



# CON issue #19

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## Meherwan Jessawalla

1930 - 2016

#### Rick and Sheryl Chapman 15 July 2016

Son of Meher Baba's Papa "Pistol" Jessawala, one of Meher Baba's intimate early disciples, and of his incomparable wife, Gaimai, devotee extraordinaire whom Baba declared would be the Avatar's mother in the next Advent, Meherwan Jessawala definitely had a considerable head start on living a life within the orbit of the Lord of Love. Oh, and he was the younger brother of Eruch, Meher Baba's great stalwart and most

prominent male disciple. Meherwan really did not have any choice, it seems—he was clearly destined to be a member of the greater family of the Avatar's most intimate followers from his birth.

In so many ways Meherwan slipped under the radar of those who were drawn to Meher Baba after He dropped His body. He continued to live at home in a

very modest flat at Bindra House in Poona with Gaimai, his sister Manu, and others in his extended family, with the vast majority of pilgrims to Meherabad unaware that Bindra House had been the Avatar's "second home" for decades, His go-to rest stop and provisions supply center from before the decade of mast-hunting and the New Life until right up to the very end of Baba's

physical lifetime. Meherwan's demeanor also deflected attention: slightly built unlike his robust, Hanuman-like brother and living entirely out of the spotlight, in contrast with Eruch's daily "salons" in Mandali Hall at Meherazad; and slow to speak out his thoughts, however profound, in his distinctive and unique Parsi drawl. Meherwan, it seemed, was never "ready for his close-up," never really comfortable in the spotlight of attention.

But as is so often the case, every great lover of the Lord eventually has his or her day in the full

> focus of the attention of those who sooner or later come to realize his worth. With Meherwan standing as the last "mandali member" of the God- Man of this Age, and also the last one who actually traveled with Meher Baba on His Blue Bus tours throughout India, he gradually emerged as "the real deal" after his

better-known

fellow disciples one by one went to Baba. And perhaps to the surprise of many, the stories he told of his life with the Avatar had the same stamp of originality and authenticity, of substance and charm, of personal experience and of universal import, as those that his famous brother and other great disciples had told.



Meherwan recently recorded his "memoirs" at the request of younger Baba-lovers who believed passionately that his stories should be preserved, and he spent countless hours in the review and correction of those recorded anecdotes in written form to insure their greatest possible accuracy and completeness. It is in many ways fitting that the book did not get published in Meherwan's lifetime, for he desired with all his heart that it would direct attention solely upon his Beloved Baba and not at all upon himself. So now he will not be bothered with requests to sign his book, but if he had had to deal with them, his inscriptions would almost certainly have echoed his oft-stated sentiment: may these stories of my life with the Avatar of the Age, Meher Baba, help you to remember Him more and ever more, and to forget me entirely.

Dearest Meherwan, we salute your great discipleship and your unparalleled humility in your life of utmost obedience and surrender as one of Meher Baba's closest lovers, and we pray that your example of steadfastness in faith in Him and your supreme reliance upon His Name will reverberate through our lives and through the lives of all Baba-lovers to come for ages. Enjoy the rich rewards of a lifetime lived according to the Wish and Pleasure of the Divine Beloved, and know that your lifetime will shine a beacon of understanding and grace upon all who wish to become a true lover of the Lord of all Lords! AMEN!!!

AVATAR MEHER BABA KI JAI!!!!!!!



#### From Meher Baba:

"The trouble with you is you don't leave everything entirely unto Me.

If you had hundred percent faith in Me and left it entirely to Me, the
burden would automatically fall on my shoulders and this would make Me
remember in spite of My Universal work which I am engrossed."

#### Avatar Meher Baba's 75th Birthday message:

"To love Me for what I may give you is not loving Me at all.

To sacrifice anything in My Cause to gain something for yourself is like a blind man sacrificing his eyes for sight.

I am the Divine Beloved worthy of being loved because I am Love.

He who loves Me because of this will be blessed with unlimited sight and will see Me as I am."

"Keep happy and cheerful and never worry about the environment in which you find yourself...
everything is in its place according to the Divine Plan and because of the Love of the God-Man for His Creation.

Meher Baba wants you to lead a normal, loving, honest life in His Love and Service - keeping in mind to please Baba always.

I was God I am God in Human Form. And I will ever remain God." (This last quote was in correspondence with Naosherwan Anzar 1966)

#### From Meherwan Jessawala:

Baba lovers have time and again asked me in Meherazad, Mandali Hall, as to what are Beloved Baba's instructions for the present and future generations that come to Him now that He is no longer in physical form.

