagascar and between China/Japan in the Chinese Boxer rebellion. History became the fate of people who thought they owned the earth. Then came the American Gold Rush and India's great famine with the loss of millions. Meanwhile by the 19th Century's end, life in New York was just short of a scene straight out of Dante's inferno.

Children at age 6 or 7, unable to be afforded or simply disposable-unwanted from their parents' lust, were turned onto the streets to subsist as pickpockets, whores and pimps, or forced to work in 16-hour day sweatshops – exploited in all ways imaginable.

Ordinary people lived in decaying, crime infested ghettos, ruthlessly run by corrupt politicians. Rampant disease and crime were the accustomed way of life whose expectancy was very short by modern standards, especially among very young and tender children.

Human waste swill-buckets were simply tossed out of windows onto the streets below. People held smelling-salts under their noses just to be able to walk through their own neighborhoods. That was the tenor of life on those streets when the Avatar was born. The world has little understanding of how bad things were in those days – absolutely no clue . . .

The "wick of righteousness" had burnt so low as to never be re-ignited again; or so it must have felt to those living through it, and to us looking back in gross disbelief from the century, while still sublimely ignorant of the sinister plight of our own current problems – the

*www.richardccook.com/2010/09/23/esoteric-christianity-and-the-signs-of-the-times-part-ii-of-iii-2/21st



Left: street-wise adolescents at the turn of the century. Right: 10 year old girl working in a New England sweat-shop textile mill, 1918 [photographed by Louis Hine]

final degradation and enslavement in the modern life of docile “American sheeple.” Politics and turf wars with “century, while still sublimely ignorant of the sinister plight of our own current problems – the rightful Protestant Americans” vs. “Irish-Catholic scum” went beyond even Martin Scorsese’s portrayal in his 2002 award-winning film, *Gangs of New York*. Rival thugs, police, firemen, Tammany Hall politicians – butchers, all of them – ruled the streets. The Wild West in its most notorious wildness utterly paled in comparison.

In the person of New York City, simply as a microcosmic movie back-lot of the rest of the world, humanity had sunk to its lowest depths. Apart from lifestyles of the rich and famous it was a world of bottom feeders. Godlessness prevailed everywhere.

Its business tycoons were John Jacob Astor, Andrew Carnegie, the Guggenheims, Hearsts, Mellons, the Pierponts, J.P. Morgan and John D. Rockefeller, all of whose monetary empires would plunge humanity into a torment of further darkness, wars and depression. What future nightmare our current century may hold for humanity no one can yet dream.

At the end of the new millennium’s first decade, we smell the acrid smoke of a civilization roaring in flames – the global unrest of a new holocaust never before known. Meher Baba shed tears of compassion for what humanity would have to pass through before his Manifestation when he poignantly remarked, “Jesus said, ‘Father, forgive them for they know not what they do.’ I say, ‘*Father, pity them for they know not what will happen.*’ ” 5302

Meanwhile, despite all these horrific aspects, things weren’t totally bad. There were also stellar moments at the 19th century’s end, the time of the Avatar’s birth. With fresh 20th century breezes on the horizon, the 1890s saw the first motion pictures, gramophone records, experimental sound/color films, the first successful aerial glider, steam-engine flights, the first cardboard boxes and tin-cans. And not to be denied, the impressionists were also there.

They were the first to set their sails against the breeze, already getting a whiff of the coming New Age. Intoxicating energies of light and form from the subtle realm beyond the gross world insinuated their art – Claude Monet, Renoir, Sisley, Degas, Pissarro, Cézanne and the post-impressionists van Gogh and Gauguin.

Its literature embraced H.G. Wells, Joseph Conrad, Henry James, Kipling, Chekov, Tolstoy [whose daughter-in-law became a lifelong Meher Baba disciple], Thomas Hardy, Sir Arthur Conan Doyle, Oscar Wilde, Henrik Ibsen, Sigmund Freud and George Bernard Shaw.

It saw the reign of Queen Victoria and Sitting Bull leading the Lakota Nation in final battles of the American-Indian wars, women’s suffrage, as well as the invention of two new sports – basketball, volley-ball and the revival of the ancient Olympic Games. Here, too, entered the discovery of X-rays, radioactivity and the electron. It saw the world tour of the great Buffalo Bill Cody’s rodeo with sharpshooter Annie Oakley.

