

OM ॐ POINT

INTERNATIONAL CIRCULAR • ISSUE 18 • SPRING 2016





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The Barn Issue

The Meher Baba community worldwide was shocked to hear of the vandalism in the Barn at the Meher Spiritual Center. In this age of tweets, email forwarding and listservs, the news spread rapidly. We have photos taken by a Baba lover shortly after the incident, and an on-the-scene report from Joe DiSabatino. As of this writing the two young men allegedly involved have been apprehended. One, a sixteen year old minor is unknown, but his seventeen year old accomplice is pictured and named in news reports.

It is not common for me to write here, as the Editor in Chief of OmPoint International Circular, simply because each issue to me speaks for itself. I have to take a moment however to say something about Karl Moeller. This morning, between 7am and 1pm in Tucson, Karl had to go the hospital for a case of Atrial Fibrillation (“afib”). They had to zap him with electricity to get his heart going back on some predictable rhythm. This evening, at 5pm he was already back working on this issue of OmPoint. All I can say is that Karl is a real worker for Avatar Meher Baba. Such dedication, such passion to serve, is incredibly rare. I love you Karl, and all the work you have done over the years for OmPoint, but more importantly for your Avatar, Meher Baba himself. Baba knows all you do. Om. Shalom. Shanti. Salaam.

Your brother, Laurent

LETTER TO THE EDITOR

5 Sept. 2015

Dear Laurent and Karl

Another great issue of OM Point, thank you!

Your exchange of letters and corresponding articles are so relevant for these post mandali days. Our need to for guidance on the spiritual path an ongoing challenge, ideally coming directly from Meher Baba and our higher self, as you have pointed out.

Although at times the spiritual path can be fraught with self doubt, even fear and other sanskaric colouring, it can be lonely too. So seeking out help is totally understandable, but as you wisely caution, putting one's faith in the wrong hands can at least be a side track or as Baba dramatically states-‘To put yourself in the care of an imperfect master is like letting a madman sit on your chest with a knife’!

One way that I personally found beneficial was spending time with Don Stevens and being involved with one of his companionship groups in London. I no longer felt I was grappling with important or even not so important life questions and decisions on my own. To have a group of trusted companions to share the joys and tribulations of this inner-journey and having their combined help with ‘truing’ often invaluable.

Don has thoughtfully left a wealth of information for these experiments in group work, including Baba's message of ‘inner links’. Particularly worth looking at are Don's books, ‘The Inner Path in the New Life’, ‘Some Results’ and ‘Meher Baba's Gift of Intuition’.

Beads on One String Foundation is looking at using this model in its ongoing work of exploring ways of working with not only other Baba lovers but also those from other faiths and paths.

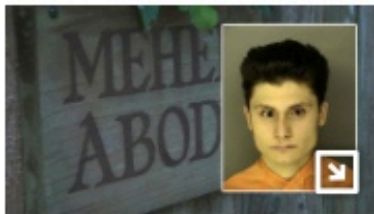
With much love in Baba to you and all fellow travellers,
Jane Hoskin
U.K.

2 teens arrested for vandalizing Meher Spiritual Center

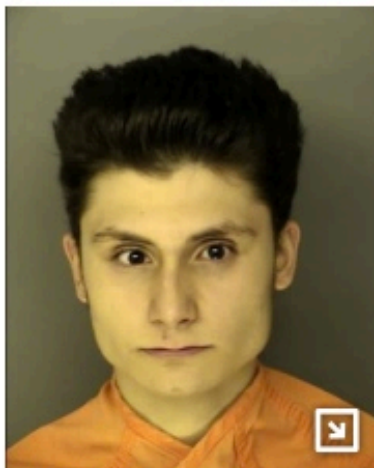
Posted: Feb 09, 2016 11:13 AM MST

Updated: Feb 09, 2016 11:13 AM MST

By WMBF News Staff CONNECT



Alan Michael Wodzinski's mugshot over a background image from the Meher Spiritual Center (Source: Horry County Detention Center, WMBF News)



Alan Michael Wodzinski. (Source: Horry County Detention Center)



Photo from inside the Meher Spiritual Center, taken for an exclusive report in February 2015. (Source: WMBF News)

MYRTLE BEACH, SC (WMBF) – A 17-year-old and a 16-year-old were arrested after allegedly vandalizing a building in the the Meher Spiritual Center, located on the waterfront near the Myrtle Beach Mall, on Saturday, January 23.

Alan Michael Wodzinski, 17, was arrested by Horry County Police on Tuesday, and an unidentified 16-year-old was arrested on Wednesday of last week.

On the night of January 23, Horry County Police responded to the Meher Spiritual Center, located in the 10200 block of North Kings Highway, for a report of malicious damage to the building. The director of the facility showed police that every window in a building in the back of the property had been broken out, antique furniture in the building had been overturned, and numerous pictures and picture frames had been broken, according to the police report.

Two fire extinguishers that were missing from the building were found near walking paths outside the building, the report states.

The director told police that the building is open from 7 a.m. to 9 a.m. every day for guests to observe the antiques, and secured sometime between 7 p.m. and 8 p.m. each night. The caretaker had arrived at 7:45 p.m. that day and found the damage.

Wodzinski was booked into the Horry County Detention Center Tuesday morning and charged with malicious injury to a place of worship, according to jail records. He was released later that morning on a \$10,000 bond. The 16-year-old who was arrested was issued a juvenile summons and released to his grandparents, the police report states.

One year ago, WMBF News was granted exclusive access inside the 500-acre Meher Spiritual Center, which was founded in 1943 by the Chapin family and dedicated to Meher Baba, a native of India and a spiritual leader who traveled the world spreading his message of peace.

Read and see more of the center in our report here:

[**EXCLUSIVE: Inside the Meher Baba Spiritual Center**](#)

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EXCLUSIVE: Inside the Meher Baba Spiritual Center

Posted: Feb 09, 2015 11:31 AM MST
Updated: Feb 11, 2015 8:23 AM MST

By David Klugh [CONNECT](#)



MYRTLE BEACH, SC (WMBF) - It is the single most valuable piece of undeveloped waterfront property left along the Myrtle Beach Oceanfront, and it's the family that developed most of the oceanfront that has made sure it will never be developed.

You've probably driven past the Meher Baba Spiritual Center a thousand times and wondered what really goes on behind its gates. WMBF News is the first to get a new crew on the property in more than 30 years.



It is one of the most densely-developed oceanfront strips in the nation. From border to border,

Myrtle Beach's Grand Strand is a Grand Canyon of high rise hotels, timeshares and parking garages, with the obvious exception of a stretch of coastal forest that seems to come out of nowhere directly across from the Myrtle Beach Mall: 500 acres of prime real estate, woods, fresh water lakes, high plateaus, massive dunes and oak hammock.

Since the mid-1940's, this has been one of the most "un-Myrtle Beach" locations in Myrtle Beach - the Meher Baba Spiritual Center, dedicated to the spiritual leader, Meher Baba. The native of India traveled the world spreading his message of peace - not a new religion, but a guide for life away from materialism, jealousy, anger and worry.

It's been more than 30 years since a news crew took a peek inside the Meher Baba Spiritual Center. It's not that those who run it have something to hide. In fact, our invitation came with no rules, and no limits on what questions we could ask or where we could go. But the privacy and the silence of this facility may convince some that something sinister is going on beyond the gates. What we found, might surprise you.

Buzz Conner has been a follower and volunteer at the center for decades.

"There's no kind of hidden thing going on here," Conner explains. "There isn't anything to join. It's not a religion. There's no initiation. There's no money to pay, no prayers you have to say. There's no hierarchy of disciples you have to follow. There isn't any kind of benchmark of anything you accomplish to say aha, I've made it, I follow Meher Baba. There's none of that, and there never has been."

MORE

SLIDESHOW: Inside Meher Baba's Spiritual Center



For the first time in decades, news cameras are going behind the gates of the Meher Baba Spiritual Center - click here to see a slideshow of what we found.

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When Elizabeth Chapin (yes, the daughter of the most famous developer) befriended Meher Baba, he was looking for a home in the west. In 1943, the Chapin family donated these 500 acres for the Spiritual Center. The land may have been worth a few thousand dollars at the time. But the spiritual leader warned that decades later, the land would be priceless, a void in an otherwise over-developed landscape. Many might resent the Center having such a rare and beautiful piece of land.



"Their advice to us was to keep it quiet around. Because it was very conservative, it was religiously conservative down south here," says Conner.