Baba has left instructions precisely for this situation in the form of His Wish which reads as under:

My Wish:

The lover has to keep the wish of the Beloved. My wish for my lovers is as follows:

- 1. Do not shirk your responsibilities.
- 2. Attend faithfully to your worldly duties, but keep always at the back of your mind that all this is Baba's.
- 3. When you feel happy, think: "Baba wants me to be happy." When you suffer, think: "Baba wants me to suffer."
- 4. Be resigned to every situation and think honestly and sincerely: "Baba has placed me in this situation."
- 5. With the understanding that Baba is in everyone, try to help and serve others.

I say with my Divine Authority to each and all that whosoever takes my name at the time of breathing his last comes to me; so do not forget to remember me in your last moments. Unless you start remembering me from now on, it will be

difficult to remember me when your end approaches. You should start practising from now on. Even if you take my name only once every day, you will not forget to remember me in your dying moments.

The last wish is to remember to take His Name when your end comes. However, He says that it will be difficult to do so unless you practice to take His Name from now.

This taking of His Name should be a very natural process. You can do so from the time you wake up in the morning. Baba Himself in one of the Sahavas Programmes at Meherabad had told us that every day on waking in the morning, repeat "Beloved Baba, I now entrust all that I do to you" for five minutes before you begin the day's work, and before going to bed at night, repeat for five minutes, "Beloved Baba, I entrust to you all that I did, thoughts, words, good and bad deeds."

Also, throughout the day try to repeat His Name while washing, bathing, in the toilet, eating, listening to people talking. This repetition should be quite natural like the quiet flowing of a river in the background, without allowing any interference with the happenings around you.

It will be difficult for you to begin this process, but one must start making conscious effort to do so. You most likely will forget to do so but when you again remember, start the process once again. Do not give up! Beloved Baba Himself said that one must ask for His help to do so and He will help, until gradually this repetition becomes a natural flow in the background.

Beloved Baba has told us that in this Advent, He has given no mantra or practice. He said that there is great power in His Name. He said that His Name has more power than Himself! Even He, Himself, repeats His Name.

The power in His Name protects one from all the allurements of the world and at the same time clears all the muck within one of lust, greed and anger which otherwise would be impossible for one to get rid of. So His Name is like a double-edged weapon of protection and defense – defending one from the allurements of Maya and clearing the muck of Maya's weapons of lust greed and anger within. Baba said, make use of this ultimate weapon!

Now I will quote two instances where Baba spoke to some of His lovers.

1. On 18<sup>th</sup> July 1959 at about 5:30p.m. Baba said to the Khilnani couple:

"...I am in everybody's heart but I am sleeping there. It is My age old habit! In order to awaken Me you should always call out to Me and say, 'Baba...Baba...Baba... continuously. Then I, who am asleep in your heart, will not find any pleasure in remaining asleep. Let alone sleep, I shall not find time even to doze! I shall then slowly be awakened in your heart by hearing your constant call, you taking My Name constantly.

"Once I am awake in your heart you too would awake and remain awake for all time.

"Therefore repeat My name constantly and awake Me in your hearts so that you become awake for all time."

2. During the 1955 Sahavas held in Meherabad Baba had come from Satara and was staying at Meherazad. He had decided to have four groups to come and stay at Meherabad each for a week.