It included the great showman P.T. Barnum, theatrical impresario David Belasco, the

great actress, Sarah Burnhardt, and the renowned Russian director/impresario, Constantin Stanislavski. Its music gave us Brahms, Tchaikovsky, Antonín Dvořák and Debussy, Scott Joplin, Gustav Mahler, Camille Saint-Saëns, Verdi and Wagner.

And so it was also a strangely and auspiciously joyous period to herald in a new age of Divinity among men, though the time for the Perfect Masters to act seemed alarmingly overdue. Why had they waited so long; why did things have to get so out of hand before they finally did something about it? The Avatar comes when the presence of Reality in the midst of illusion is most necessary. Thus, God acts in His own very precisely timed moment.

A Young Hero in Search of God

One destined to catch the breeze was Meher Baba's father, our age's new "St. Joseph," named Shahr-yar Irani. He was born in the town of Khorramsha, Persia [Iran] to a poor Zoroastrian family March 21st 1853, Persian New Year's day, heralding the beginning of spring. His Persian name *Shahr-yar* means "emperor," later simplified to "*Sheriar*."*

Avatar Zoroaster appeared in ancient Persia between 5-6000 years ago. His primary Master was a God-Realized Hebrew, but the world knows practically nothing about the religion that descended from Him. He prescribed a life of "good thoughts, good words and good deeds," and was the first in this last 5000 year cycle of seven Avatars.

In 1865, while prospectors clamored in their search for gold throughout the American West, Sheriar, a mere boy of 12, mined the inner gold of union with God as a wandering renunciate traversing the remote deserts of Iran in search of the Divine.

Although uneducated, as a child he one day suddenly gained full reading and writing knowledge of Persian, Arabic and Hebrew, as if a veil was suddenly torn from his mind, revealing this past-life knowledge. In later life, scholars would seek him out to clarify subtle points in all of these languages. Every human mind contains all knowledge, but the curtain of false impressions in our lower minds prevents access to knowledge of our ageless past.

A precondition of this gift is a state of desirelessness; something Sheriar had. He was truly desireless. And as he'd not misuse the gift, God gave back to him this rare knowledge. The stillness emanating from him was precisely a reflection of his utter desirelessness. [28]

He spent the next 18 years of his youth wandering with deep spiritual thirst the deserts from Iran to India. Zoroastrianism had no mystic traditions, so Sheriar chose to practice the Islamic mystical Sufi path. He was also the devout follower of a Muslim saint, while never leaving his birth religion of Zoroastrianism.

A wandering mendicant, he was chaste, lived on alms and was totally honest, brave,



Late 19th century dervishes.

*Pages 84-104 at www.lordmeher.org detail the extraordinary adventures of Sheriar's early life.

loyal, funny, smart and strong. But all seemed in vain. Begging his food, he walked 100s of miles each year for years on end. Cut by rocks and thorns, his foot wounds were nothing compared to his heart wounds. Burning love urged him on with the name of God, “*Yezdan, Yezdan, Yezdan*” ever on his lips, without even a *glimpse* of his Beloved God. [29]

In desperation at age 31, reaching the point of either Realization or death, he hid himself in a remote Indian jungle to undertake a 40-day fast. It was a dangerously heroic penance, *chilla-nashini*, where one sits in seclusion in a hand-drawn circle for the entire 40-days – no food, water or sleep, facing whatever comes to one’s consciousness. If persevered to the end, it was said that the angel Gabriel appeared to grant the devotee’s sincerest wish.

During the time of Gautama Buddha, with the world in a different state of natural peacefulness, a yogi or hermit could meditate at these highest levels. But today with so much digital machine-age noise, it’s almost impossible to achieve these highest states.