Today, our culture has changed. A Spiritual Center is hardly the strangest thing we might come across during single day. However, the message here has not changed.

"Our job, those of us who live here and work here at the center, is to help preserve this place as it was when he was here, so that people can come and enjoy it," Conner adds.

And, every day the individual cabins are filled with both followers and those curious, for overnight stays.

"I think it's so important to have a quiet restful space," says Mimi Hay. She was looking for a way to gain spirituality and wasn't finding it until she found the Spiritual Center. "We're right here on a natural lake right next to the ocean. It's the only place on the east coast that has this kind of natural landscape, and people can drop the business of the world and go within."

Mimi Hay has been "going within" here at the Center for more than 20 years. And while she says God is a big part of why people come here, religion is not.

"I could join Buddhism, Catholicism, Judaism, Hinduism, etc. into beads on one string, as Baba would say. It's really about your love relationship with God," she explains. "And then the ethics of how you deal with the world, with people around you. Trying to find a harmony with all of that."

Weekly musical programs, readings, hikes - they all help to build that harmony. And it's all open to the public, to anyone who wants to be part of it.

While the welcome mat is certainly out for anyone and everyone, whether you're staying the night or just wanting to hike the trails here for the day, it does come with conditions. After all, this is considered sacred ground, and the staff and volunteers here at the Spiritual Center want you to know that comes with responsibility.



The Spiritual Center wants you to respect what they have worked so hard to maintain over the last 65 years. And yes, they want to leave with a better understanding of who Meher Baba was. There are rules.



"When you're here you can't talk about politics, you can't backbite," says Conner. "You can't talk badly about other people, no use of drugs - no telling drug war stories or drugs or alcohol on the center."



Meher Baba himself only visited the Center three times, but those visits are what made the place so personal for him, and so special for his followers.

Charles Haynes met Meher Baba twice as a child. That's all it took for him. He has been returning ever

since. His visits are a way of renewing his faith with a break from his home and church in Washington D.C.

"People drive by, they should stop and see if they have the question, because the wonderful thing is that it is a place for anyone to come and enjoy the atmosphere," says Haynes. "And take away from it whatever is meant for them. People come from great distances just to spend a few days here. Not because it's a beautiful place. It is. Or not because of it being on the ocean, but because he was here."

If you stay here, chances are you'll meet people from all walks of life, all faiths and some who consider Meher Baba their only faith.

Aenon Kumar is one of them. She found Meher Baba in 2007 the same way others discovered him in the 60's and 70's.

The Who's Roger Daltrey and Pete Townsend were devoted followers. The Grammy-winning rock opera Tommy was dedicated to Meher Baba, and is even considered their interpretation of his work.

"I had wanted spirituality in my life that I really hadn't gotten and wasn't finding anywhere else," Kumar said. "And I thought it really fit how I was feeling about the world and myself and a void that was in me."

The Who not your cup of tea? This spiritual leader continued to influence Pop culture decades later when Bobby McFerrin discovered one of his writings and turned it in a Grammy winning hit called, 'Don't Worry, Be Happy'.

"I think people do have kind of a fear because they don't understand, so they kinda fill it in with, ya it's kind of a cult, it's something different," Kumar added.

That 1988 record of the year puts this place in perspective. Those here will tell you there are some things they will never allow inside these gates: the towers, traffic and tension of life outside the gates.

MORE

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The Barn, the Wounding, the Garden of the Beloved

by Joe DiSabatino, Myrtle
Beach SC

Dennis had asked me to read two of my poems at the Meher Center's Saturday night program on the evening of January 23rd. The program starts at 8:15 and he's always at the Meeting Place well ahead of time to set up as he has done like clockwork for the past thirty-two years. On this Saturday evening, it was 8:10 and Dennis still hadn't come. Something highly unusual must have happened, I thought. Or maybe he was just having car trouble. At exactly 8:15, he rushed in the back door and apologized for being late—he muttered something about a personal emergency and the program got under way.



The Barn at the Meher Spiritual Center, Jan. 2016. Cordoned off by police as a crime scene.

It's Dennis' responsibility to go to the Barn at 7:00 pm on Saturday night and lock the doors. As I later found out, on the night of the 23rd he had discovered the vandalism at that time. Somehow, despite being in a state of shock, he was able to host the meeting as if nothing had happened. I read my poems, sat down and watched the film featuring the Amartithi celebration of 1976.

Like Baba-lovers all over the world in the following days, I was stunned, and cycled through a range of strong emotions and conspiratorial thoughts. But I kept coming back to the conclusion that it didn't really matter to me who did it or why they did it. All that mattered was that it happened, that it hurt, and that some chunk of pristine innocence and untarnished atmospheric purity, some Narnian kind of Center magic had been damaged. It felt like the whole Center and not just the Barn had been violated. And like most crime victims, I knew I'd get over it, that the life of the Center would continue to thrive, but at the same time, somewhere deep inside, I could tell I'd never totally get over it.

It wasn't until Thursday of that week that I suddenly remembered the content of the two poems I had read on the 23rd. The first one is titled "Don't Ever Snap" and it's a paradoxical take on Baba's Silence, urging Him not to break but to deepen it, to pile drive the steel rod of His ineffable quietude deep into the bedrock of the world soul. One line of the poem reads:

"Aim the might arrow of your un-utterableness
Into the sickened heart of the world's violence"

That's what I wanted Him to do, was urging Him to do that night. But instead He did just the opposite--He allowed the dark arrow of the world's violence to pierce the heart of His home in the West.

The second poem I read is titled "Everyone Carries A Wound About Inside". I had some misgivings about reading it because not everybody agrees with its premise but I decided to read it anyway. Here's the entire poem:

everyone carries a wound about

everyone carries a wound about
inside
that will not heal
this fact can be proven
by the sense of hearing
late at night
when the dogs are barking
and the birds do not sing
there's something else out there, howling, searching
it's that part of ourselves we cast out
abandon in the dark alleyways of our night

if one walks slowly
and pricks up one's ears
late at night
when everything about is quiet
one hears, for instance,
the rattling of a mirror
not firmly attached to a wall
it's that part of ourselves we cast out
begging, pleading with us to gaze into the mirror

I compress my wound into a sliver
of dark light
late at night
when everything about is quiet
I sneak up to the hill
I slip it into the tiny crack
between the threshold
and the closed Samadhi door
I slide my wound into the tiny crack
between the threshold
and the closed Samadhi door
I listen. I wait.

everyone carries a wound about
inside
that will not heal
cherish it
it's your ticket of admission...
to the Garden of the Beloved

when my portion of His Divine Light
spills out of that infinitesimal crack
between the threshold
and the closed Samadhi door
I roll it up into a ball
and push it under your door
for you to use, my friend,
against those moments
when your pain is too great
for you to use
against the moments
when the pain is too great

everyone carries a wound about
inside
that will not heal
cherish it
it's your ticket of admission...
to the Garden of the Beloved

by Joe DiSabatino



I was inspired to write this poem by Rumi and by the myth of Chiron, the Centaur (half horse, half man) in Greek mythology who became known as the Wounded Healer. Chiron was a renowned healer and teacher of the children of the Greek kings and heroes. The impulsive teenage Hercules shot a poisoned arrow at a rival and Chiron intervened by taking the arrow in his leg. The poison was divine in nature and was inevitably fatal. Chiron, the greatest of healers, could not heal himself.

“Chiron symbolizes our experience of pain, alienation and woundedness, and is therefore connected to suffering in one form or another. In mythology, the centaur Chiron sustained a wound that never healed and he was said to have suffered unceasingly from it. And yet, it was this suffering that drove him to search for relief, and that search brought him the knowledge, wisdom and experience that expanded his knowledge about healing. This enabled him to counsel, teach and heal others, earning himself the label of the Wounded Healer. And it was through an act of compassionate negotiation that he was finally relieved of his suffering, by trading his life for Prometheus' freedom from torturous punishment.

Chiron is therefore associated with phrases like "the wounded healer" and "the wound that never heals." There are some tragedies, crises and abuses from which our human nature cannot completely recover. That doesn't mean we have to let those wounds define us or consume us, but there is a certain quality to our experience of these things that cannot simply be wiped away. We carry the memory of that pain to some extent, and for some people that pain is never very far away from their here-and-now consciousness. For some of us, Chiron represents a more profound and persistent wound than for others.”¹

The ravaging of the Barn feels like that kind of Chironian wound to me. Everything that was broken will be replaced or repaired—they were all physical objects—but there is something intangible that will be forever dented or cracked--the original wholeness, an unsullied, crystalline profound stillness inside the Barn, resonating with Baba's silence, that was disturbed, if only for a brief time, by the smashing of furniture, framed photos, and windows. As I write this the Barn is cordoned off with yellow police tape, a crime scene. As I stood there I couldn't help thinking that the whole world, in one way or another, is fast becoming a crime scene and that there is no escaping it, not even in the protective shelter of an ex-donkey barn that three times hosted the Ultimate Wounded Healer, the Avatar.