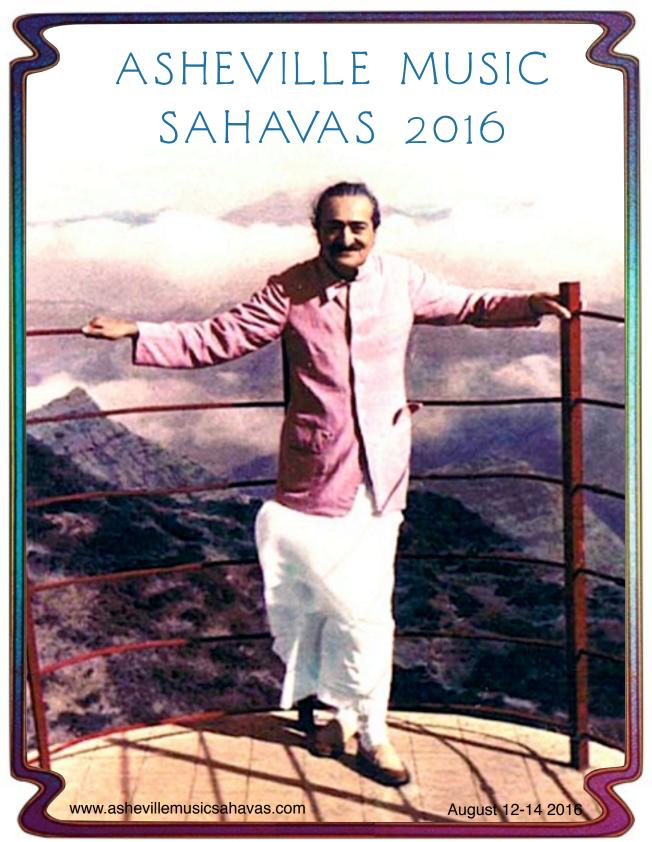
So on the first day of the first group, Baba accompanied by Eruch, Kaka Baria, and Gustadji left for Meherabad early in the morning. On the way, He stopped the car to pick up my uncle Nusserwan Mama who was standing outside his home, Akbar Press to wave to Baba as He passed. Baba inquired as to why He was not at Meherabad. He replied that he was not invited to come for the Sahavas. Baba said, "I invite you to attend." Baba stepped out of the car and told Nusserwan Mama to get in and sit beside Eruch who was driving the car and then He got back in after him. Then they drove off to Meherabad.

Turning off the main road to the left, the car headed for Meherabad. It was a narrow dirt road and the car was going along at a good speed. Suddenly, on the road ahead, they saw that a cow from the herd by the side of the road had strayed onto the main road and was heading straight for their car coming from the opposite side. Eruch applied the brakes and with great difficulty avoided the cow but, in doing so, had swerved the car to the left side, landing the car in a ditch where it came to a halt. Baba turned around and asked Kaka Baria whether he had taken Baba's name. He replied in the negative and said he was preoccupied with minding Baba's accessories. Baba said that was no excuse and that he should have taken His Name. Next He turned to Eruch and asked him and he said that he was preoccupied in averting the crash. Baba again said that was no valid excuse and that he should have taken His Name. Then He turned to Nusserwan Mama and asked him and he replied that as he was sitting next to Baba, what was the need for taking His Name. Baba told him that even though he was sitting next to Baba, he should have taken His Name. He admonished all of them and told them never to forget to take His Name under any circumstances.

So you can see what great importance Baba gave to repeating His Name.

Meherwan Jessawala Meherazad 19<sup>th</sup> May 2016





ADRIENNE SHAMSZAD JAMIE NEWELL PERRY AND F MARK TRICHKA JIM MEYER

BILLY GOODRUM PERRY AND RICK FLINN & LISA BRANDE JEFF WOLVERTON

#### Announcement:

Marc Molinari, a Baba lover from Marseilles, France is organizing a pilgrimage in India this December, 2016 to commemorate the 60th anniversary of Beloved Meher Baba's automobile accident in Satara. The intention of the trip is to visit holy sites in Satara, Mahabaleshwar, and Pune which are connected to Shivaji, were recognized as spiritually significant by Meher Baba, and which He also visited. The pilgrimage will begin and end at Baba's Samadhi in Meherabad.

Traveling by coach, the pilgrims will stay in hotels in Satara,
Mahabeleshwar, and Pune. A travel guide will accompany the group.

The cost of the six day journey is approximately \$575 (US). This does not include the daily charge at the Meher Retreat Center, single room supplements, excursion to Raigad Fort, or air fare to India.

A description of the pilgrimage follows. For more information or to register, contact Marc Molinari at molinarimarc13@gmail.com. The registration deadline is early October.

#### DESCRIPTION OF THE PILGRIMAGE

IN INDIA (Meher Baba's second crucifixion)
60th Anniversary of Meher Baba's
automobile accident, Satara, India December 2, 1956 - December 2, 2016.

Referring to the article written by myself, Marc Molinari, and published in 2014 and 2015 in the journals OmPoint and "Les Amis de Meher Baba", on the two crucifixions of Meher Baba, I propose a pilgrimage to commemorate the 60th anniversary of Baba's accident which took place on December 2, 1956 near Satara in India.