Three ancient yogis still alive today dwell in remote Indian caves where sound cannot penetrate. They have lived in blissful peace and utter calm – the secret of overcoming of the convolutions of “sound” – not for just 2 or 3 days a week, but for over 600 years. [30]

This is the state of *chilla-nashini*. Time passes slowly, and Sheriar loses track of it. He can no longer differentiate between the days. As he enters deeper into his 40-day fast, a ferocious lion suddenly appears, ready to devour him with deafening roars that vibrate and shake the very ground beneath him. He does not move. The lion disappears only to be replaced by a ferocious tiger, stalking the circle for hours on end. Sheriar does not move.

No sooner has the tiger disappeared, then suddenly flames arise on all sides around the circle, moving in closer and closer, convincing him by actually making him feel that he is burning alive. Still, he does not move. Hideous gases and screaming giants appear with spears pointed at his heart, their eyes and faces ominously dripping blood. He does not move.

Soon they too disappear. These dreadful serial nightmares all possess alarming faces of horror to torture him. It is nothing but his own false mind projecting itself outward onto the screen of his consciousness – hellish inner-plane hallucination/nightmares.

But alas, he dozed and fell out of the circle, having remained within it only 30 days – a 10-day shortfall. He wept inconsolably in apparent defeat. Disheartened, bewildered and half-dead, he dragged himself away and collapsed on a river bank, falling unconscious into a deeply needed sleep. He awoke to a divine voice that clearly spoke to him.

“*He whom you seek and wish to see – His attainment is not yet destined for you. Your son will attain it, and through him – you!*” Was it the voice of Gabriel? Sheriar awoke with those words echoing in his mind, “*Your son – through your son.*” What could it mean?

A wife, a son? Exhausted, with such thoughts he fell soundly asleep for 3 more days. Then, pale and totally haggard, some power was guiding him to follow its force. He walked more than 400 miles south toward Poona, India, without feeling any pain. It would be over ten years before that Blessed son would appear. And *how* He would appear. [31]

Seventy years later, that son foretold by the angel would retrace his father’s steps in dangerous Indian mountain wildernesses and scorching deserts, travelling in 1940 with his men and women disciples. Suddenly turning to his young sister Mani, that son, Meher Baba, gestured to the surrounding countryside, “Look around. You see all these mountain ranges?

“Here we’re travelling by bus, but Father walked it all looking for me . . .” Mani recalls: “I’ll never forget Baba’s expression when he said this, remembering our father, Sheriar. Even in a bus it was horrible. *‘Father walked this barefooted, searching for me.’*”

Totally disheartened, Sheriar completed the 400 mile trek to Poona, finally visiting his older sister Piroja whom he’d not seen since childhood. Alarmed at his still restless spiritual wandering, she begged, “For god sakes, settle down and get a job! Get married!”

Incidentally, in walking to Poona, Sheriar passed through the small village of

Arangaon, on whose outskirts his future Divine son would establish the greatest spiritual community of the modern age, including his and his family's final resting places. In 100 years it would become the world's most foremost site for spiritual pilgrimage, and I myself would bow down there many times at Sheriar's tomb with loving gratitude. [32]

In 1883, Sheriar's sister Peroja, still pleading with tears and begging him to marry, promised to find him a good wife. As Sheriar chuckled at this, a little 5 year old girl clutching a writing-slate passed their house. "All right, if I marry, I marry *her*. No one else!"

Of course, he realized the absurdity of his offer with at least 25 years between them. But Peroja thought, "Why not try? Who can say it's not in their destiny to come together?" So she rushed to her good friend and neighbor Golendoon, the child Shireen's mother.

She begged on her knees to save her dear brother and her happiness by consenting to give her daughter Shireen to Sheriar in marriage. It was an unwritten code in those days and always adhered to that one could never go back on one's word or break a promise once given, either in jest or in earnest. Knowing Sheriar's most pure spirit, Golendoon agreed.

He was stunned when taken up on his word, knowing he could never go back on it. And so began a chaste 9-year engagement. Shireen's father Dorabji was so dead set against it that even nine years later in 1892 he boycotted the wedding with Sheriar 39 and Shireen 14.

Actually, they had married due to their past life connections and sanskaras. Sheriar always said, "*Whatever happens is all God's will. What happened was to happen. And what is to happen, happens. It is God alone who does everything.*"

Ages and ages of past connections is the only way to understand one's good fortune to be with the Avatar, and not just a coincidental quirk of fate. It's all well planned and charted out, although we have no idea who and what we were in the past. Nor do we know how we have this great privilege to be associated with him now. But that's how it is.