Chiron[1] the asteroid/planetoid was discovered in 1977. In astrological circles, its placement by sign and house in the birth chart speaks of how and where each of us carries a wound that never quite heals, perhaps a real or imagined handicap of some kind. It's the wound that drives us to our knees and forces us to implore the Divine for assistance. It's where we are forced to surrender because our ego fails again and again to create a desired change. Chiron is also the astrological symbol for the new age of intuition, and in that sense it's a symbol for the emerging New Humanity that Baba is ushering in. The astrological symbol for Chiron is a key and one is reminded of Baba's statement: "The book that I shall make people read is the book of the heart, which holds the key to the mystery of life." It's in our awakened heart that we access our deepest intuition.

Chiron takes approximately 52 years to make one revolution around the Sun. It has a strange elliptical orbit between Jupiter/Saturn and Uranus---it links the inner personal planets with the outer transpersonal planets (Uranus, Neptune, Pluto and beyond). Since Chiron was the mythological great healer, it's interesting to note that the alternative healing movement really took off starting about 1977.

It's even more interesting to note that when the Qutub Sai Baba of Shirdi dropped his body on October 15th, 1918, Chiron was at 0 degrees Aries, the degree which is the symbol for a new start, the first day of spring. Did Meher Baba take over as the head of the spiritual hierarchy on that day? Because fifty-two years later, on January 31st, 1969, the day Baba dropped the body, Chiron was again at 0 degrees Aries. Baba was probably the head of the spiritual hierarchy for exactly one revolution of Chiron around the Sun/zodiac.

In Meher Baba's birth chart, Chiron is at 18 degrees Virgo. The transit of Chiron around anyone's birth chart often re-stimulates the Chiron wound at certain times. The conjunction (at age 52) and opposition (180 degrees from its placement at birth) are key periods. In the fall of 1994, when the painful and divisive controversy in the Myrtle Beach community peaked, resulting in a change of leadership at the Center, Chiron was at 18 degrees Virgo. It happened during Baba's second Chiron return. Some people say some of the interpersonal fallout from that time is still in evidence.

On January 23rd, 2016, the day one or more individuals took out their anger or hatred or revenge inside the Barn, Chiron was at 18 Pisces, exactly opposite Baba's natal Chiron at 18 Virgo. This was the most powerful aspect to His Chiron since the fall of 1994. Similar to that time, but in a totally different way, Baba's lovers world-wide were stabbed in the heart, saddened and reminded that the worst that goes on in the world at large can and will penetrate into His family and into His sacred spaces. For both good and bad, we are the world, His world.

And yet, and yet, as the last lines of my poem state—a poem that for some reason I was supposed to read that Saturday evening—cherish the pain, this most recent Avataric wound we are all privileged to share in, don't let it go to soon, feel it, face it. In French, the word “blesser” means to wound, hurt, injure or offend. Ultimately it's not about who did it or why they did it. Rather, cherish it, this blessing from Baba, because it's our ticket of admission to the Garden of the Beloved, to Baba's Barn inside the heart, that simple, natural space big enough to hold all of us in His Love, the space where the stubborn donkeys of our egos transform into beautiful white horses wishing to serve and surrender.

1. Wendy Guy, Evolving Door Astrology (www.evolvingdoor.ca), “Chiron in Pisces, Surrendering to the Wounded Healer”

All photographs of The Barn (Jan. 25, 2016) at the Meher Spiritual Center are copyright (c) 2016 Joe DiSabatino.



Mehera - Mani photo by Wynn Coates

Date: Fri, 5 Feb 2016 11:58:43 -0500

From: Meher Spiritual Center <meherspiritualcenter@gmail.com>

Subject: [Meher-Center-Messages] Announcement: Barn Update 2-5-16

February 5, 2016

News about the Barn

Since our last update, there has been much encouraging progress. First, we must share the most important thing, and that is the tremendous support coming from all of you--your concerns, your trust, your offers of skills, time and donations. This has been the inspiration that has sparked the healing and recovery that is beginning to emerge. The Amartithi gathering last Sunday, where more than two hundred gathered in the Meeting Place to celebrate Baba's eternal life in our hearts, was a testament to our faith and our trust in Him. All of you were there with us---such love has descended upon this sacred ground.

After yesterday's insurance company evaluation of damage to the Barn, we were given the green light to begin the cleanup work. It will first involve a meticulous sorting through and picking up of all debris and glass, and moving all furniture and objects out of the Barn to areas of safe storage for clean up and repair. In this transition of beginning the restoration work, there is great easing of heart. The Barn will be beautiful again, and enriched by all of our love for Beloved Baba's Home in the West.

Though we have not yet received confirmation that the two identified suspects have been arrested, we have been assured that it will happen very soon. The charge, as we understand it at this time, is "malicious entry and destruction of a religious facility." We continue to cooperate with the Horry County Police Department, and expect to meet with them again early next week to receive a full report on the case and the proceedings that will follow. We are confident in their process, and grateful for their expertise in handling the complexities of this case. We urge all of you to share our confidence, and stay with us as we move forward.

The immediate priority, of course, is to secure the Barn. While it is under repair, which it will be for quite some time, it will be locked, alarmed (for fire and intrusion), and only open for workers doing the repairs. The initial work involves removal of all the broken window and door glass so that those openings can be closed off and the alarm system, which has been in place for many years, reactivated. The area around the Barn will be taped off until all of the glass and debris outside can be cleaned up--probably just a few days. Then that tape will be removed, and only the entrances will be roped off.

We will continue to keep you informed. Your sustaining love, attentiveness and devotion to the Center are what miracles are made of-----extraordinary, heartfelt words, thoughts and deeds. Our Beloved Baba and His dear Barn have picked up our hearts and run with them.

In His Embracing Spirit,
The Board and Staff of the Center

Date: Fri, 19 Feb 2016 15:01:50 -0500

From: Meher Spiritual Center <meherspiritualcenter@gmail.com>

Subject: [Meher-Center-Messages] Announcement: Barn Update 2-19-16

February 19, 2016

Dearest Baba Family,

The initial cleanup of the Barn is complete and the extensive repair work has begun: removing broken glass from the doors and installing new glass, replacing damaged screens with new ones, and making preparations for painting the walls and rafters. A wonderful detail—a match has been found for the beautiful blue color chosen by Norina for the rafters so many years ago. While we know that months of repair lie ahead, when we see the staff working with such painstaking care and love, we cannot help but feel that this sacred building, which Baba so loved, will be restored to its original beauty and charm.

The local TV station did a short piece on the vandalism, and the local newspaper, the Sun News, ran an article about it, for which a reporter, Elizabeth Townsend, spoke with Buz Connor. We felt both pieces gave a fairly good overview of the incident.

With respect to the two young men who were arrested, the criminal prosecution is being handled by the 15th Judicial Circuit Solicitor's office (in South Carolina, the District Attorney is referred to as the Solicitor). The Solicitor's office will let us know what assistance they may need as the legal proceedings move forward.

The board called an emergency board meeting earlier this month to address the incident and to set priorities for its upcoming retreat on February 27 and 28. The safety of the Center—its guests, staff, physical structures, archival materials and natural environment—will be a primary focus of the retreat.

We know that along with all the deep feelings and outpouring of love for the Barn, and the deep gratitude that nothing worse happened, it is only natural that some are experiencing feelings of anger and frustration in the face of such violence to Baba's Home. After all, Baba said He didn't want His Lovers to be stones. At the same time, He reminds us that we must not act on those feelings—but rather give Him our wholehearted trust, remember everything is His will, and surrender all our feelings, good and bad, true and false, to our Beloved Who takes care of everything in His time.

Elizabeth often said, when something bad has to happen, Baba mitigates it—He cushions the pain so it is bearable. We can see this here so clearly: Baba's own three chairs untouched by destruction; the beautiful cypress structure intact; the sacred oak under which our Beloved sat, still standing; and, above all, the extraordinary reminder that no act of vandalism, no event in the world, can dim the brilliance of His eternal love.