As I related in my article, that accident seems particularly connected to work that Meher Baba undertook and is linked to India's future role as the spiritual leader of the East. All the historical places of this pilgrimage are linked to Shivaji, Emperor of the Maratha Empire. Shivaji restored the Indian nation's confidence in itself. The Hindus, especially, regained confidence as a nation, which restored profound meaningfulness to the Hindu and Indian consciousness.

Fort Raigad was the capital and Shivaji's base where he regrouped in times of adversity and crisis against the Mughal Emperor Aurangzeb. This is also where he died and is buried. But above all, this region is marked by great spirituality; having witnessed the birth of many great Hindu saints. It is from Maharashtra that Shivaji's actions and the spiritual renewal of Hinduism gained momentum.

#### ITINERARY

- . Arrival in India around 23 November.
- Morning departure from Meherabad, December 2, 2016 to commemorate the anniversary of Meher Baba's accident December 2, 1956 (at 5:15 pm) on road number 4, at Satara, between boundarystone 753 and 752 (prayer and meditation). 1 night Hotel in Satara.
- December 3 morning Visit the places
   Meher Baba stayed in Satara.
- Afternoon visit to Sajjangad (Parali) the tomb of the perfect master Samarth Ramdas (Samarth Ramdas Samadith), who controlled Shivaji's actions (Masked Avatar).
- Departure for Mahabaleshwar (hotels and rest). 1 night hotel in Mahabaleshwar.
- December 4, Panchgani cave (Meher Baba's seclusion cave), Arthur's Seat, Agha Khan's bungalow (stone of Masts). 1 night hotel in Mahabaleshwar.
- December 5, departure for Raigad -Shivaji's fort, (Shivaji's Samadi). 1 night hotel in Mahabaleshwar.
- December 6, morning Pratapgad fort and departure for Puna. 1 night hotel in Puna.
- December 7, Meher Baba's house,
   Babajan's tomb (Muslim saint), the Meher
   Baba Center, Guruprasad.
- . Return to Meherahad in the afternoon.

Marc MOLINARI.
Marseille. FRANCE.





Nariman Lindsay Meherabad photo

#### Melinda Abeles, Mariposa, CA

#### THE SWEEPER

This is the story of the Sweeper.

The year was 2006. I had spent over a decade creating a spiritual retreat center for the people. This was before I was captured by Baba. I had had a vision to do so, and guidance from teachers of the time to do so. It was called Flaming Heart. I had put my inheritance into it. It was for the spiritual upliftment of the people. It was to help them remember God. It was towards the end of that time that I became Baba's through a series of very sweet events. This is one of them.

The gist of that part of the story is that I had been in a leadership position, making my wholehearted attempts at helping people remember.... what I called Spirit at the time and now call God and/or Meher Baba. It was not a particularly comfortable position to be in and did not come naturally to me. I always relied on notes to not forget my points within my nervousness and rapidly beating heart during these things. The events were good though I must say, and there was movement in people's lives because of it. It was during this time that Baba was reeling me in.

What happened int he gross world is that a new center opened in town that was a lot more convenient to get to. The woman was young and began bringing forward the same sorts of events and the people naturally gravitated there. I was devastated and confused as to how to proceed, though really got it that this was God's plan. I also got it that the work really was for these young beautiful ones to bring forward for the future of the world, and that it was time for me to let go. I was in my early 50's.

Towards the end of this chapter, Baba became "real" in my life. I knew it was He who was moving my life around. One day I decided to have an internal chat with Him as to what to do now, and fell into a waking dream:

I entered the samadhi door. (I had not yet been to India). I dove In to the marble and met Baba in the starry universe. He was wearing a white sadra (sp?). He took my hand and we went walking. We came to a mesa and walked to the edge. Baba waved his arm and below was a burned out smoking world, black and dead. I had seen this before and I asked Him why he was showing me this? We walk on, to another part of the mesa and He waved his arm again. Before me was a Blue City.

In the center of the city was a central plaza that was round. In the center was a 'spirit fire' that appeared like water shooting flames upward and emitting a cool mist. It was morning, and I saw the townspeople walk in to the plaza and take an individual seat facing the watery fire. They would pause for a few minutes taking in the mist, and when they were ready they simply rose up and moved in to their day.

At the end of this morning session, a little man came forward with a broom, and started sweeping out the place from outside to In placing the dust into the fire. He was The Sweeper. Baba pointed at me and then at the Sweeper.

#### The dream ended.

Because of all the trials and tribs of having a community center on personal land, and all the confusing ego trips that come with it, I was entirely relieved at the new assignment given by Baba, to simply sweep. Let go and just sweep up and give it all to Baba.