Sheriar finally settled down and saved his money for some years as a door-to-door cloth merchant. Then he opened a Persian tea shop in Poona's famous Chaar Bowdi area, where later on his son's first Master, Babajan, settled under a neem tree a short distance away from Sheriar's tea shop. She, too, was destined from eternity to be there for his son.

Then he opened a second shop, selling cold drinks, sandalwood and incense used in Zoroastrian religious rites. He eventually owned ten shops, but wasn't interested in worldly business for money's sake. God's name, *Yezdan*, was silently and constantly on his lips. He kept all family duties, carrying out the necessary tasks to well provide for his household.

Apart in age by 25 years, they were also poles apart in temperament and outlook. Still, they made a perfect pair with Shireen's practical-no-nonsense personality, a sharply needed contrast in their roles of raising the extraordinary Divine child soon to come.

But that child would not their firstborn. On January 2nd 1893 at age 15, Shireen gave



Sheriar Irani during early 1900s

birth to a son they named after the ancient Persian king, *Jamshed*. Suffering post-partum depression, she was unprepared and too young to accept the responsibility of motherhood.

Living close to Poona in Lonavla and running a restaurant there, Shireen's older sister Dowla and her husband Faredoon were childless. So they were more than happy to care for the new baby, and began raising Jamshed as their own son. Six months after his birth, Shireen again conceived, but this pregnancy was very different. From the outset Shireen felt the natural joy of an expectant young mother.

She had wonderful dreams which her mother Golandoon would interpret. When the day came for the birth of their second son on Shireen's 16th birthday, Sheriar felt the deepest meaning beneath it, as finally the child long foretold by the angel was now to arrive.

We see how his amazing story unfolds with a prophetic dream hours before his birth. While feeling Shireen the natural joy of an expectant mother, Shireen was blissfully unaware she was giving birth to the Christ child and the Avatar of our age.

Five hours before his birth, as the midnight gong rang from Sassoon Hospital's clock-tower, Shireen awoke in alarm, confiding to her mother keeping bedside vigil in room 14 that she'd had a clear vision – an open space and a sea of people looking expectantly toward her:

“And I saw a glorious person like the sun sitting in a chariot, his cool brilliance filling the entire atmosphere. A few people were pulling his chariot, while thousands were leading him in procession. Tens of thousands of eyes were gazing at him, consoled by his divine radiance. I was in the procession and marveled at the luster of his face. His light fell on the whole procession. All eyes were fixed on him. They couldn't look away.”

Tears of joy came to Golandoon. “Oh Shireen, do you realize a very auspicious son is being born to you today. His name will spread all over the world. He will be among many thousands of people one day, carried in grand processions just as you dreamed. He will be paid reverence and honor.” Comforted by her mother's words, Shireen fell back to sleep

Chapter Three Quotation Citations

Numbers in **bold** refer to the online Lord Meher pages found at www.lordmeher.org with the page number typed into the left column for search.

1 **4008**

2 *Sparks of the Truth*, ed. C.D. Deshmukh 1967 pp.110–111

3 *Sparks of the Truth* p.18

4 **1843–44**

5 **2037**

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7 **3555**

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9 **4506**

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11 **2442**

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13 **344**

14 *Avatar of the Age Meher Baba Manifesting*, by Bhau Kalchuri p.111

15 **3271**

16 **834**

- 17 **4804**
- 18 **1619–20**
- 19 *How a Master Works*, by Ivy Duce p.457
- 20 Glow International, Spring 2009, p.11
- 21 **3047**
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- 23 *God Brother*, by Mani Irani pp.143–46
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- 25 Meher Baba Calling p.20
- 26 **1373**
- 27 **2563**; Treasures from the Meher Baba Journals, ed. Elizabeth Patterson & Jayne Barry Haynes, p.166
- 28 *The Real Treasure*, Volume III by Rustom Falahati p.69
- 29 **95**
- 30 *Lord Buddha's Explanation of the Universe*, English transl/edited Lawrence Reiter, p.169
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