We are so grateful for the wave of love and support that continues to embrace the Beloved's beloved Home in the West. It inspires us to remember Him and to trust that He is ever present and will guide us in His work here at Meher Center.

In His All-Embracing Love,
Ann Edelman, Secretary
On behalf of the Meher Center Board

FIRST THERE IS INTUITION

Meher Baba

When you feel something as intuition and have no doubt about it, then know it is real. Passing doubtful thoughts and temporary emotional feelings should not be given importance. But when you feel it touches your heart, follow it.

When it is from the mind, it is not intuition. Intuition means that which comes from the heart. In the divine path, first there is intuition, then inspiration, then illumination, and finally Realization. If it touches your heart, follow it. And God willing, from today you will know that if it is intuition it is right.

My love will help you and guide you to understand what is right. Love Baba. God wants honest love. He is all honesty and wants honest love. So love Baba. God will help you in your quest for the Truth.

LORD MEHER, 1st American ed, vol. 11 & 12, p. 3812, Bhau Kalchuri
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TUITION AND INTUITION

Meher Baba

Intuition has been buried under the debris from the piecemeal tuition of the assailing experiences of the false. Tuition is impressed from without, while intuition dawns from within.

Tuition thwarts intuition. Therefore, the tutoring of the mind by external events has to be counteracted by inner awakening. Then and only then can intuition, in its transcendent understanding, truly judge without yielding to the stupor of indiscriminate impressibility.

LIFE AT ITS BEST, pp. 37-38
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MY FRIEND ADELE

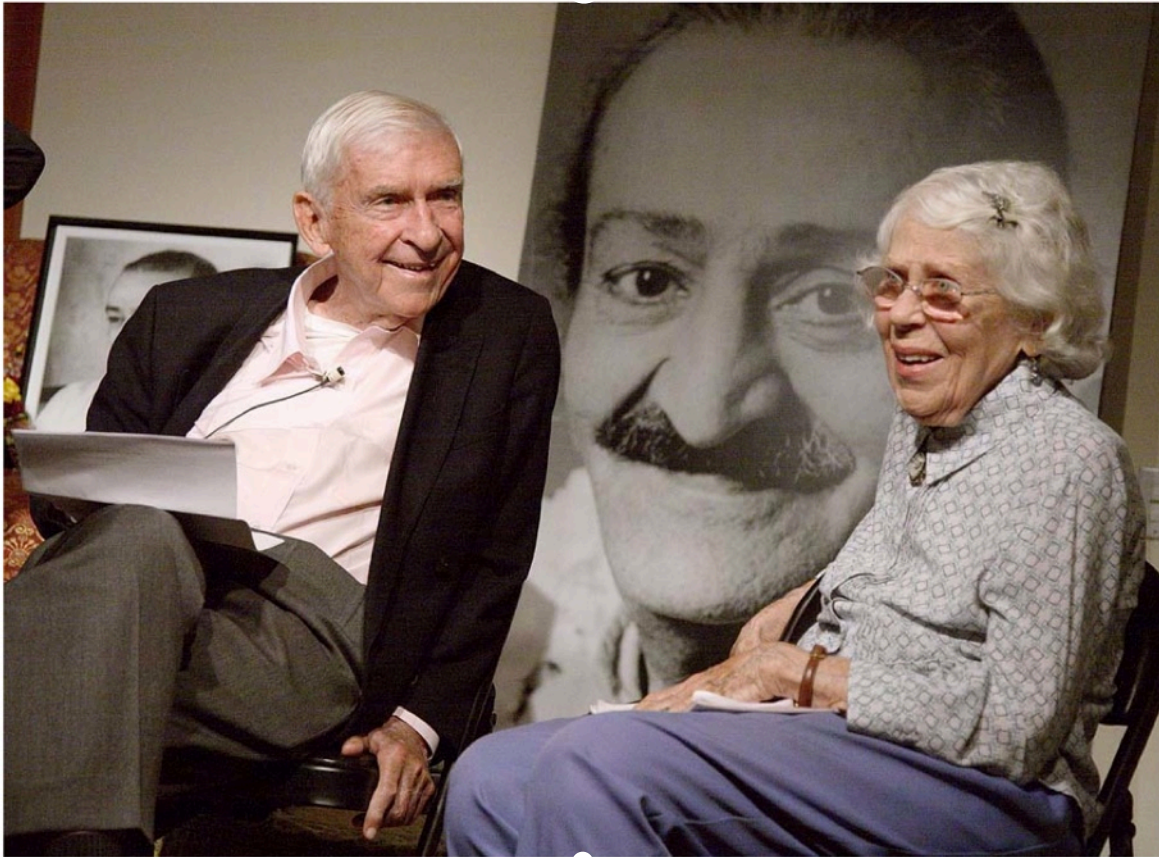
By Laurent Weichberger,
Ashland OR (December 27, 2015)

Adele Wolkin was my friend. I first met her at the LA Sahavas in the late 1990s, I remember that evening well. I had just arrived from Arizona, with my small family. After dinner, I was sitting by the outdoor fire pit with some other Baba-lovers, on old cut tree rounds, and some chairs. The beautiful blazing bonfire lit up the face of an older woman sitting next to me, and we started up a conversation. She was about 75 years old, and I was happy to share with her. Baba's love permeated the air that night. About half way through our conversation, I realized I was speaking to Adele. What struck me in that moment was her total complete humility, and naturalness. There were no airs of superiority, or anything smacking of hierarchy and yet, here was one of the women closest to Meher Baba in the West. I was stunned with her presence and loving-kindness. She told me I should come to visit her at her home. Years later, in 2005 I was a Caretaker at Meher Mount, in Ojai, and I took her up on her offer, and visited her home on PCH. That was a sweet visit, it felt like going to visit my grandmother, my kin.

I will tell two more short stories of my experience of Adele. I have many stories, but these two stand out this morning. Before she moved to Myrtle Beach, and during the time I was working with Don Stevens, we created what came to be known as Don's Young People's Group. This was based on Don's wish to pass along his wisdom to the younger generation. We met in four homes, over many years: One near LA, near Atlanta, near Boston, and two locations in Oregon. Although the gathering was strictly for the younger generation to spend a weekend with Don, and there was a tight agenda, whenever we were in Los Angeles, Don would say to me, "Make sure we invite Adele, and see if she can join us." So we did, and she did, and Don would show her tremendous respect, and the love flow between them was palpable. From time to time Don would ask Adele to share her experience of Baba, or the subject we were discussing with Don, and the young people would absorb her deep love for Baba and her profound wisdom. See the photo here of Adele joining one of our gatherings which took place at the home of Nasrin and Mahmoud Ajang.



Left to right standing: Ben W., Glenn R., Ryan B., Ellie & Jamshid E., Marlana A., Alison H., Marnie and Doug F., Mahmoud A., Laurent W., Richard & Cynthia G., Payam R., Daniel S. Seated: Adele W., Don S. and Nasrin A.



Don E. Stevens and Adele Wolkin at L.A. Center Oct. 2007

Lastly, I will share one of my favorite memories of Adele. I had been working for a number of years on a documentary film about Meher Baba, in which I asked every participant the same three questions:

1. Who are you,
2. Who is Meher Baba, and
3. Why do you feel this way?

By the time I caught up with Adele to ask her these questions, she had moved to Myrtle Beach, and here is an excerpt from her very long and insightful answers. I know she would want me to end this article focused on Beloved Baba, such was her humility and love for her Lord.

"Who are you?"

Adele: "That's quite a shock to get a question like that! I ask that of every day of my life. That's the

question of all questions. Finally it should end that 'I am God in human form.' {she laughs out loud to herself.} Then I have to add something to that, there is a trailer to that question which is because everyone is God in human form, because God alone exists..."

Who is Meher Baba? Adele: "Oh, can't you wait a minute while I put my thoughts together? { Adele contemplates... } Who is Meher Baba? { She asks herself... } Well, first of all – Who is NOT Meher Baba! That is one answer. Since He is Creator, Preserver, Destroyer, Sustainer, and never absent, Omnipresent, Omniscient ... Omnipotent, He never leaves. He never leaves. Eternal, infinite and eternal. Well, I don't know, that's all I can think of."

Thank you Adele, for a life lived with so much love for Baba, that you became a shining example for us all. Avatar Meher Baba Ki Jai!

THE SEARCH

Every morning when I wake up
I wonder when I'll really wake up.
It's been years now and still no sign
of really dying and being born,
and like a pilgrim in the desert
I keep plodding on
looking for the only non-mirage there is,
the city called Love.

And how do I know this city exists?
In answer, my mind takes me back
to a small room long ago
and the broad smile of a friend
as he told me God is Love
and Who God is.

And as he spoke
and then stopped speaking,
his smile went on and on
and the room filled with a Presence,
and Time and Space collapsed
completely into Love
into which we both disappeared
yet remained.

*And the Sun rose in its Glory,
and bathed me with its Light,
and fed me with its Honey
and Blessed me with its Sight,*

*and in the folds within my "robe"
for a moment I knew Truth,
as told of since the ancient days,
and I'd found Eternal Youth.*

And my friends,
when I left that room
I sang a different song
and searched a different search,
for nothing I'd known before
could matter very much
once Time and Space
had given way to Love
like the thinnest membrane
parting to reveal
the vastest universe inside.

And I saw that what I'd known
had never been very real
but only stood to mark time
as we wind our way
to that Love
uniting all.



Poetry & Art by Max Reif

MANHOOD

Poetry & Art by Max Reif

I am a foundling.
My Beloved has raised me
from a child to a man.
Now the mysteries
of manhood lie before me.

He has crafted the Light
in which my days run,
sunrise and sunset
until my end,
magnificent the web of meaning
He has spun to tell our story.

He has crafted our lives
as gifts to Him,
rushing in rivers of significance
down to the Ocean of His Love,

sweet our journeying dreams
down days of measured moons and suns
and poetry of gilded light
cut in thickness like cake,
sculpted into Creation
by His loving, sensitive Hand.

I am glad my Master has called me
to His Castle Sublime,
His Round Table,
and I may live
what most know only in legends.

And I am glad I responded,
for He once planted a resilient seed
in the soil of my heart,
which will not be satisfied until it has
blossomed
and earned a place in Love's Garden.

So though I return time and again
to the cities of vacant dreaming,
my heart knows a sadness there
it cannot quench.

City of Love,
may I never leave you!
Heart, may I always be
cupbearer to the Beloved,
whose chalice, sacred, concealed,
pours forth Love upon all.

City of Love,
in your precincts
may I serve my rounds
until He calls
for the drink that unites us.





Baba's Beach photo by Jane Brown

WHERE DOES SOUND GO?

submitted by Robert Holcomb

One day at Meherazad, Mani was talking to me about music and she remembered an incident when one of the girls asked Baba if it were true that in the old times there were singers who could light candles and start fires by their signing.

Baba replied that once there was a *majzooob* who had no consciousness of the world and was completely absorbed all the time. He never ate or drank or paid any attention to his body. This *mast* had attendants who wanted to look after his physical well-being, but how could they ever feed him or bathe him or put new clothes on him when he was so completely drowned? So, they had a *fakir* come regularly to sing to this *mast*. His singing was so powerful that the *majzooob* would sit up and become aware of his surroundings enough to be fed and bathed.

Baba then said, "If sound could do this, of course it could do the other, which is so insignificant in comparison." Baba asked, "Where does sound go?" None could answer him.

Then Baba said, "It doesn't go anywhere, but rather it collects. All the sound gathers together and is ultimately used for spiritual creation." To Mani, this spiritual construction also meant physical destruction.

At another time, Bhau mentioned to me that Creation is like a universal container or bowl that has a limit to how much sound or noise it can contain, and that this container can never overflow. Therefore, when the noise builds up to such an extent that it might overflow this container, three-fourths of the world is destroyed, and in this process the accumulated universal sound is the factor that causes the material or *sanskritic* destruction.

HOW A MASTER WORKS, p. 745a, Ivy O. Duce
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Why Was The Master Silent?

"Oh, Master, why were You silent?"
I asked of Him one day,
and He turned and looked at me
with His kind, all-knowing look
that understands our questioning,
and in my mind an answer
began to form.

"Silent?" asked the Ancient One.
"Be silent a moment
and hear Me speak.
I speak in the roar of the sea,
in the squawking of the gulls,
in the padding of soft shoes
on pavement."

Be still and you will hear Me speak,
for only in the noise of your own mind
can My voice ever be lost.
The universe is ever alive
with the music of My speaking.

Yet if in this form that you see
I do not talk with My mouth,
it is so you will learn
to be guard over yours.

I come in an age
when words spew forth
like lava from volcanoes,
covering everything
in their ashen haze.

A word is sacred. A pure word
is a bird flying home to God,
yet men exchange these jewels
in the marketplace with boredom
and contempt.

I come to restore the key
to this treasure-chest called Man.
I come to bring back the wholeness
that was lost.

And if I do not speak words,
it is because I need not,
for all words, on every tongue
are Mine."

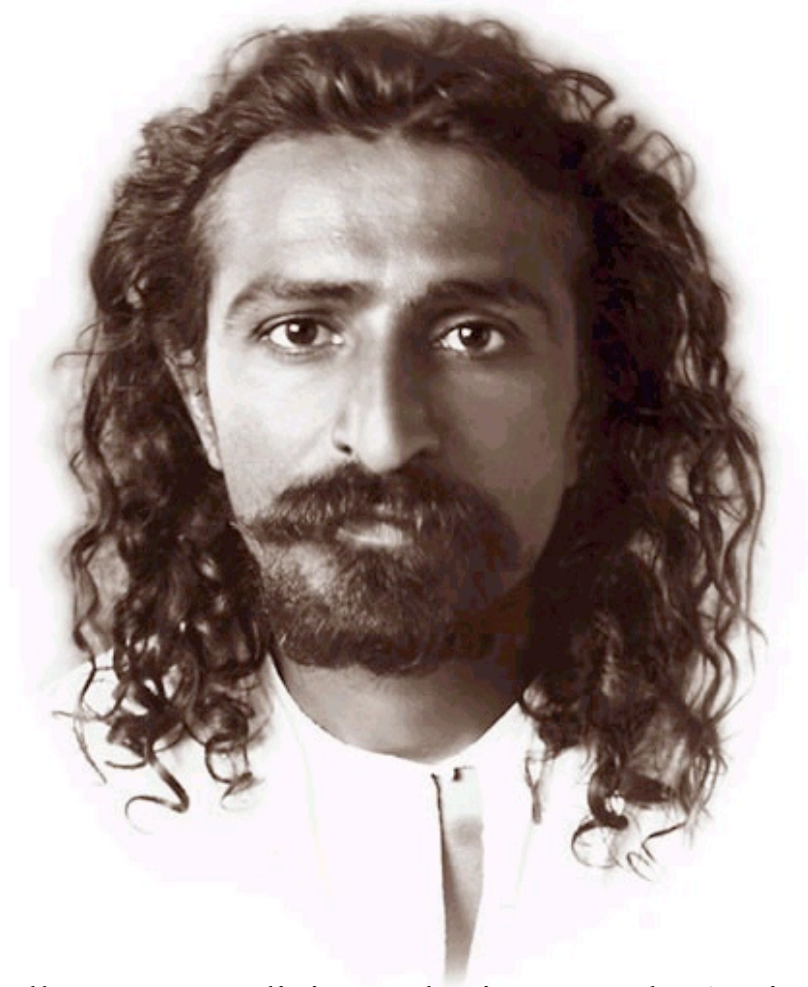
Max Reif



Meher Mount 2005



photos Karl Moeller



"I tell you on my divine authority: I am the Ancient One,
I am the Lord of the Universe." -Avatar Meher Baba

Chapter Four of Christ Come Again

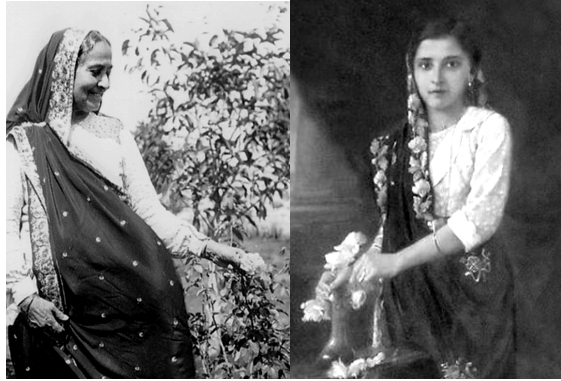
by Ed Flanagan

The Birth of Light - The Avatar's Early Life

Chapter Four

The Birth of Light – The Avatar’s Early Life

“I am never born, I never die. Yet every moment I take birth and undergo death.”



An older and younger Mother Shireen, affectionately called “The Queen of Beauty.”

Entering at dawn and taking his 1st breath at 5:15 AM Sunday, February 25th 1894, the long-awaited one signaled his return as the Awakener of the world. As Jesus said, *“I lay down my life that I may take it up again. No man takes it from me, but I lay it down of myself. I have the power to lay it down and the power to take it up again.”* (John 10:17–18)

And so it was. He was taking it up again, reminiscent of the Old Testament refrain of Job: *“While night was in the midst of her course and singing stars transiting the heavens, thy Almighty Word leapt down with joy from his heavenly throne and entered the womb of the world, while all the sons of God shouted for joy.”* (Job 38:7)

And so began a glorious new chapter in mankind’s history. He inaugurated his new Advent by touching all its major religious bases; being born into a dying Zoroastrian religion in the Iranian wing of a Jewish hospital and delivered by a Catholic nun, a Sister of Mercy, summoned during early morning chapel prayers to assist at his delivery.

Thus, the Lord of the Universe signaled the world from the very outset that he belongs to none of these religions, but they in fact all belong to him. On being told, “You have another son!” Sheriar was filled with joy and immediately rushed into the room to see his newborn – his promised and long-awaited child from God. [1]



Sassoon Hospital, the birthplace of the Avatar, Poona India, 1894

One day a great cathedral-like memorial will rise here beside Poona’s Sassoon Hospital, enshrining the new Bethlehem of the 20th century messiah. He would later be educated at a Jesuit High School, graduating with honors at 17. In his 2nd year of college, his divinity would be unveiled by the 5 Hindu and Muslim Perfect Masters of the Age.

According to the Zoroastrian calendar, he was born in the month of *Meher – the Light of the Sun*. And so he was named *Merwan*, while his parents affectionately called him “Merog.” To even begin to understand what would happen to him in later years, we follow the broad strokes of his childhood, simply to get a flavor of the kind of boy he was, and how even his early life gave clear hints of what he would later become.

Though he was her 2nd child, Shireen loved Merog deeply, and felt so bonded to him that she thought of him as her 1st-born. She was unable to understand her intense love for him in contrast to feelings of rejection for her 1st child, Jamshed, for whom she was unprepared. Life was happy for Sheriar and Shireen with infant Merwan. But within a few months, Shireen had another dream – a frightening one which she related to Sheriar:

“From out of our well arose the figure of a small, but striking woman – a splendorous Deva, like a Hindu goddess. As she rose, I admired her lavish green sari and green bangles adorning her arms. On her forehead were painted bright multicolored jasmines. In her hands she held a tray with flowers, burning camphor, incense and oils.

“I stood in quiet fascination until she implored me to hand over Merog. *“Give me your son; give him to me.”* Frightened, I held on to Merog more tightly, awakening from the dream and relieved to see him sleeping by my side.” [2]

After such dreams, Shireen increasingly thought of her son as having an exceptional calling, but as foretold in this dream one she would find agonizingly painful in later life. When the Avatar incarnates on earth, he is born under a veil – totally unaware of his divinity. Only in this way can he acquire normal human knowledge and experience.

It takes 18 years for human instincts to mature and before the 5 Perfect Masters who bring Christ down from the Beyond can unveil him to awareness of his Real Infinite State; just as John the Baptist at the Jordan unveiled the same Ancient One called *Yeshua – Jesus*.

Meanwhile, Shireen’s father Dorabji had been furious with his wife and unyieldingly opposed this marriage. He forbade Sheriar to visit his house. They hadn’t even spoken for 11 years. But at Merwan’s birth, Dorabji underwent a profound change of heart.

He was so attracted to his grandson that he visited Sheriar and Shireen in their home every day to see the infant, so happy to just gaze at Merwan’s adorable face. He bowed to his grandson’s sweet splendor, and the baby responded with great affection. Over time, Dorabji began looking upon his son-in-law Sheriar with deep respect and love.

Though he was veiled from early childhood, Merwan exhibited remarkable qualities, and yes, also a mischief maker. Just before his 1st birthday, Shireen left him in his cradle outside under a tree, while she went in to finish some cooking. Coming out minutes later, she saw a deadly black cobra wrapped around Merog’s little body, as he happily played with it, swaying his head in rhythm with the cobra’s movements. Shireen screamed out in terror.

The cobra quickly slipped away from its innocent play with the child. Almost swooning, Shireen clasped little Merog in her arms. He pouted at her interrupting his fun. As neighbors came running, the cobra was gone and never seen again. But they assured Shireen that this was an auspicious sign of her son’s exceptional future. Shortly after that, Merog stood up and started walking on his own without even stumbling.

But Shireen found his new skill exasperating. No matter what she did, she couldn’t keep him in the house, as he’d constantly escape outside, making her feel desperate. One day, after repeatedly carrying him back in under her arm, she tied him like a puppy to the bedpost with an old sari, put down a plateful of puffed rice and some water, then went back to her kitchen chores. Upset at his loss of freedom, he started crying.

Shireen ignored him, and eventually he fell asleep. When she went back in to check on him a few minutes later, there were tears on his sleeping cheeks that sparkled like pearls. He looked so helpless lashed to that bedpost. Overcome with tenderness, she gently untied

him. But within moments of awakening, seeing he was free again, he ran back outside into the lane, proving that he truly was the Mischievous One.

It got so that she had to regularly lash him to the bed until he got older and more manageable. Sheriar would come home from work at the tea shop only to find his Merog tied up, and out of pity he'd free him. Then playing with his father awhile, he'd escape outside again till a passing neighbor tucked him under his arm and brought him back in the house. When Merwan started talking, he called his father *Bobo* and mother *Memo*.

He had golden hair that fell to his shoulders, and big, heart-melting, brown eyes. And though he was healthy, he had one affliction – a sensitive stomach and weak bowels. Thinking he'd eaten the wrong things, Shireen sometimes spanked him. But Sheriar never laid a hand on him, knowing Merog was his promised son from God. [3]

He began school at age 5, and one day found a baby sparrow fallen from its nest in his courtyard. He picked it up and nursed it for some days, but the sparrow died. Merwan was very sad and cried over its passing. With his friends he carried the sparrow to a hole dug under a rose bush. Burying it, Merwan put flowers on the grave and solemnly recited a little prayer while his friends stood around with bowed heads. [4]

Pinching Coins

Wanting to buy candy, Merwan might sneak a coin from Sheriar's pocket. But one day, the candy store clerk gave the coin back, saying, "This money's no good. You have to give back the candy." Disappointed, he walked home and reproached his father.

"Bobo, this money's no good. Give me some *good* money!" Sheriar handed his son another coin, saying, "What does this man want; money that can walk? All right, take this coin. This one will walk." Merwan examined the coin. "How can it walk? Where are its legs? Is it a magic coin, Bobo?" Sheriar laughed as he explained the expression to his innocent son.

As for superstitions, Merwan had only one – *cats*, instilled early on by grandmother Golandoon. Besides the habit of sneaking money from his father's pocket to buy candy, Merwan might pinch a few extra coins to give to beggars coming down the lane.

Soon they were boldly coming right up to the door, expecting handouts. Shireen complained to Sheriar not to keep pocket-change where Merwan could get at it. So he started hanging his coat high on a hook. But when no one was around, Merwan would climb on a stool, grab more coins, and like a young Robin Hood give them to poor men waiting outside.

One day, Sheriar and Shireen watched from behind the lattice-work of their front porch as this routine was unfolding. Shireen again rebuked Sheriar about it, and as Merwan came back in the house, she began scolding him, "You're always stealing money. You're a thief!" At the reproach, he turned to his father, "Am I a thief, Bobo?" Sheriar laughed, "No, Merog, you're not a thief. Thieves don't give money to the poor!"

Another day when he was a bit older, Merwan was walking down the street on his way to meet up with his playmates in a nearby field. Suddenly, a large herd of water buffalo came stampeding down the street directly in his path. From their upper back porch Shireen screamed down a warning, thinking her Merog was about to be crushed to death. The buffalos charged straight toward the boy. Then, something seemingly miraculous happened.

Some onlookers said at one moment the child was about to be trampled, but then they saw him sitting in the street with buffalos running to either side of him, barely avoiding him. Others claimed that one buffalo stopped and hovered over the child, protecting him from the rest of the stampeding herd. Still others saw yet another scene.

At one moment they saw him actually trampled to death by the buffalos, but in the next moment saw him standing safely on the other side of the street as the herd charged on. Whatever the true account, all were astounded at the child's seemingly miraculous escape.

Yes, the 5 Perfect Masters had their protective eyes on him

[5]



Left: the lane at the rear of the family house in the Quarter Gate neighborhood of Poona where young Merwan was almost trampled by a herd of stampeding buffalos, circa 1900. The front of this house was Sheriar's tea shop. Right: the same lane as it looks today.

Dari was spoken at home. It was a common dialect in Iranian villages, and even the court language of ancient Persia. But the neighborhood was like a little UN, where the children also picked up other languages. In school, Merwan's teachers took special note of him. One teacher liked him so much she'd invite him home to dinner with her family. On his last day at that school when he was 9, she embraced him warmly with words of advice.

He listened with downcast, tearful eyes, knowing he would miss her. But he soon made friends at the new school. Older students seemed especially attracted to him, wanting to sit and eat with him at lunch breaks and play with him in the schoolyard.

He was loved by all, except for a few boys who were envious of his popularity. They formed a gang against Merwan and his friends. He tried to ignore their hostility and not react, believing as Sheriar taught him early on that today's enemies were tomorrow's friends.

The gang was led by Homi, a desperate kid with a mean streak, and the older brother of Merwan's closest chum, Baily Irani. Once at a school field-hockey game, Merwan's team beat Homi's. The angry boy whacked Merwan hard on the shin with a hockey stick. It hurt, but he took the blow without complaint. Outwardly, Homi was still an enemy, but from that day on, he felt a respect for Merwan that in later years would transform into a deep love.

Merwan excelled in sports and seemed clever at balancing homework, reading and games. He'd rise early to sing his prayers aloud in an exquisite, melodious voice. Neighbors got up early just to listen to him, describing it as "*rippling waters in a river of poetry*." [6]

He affected the hearts of all who heard him. Walking down the narrow lanes close to his house, strangers would gaze into Merwan's soft brown eyes, entranced by the inner light shining from them, well before even he knew of his divine origin.

Merwan did have one nemesis – arithmetic – a great headache and maybe his 1st source of unhappiness. How I can appreciate that, as I, too, was a constant math failure. Sometimes he'd sneak a peek at someone else's answers during a math quiz. Remembering it decades later, he once commented in a talk given at a school, "As a school boy I always had to cheat in arithmetic to get through my exams." [7]

Then one day, he had an overwhelming experience in math class. He described it later in life. "I saw a great glitter of circles with tiny points in them as if suns, moons and stars were being projected from those points." He lost consciousness and fell off his chair. The teacher rushed over and laid him out on a bench, sprinkling water to revive him.

When he came to, she asked, "*Merwan, are you alright? What happened to you?*" He

muttered, “*A halo. . . I saw a halo!*” The teacher didn’t understand. “How do you feel? Would you like to go home?” “No, I’m OK.” But when the math class resumed, he sighed in regret. Glimpsing the true light of God – the *Noor* of divine effulgence – here was this awful arithmetic again. He reflected wistfully, “Maybe I should have gone home.”

Even as a youth, Merwan disliked religious ceremonies at the local Zoroastrian temple. He’d quickly thumb through the prayer book, hoping it would soon end – priesthoods and rituals – something he’d constantly rail against on becoming God-Realized. [8][9]

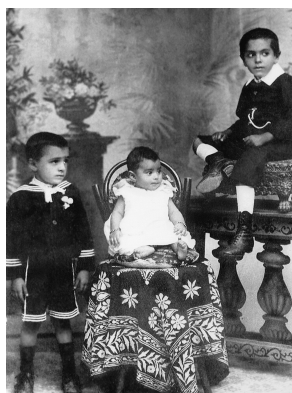
He loved to prod Sheriar for stories of his adventurous days as a wandering dervish in the mountains and deserts of Iran. And so from his beloved Merog’s earliest years, Sheriar carefully taught him the inner secrets, as well as the mystical poetry of Hafiz and Rumi, remembering the divine voice who spoke to him of his most destined child. Sheriar and Shireen were blessed to have 9 children – 7 sons and 2 daughters. In early childhood, 3 would die – daughter Freiny at 4 and 2 boys, Shirmund at 7 months and Jehangir at 2. [10]

The Beautiful White Horse

Freiny died in the influenza epidemic of 1902 when my own father also lost everyone in his own family. Her last words were: “*I’m going now. The beautiful white horse has come!*” These significant words echo Hindu Scriptures affirming the Avatar of this cycle of the Kali Yuga Machine Age will be known as *Kalki, the White Horse Avatar*; a figure to play great prominence in Merwan’s later life as the Avatar of this age. [11]



Left: Meher Baba as *Kalki*, the long-awaited White Horse Avatar brandishing his sword [by Diane Cobb ©Sufism Reoriented. Center © by Cherie Plumlee.] Right, the head of a beautiful white horse.



Merwan, age 5. Jamshed, 6, with sister Freiny who died in early childhood. Jamshed was now brought back into the family where he & Merwan were raised almost as twins, loving and fighting as brothers do.

The other surviving children were Jamshed and brothers Beheram, Jal and Adi. I’d

get know the latter 2 and especially sister Mani, the last-born and so very treasured. She outlived them all till 1996, becoming a dear friend and like my own sister for 15 years.

From the age of 16, each night before sleep Merwan would respectfully bow down, touching the feet of his mother and father. Then in the morning arising early, he'd go to their bedside, and again most gently touch their feet as they still slept.

He considered this act of respect a sacred duty, and continued it until the time of his Realization at age 19. He was very loving and obedient to his "Bobo and Memo," as he always called them from his infancy, and they in return reciprocated the love of their dearest Merog more than their other children, and did nothing to hide the fact. He was doted upon and adored even by neighbors, who also referred to him with affection as "Merog." [12]

Their home was on Butler Mohalla, a quiet, middle-class residential enclave hedged between busy commercial streets. It was made up of quaint lanes [mohallas] and neighbors were like joint families, caring and watching out for each other. If one received good news, everyone celebrated. If a husband beat his wife, everybody was up in arms.

Pushcart vendors passed by hawking treats, samosas and coconut candy. "And oh," sister Mani recalled, "the frozen ices! Mr. Hussein had a big mustache and a bright painted cart with a brass bell. Hearing it, neighborhood children rushed out for his crushed-ice treats, generously made in whatever shape they wanted with flavored syrup toppings." [13]

Meanwhile, Shireen managed the household and family with deliberate care. She had to be practical, having a husband who was apt to be too generous with his worldly goods – money, blankets and all sorts of things given to anyone whom he felt was in need.

This upset her, as she'd then have to penny-pinch on the family's budget. Giving the kids and Sheriar a good laugh, she once quipped, "You know, if we collected the amount of blankets Sherog has given away we could have opened our own blanket shop!" [14]

This generous trait would rub off onto Merwan. In later life as the Avatar, he would generously give to the poor, such that his own pockets were empty and his intimate disciples had to do with just the bare necessities of life, scant food, worn out clothes and a tiny bar of soap for both bathing and washing their few clothes. [15]

Merwan's temperament was mild. He was brave, loyal, funny, smart, strong and honest – so straightforward that he didn't like deceiving or lying. He'd keep silent rather than hurt someone's feelings. He endured whatever illness or suffering he had, and was even reluctant to share it with his parents. Strangers often mistook him for European, as fair, golden-haired children are uncommon among Persians.

Cricket was his favorite sport, but whatever sport or activity it was, he totally gave his heart to it. His gait was swift and graceful as a deer's, his heels barely touching the ground, even when walking. He held track records in school, and in later life disciples had a hard time matching his agile stride, often having to ride bicycles just to keep up with him. With a genius for friendship Merwan was honest and true to his many friends.

In Trouble over Baily

Baily Irani was his closest one from early childhood. In defense of his friendship with Merwan, Baily at times said or did things to hurt others' feelings. But he'd get furious if they complained to Merwan, as he just couldn't bear a reprimand from his best and noble friend.

But if Baily was criticized for his own shortcomings, he'd usually pay no heed and let it slide. Still, it bothered him that he was so submissive to Merwan. Several times he decided to confront the situation, then as soon he stood before Merwan, he'd completely chicken out. Merwan was also very clever in studies, while Baily failed, was kept back twice in the same grade, and was about to be thrown out of school.

Baily easily fell in with bad company and habits that later in life would include

drinking and gambling. There were no 2 ways about it; Shireen totally disliked the boy as a terrible influence on her favorite son. She'd scold, "Merog, that boy's no good. Give up his company! Stop seeing him! I don't want him in the house."

Not caring, Merwan patiently bore her abusive words while seeing Baily on the sly. He tried to improve his friend's conduct and help him with his studies. But then it escalated to a daily exchange between mother and son, as Merwan and Baily maintained their closeness – a closeness which was actually pre-destined from their past.

As the arguments went on, Merwan was usually in trouble with Shireen. Baily was totally unaware of this, until one day Jamshed pulled him aside and told him what was going on at home. While Merwan tolerated Shireen's constant scolding, Baily now felt bummed out seeing his best buddy always in trouble with his mom because of him.

So one day Baily cavalierly announced his intention to end their friendship. Merwan was stunned. "Well . . . if that's what you really want, I can't stop you. But we part as friends I was and will always be your best friend." Baily retorted, "But you know why."

"Yeah, I understand why, but how do you think it makes me feel? I know you're trying to spare me my mother's tongue-lashings, but to break our friendship over it?" The boys just looked at each other for a moment and then made amends. But to keep peace at home, they'd have to continue meeting even more secretly than before, so as not draw the attention of Shireen or her tattletale "spy," little brother Jal.

A Close Brush with Death

One day while playing, Merwan fell down off a wall, sustaining a 2-inch forehead gash. He started crying and was rushed to the doctor. Bleeding continued while different physicians attended him for 3 days and nights. Finally, as one last remedy was applied, the doctor warned Sheriar, "Your son is in critical condition, and if bleeding continues" That night, Sheriar went into deep prayer. Miraculously, the bleeding suddenly stopped.

The physician told Sheriar the next morning, "Your son has a new lease on life. I didn't want to tell you, but I was convinced he'd not survive." Still, Merwan suffered headaches and weak eyesight for months. Afraid he'd lose his sight, Shireen forbade him to read or write. But after 3 months, the headaches abated and Merwan's vision became normal, perhaps due to more of Sheriar's prayers. Then came the inevitable brotherly quarrels [16]

Jamshed was a year older, and raised by his aunt Dowlā. She pampered and spoiled him by her many indulgences, such that he developed an attitude and a sharp tongue. Then, while the boys were still young, Jamshed moved in to live with his real family.

From then, he at age 6 and Merwan age 5, were raised like twins. Though doting on Merwan, Shireen disciplined him such that he never became spoiled. While Merwan was unaggressive, Jamshed's nature in contrast was hot-tempered and rash. Yes, they liked each other, but sometimes there were quarrels with Merwan playing the peacemaker to preserve their friendship and even accepting punishment for his brother's mischief.

If Jamshed got angry, Merwan would just ignore him – like water putting out fire – enraging his brother all the more. Dreading Shireen's wrath, he wouldn't pick on Merwan if she were around. One day, Merwan's close friend Khodu was arguing with Jamshed and wrestling on the ground. Merwan tried to break it up, but Khodu was tall and muscular.

He had the better of Jamshed, punching him really hard. As Khodu got up and ran, Merwan threw a rock at him. Khodu fell down, crying, and both brothers became alarmed. Jamshed ran home to tell Shireen, leaving Merwan to deal with Khodu. Luckily, it wasn't a serious injury, and after each shared their views, they shook hands, remaining friends.

Much later after years of separation, Khodu would rediscover that old friendship. He'd also discover a "new" Merwan and become one of his very 1st disciples. This, too, was

due to his past-life karma with Merwan in an earlier incarnation. Khodu would also be the sole witness of another rock-throwing incident – one hurled at his dear friend’s forehead, forever and blessedly changing Merwan’s life for the ultimate good of all Creation.

On another day when Jamshed and Merwan were riding their bikes to the store on an errand for Shireen, Jamshed collided with a Muslim boy. Arguing who was at fault, the other boy swore at Jamshed and got punched in the face. Jamshed was just about to do it again, when Merwan quickly pushed the boy aside, taking Jamshed’s punch himself.

A small crowd had gathered by now, and saw Merwan take the blow for the other boy, instantly defusing the situation. The 3 got back on their bikes to continue their separate ways. But it didn’t end there. When Merwan and Jamshed got back home, the Muslim boy, sporting a black eye, was there with his mother looking for Shireen and demanding an apology. When asked who beat him, the boy pointed at Merwan!

He took it calmly offering an apology in front of all the neighbors. Satisfied, the boy and his mother left. Well, Shireen didn’t believe it for a minute. Knowing Merwan again played the scapegoat, she scolded Jamshed to stop fighting. But the false accusation didn’t perturb Merwan. He seemed to enjoy it, and was even smiling as he apologized to the boy.

Besides cricket, Merwan was also a champ at marbles and competitive kite flying. In fact, Merwan was a bit “kite-crazy.” The tops of his kite strings were glue-coated with glass powder, laboriously made by grinding bits of glass picked up off the street. The object was to cut the opponent’s string. Battling in the sky, the winner could retrieve the downed kite.

If Merwan’s string were cut, he’d happily watch it sway and sail into the beyond, then go pick up more broken bits of street-glass, grind to it powder and glue on a new string. It was a laborious process and took a full day, but Merwan enjoyed doing it. [17]

Almost Losing Jamshed

One day during a big kite-flying competition, one of the strings was cut and the kite quickly spiraled down from the sky. Running to retrieve it with his friends, Merwan suddenly stopped, asking, “Where’s my brother?” The other boys said, “Oh, he’s somewhere behind. Come on, Merwan, let’s go or we’ll lose that kite!” Merwan implored, “But *where* is he?” Jamshed was nowhere to be seen. Merwan pleaded, “We have to go back for him.”

Reluctantly, the others abandoned the downed kite and began retracing their steps. While running, Jamshed had stumbled into an open sewer, was barely clinging to its edge and couldn’t even yell. They pulled him out just before the municipal water district released a torrent through the sewer that would have instantly drowned him. Still, his clothes were ruined, and he got home soaking wet and smelling of sewerage.

Blasted by Shireen, he started crying and was kept outside during dinner “*in that filthy condition.*” Feeling sorry for him, Merwan snuck back out with buckets of water to wash Jamshed and his soiled clothes. Then on the sly, he brought him out some dinner.

When Merwan was 14, sweet-natured Beheram was born. Of all the brothers, Merwan loved him the most. Young Jal was closer to Jamshed’s temperament, and even in later years continued to be “mother’s little spy,” as the narrative will reveal. [18][19] During Merwan’s adolescence, the family lived behind Sheriar’s teashop. Everyone in the house was asleep in the early morning hours, except for Sheriar opening the house-front tea shop, and Merwan chanting his morning prayers. Baily had to get up early to get milk for his mother, so he’d secretly meet Merwan before going on his milk errand.

At the crack of dawn he rode to Merwan’s and softly rang his bike bell. Hearing it, Merwan came out. They’d sit on the steps, whispering quietly. Even Baily was captivated by Merwan’s voice, and would get there early enough to hear him sing his prayers. Sheriar tolerated Baily and never commented about the boys’ meetings. “Be as it may . . .” [20]

Chapter Four 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 search column.

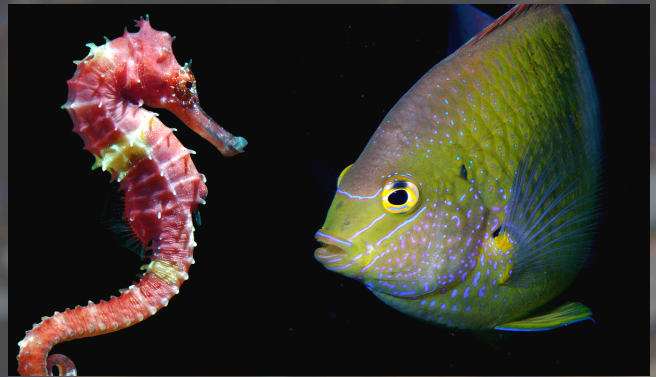
- [1] **107-08**
- [2] **108**
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- [4] Letters of Love, by Jane Barry Haynes ©1997 EliNor Publications p. 294
- [5] **114**
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- [8] **111-20**
- [9] **3736**
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- [12] **120-21**
- [13] GB 22
- [14] **193**
- [15] TH 94
- [16] **122-25**
- [17] **116**
- [18] Mehera-Meher, by David Fenster, First English printed edition © 2003 by author p. 140;
- [19] **134-36**
- [20] **122-24**

GOD Likes:

Functional Uniformity
(sense of order)



Decorative Diversity
(sense of humor)



Inner Intensity
(divine burning)