A few years later I have the opportunity to go to India. 3 very significant things happened and I shall tell you 2 of them. The third is another story in itself. Off I go...

Besides what happened in India and the infinite experiences at the samadhi and with Baba there, I took a day trip to the Ellora Caves. It happened to be Mohammed's birthday and you can only imagine the accentuated traffic of the day. It was almost time to go and this was to be my last cave to see. It was near the end of the day and lots of folks had gone home by then. The cave I had chosen was empty as I entered, except for one older man. He came over to me and waved for me to follow him. There was

absolutely no negative feeling about this, no fear, so I followed. He had become my guide and we slowly went along down one side towards the little doorway at the end of the hall which led into the most spectacular room where Buddha was waiting. We never exchanged any words.

I had the most peaceful feeling in there in the silence of the cave while walking along with the man. The entire rest of the universe had disappeared. He began humming and I spontaneously started doing harmony with him. We were really in timelessness together. I was in a profound state of peace.

When we came back to the entrance, it was time to part. I knew it was also time to offer some money to my fine guide and friend. As we were placing our hands together and making our bows he patted his chest and said, "I am The Sweeper".

I am forever grateful as I sit and write this today, that this precious man swept up the dust I left behind that day for the Buddha, who held the spirit fire of that place. And I am grateful to Baba for showing me the humility and poise of this gentle soul, The Sweeper, who in his simplicity does such a service for humanity.

#### Onward to the second thing.

Back at Meherabad, it was time for me to go to the Darbar for some shopping. I wanted a Baba pendant. I was in there looking intently at them all one by one when one caught my eye. You know how there's little bits of separation between the photos and the glass, or there's bits of glue or whatever that happen that cause an image to appear? I had picked up a pendant of Baba's painting in the tomb, and in the middle of his chest I could see by a flash of light that reflected there.... the watery spirit fire, plain as day.



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### JO JAYSON

is an intuitive spiritual artist and teacher. Her paintings embody the empowerment of the Divine Feminine and she teaches workshops on these themes in her paintings. Jo's chakra meditation kits and cd's have together with her paintings and prints have been her most popular products, and her latest cd is

"A meditation of Self love". For paintings, products and workshops contact www.jojayson.com

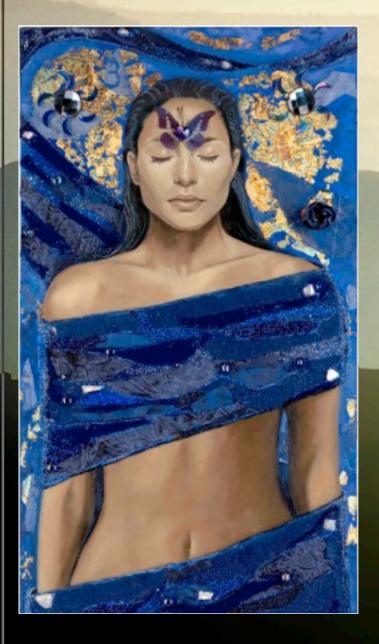


Indigo Dreams oil and collage on canvas © Jo Jayson 2009 Indigo governs the Brow/third eye or 6th chakra, situated in the center of the forehead between the eyebrows. It represents the intuition, and is where our own unconscious self sends us messages of perception. Indigo is the energy of the subconscious, the mysterious depth of who we truly are.

Red Root - oil and collage on canvas © Jo Jayson 2008 Red governs the Root or 1st chakra, situated at the base of the spine. It represents vitality, courage, relationship to the material world and stability. 'Red Root' connects us to our roots into Mother Earth.



Guan Yin - oil and gold leaf on canvas © Jo Jayson 2013
In Chinese Buddhism Guan yin also means the Bodhisattva
Avalokitesavara – the enlightened personification of compassion and mercy. Guan Yin has become the most beloved archetype of the Mother Goddess Divine and regardless of which legends are to be believed, this beautiful energy resides in and around us for all eternity.





Kali Ma - oil and gold leaf on canvas © Jo Jayson 2015 Kali – Kali Ma (or Kalika, or Maa Kali) from the Sanskrit 'Kala' meaning 'Darkness and beyond Time.' She is fiercely protective and compassionate to those who are true to themselves and true to their own divinity. Kali destroys what no longer serves and gives birth to the new reality in the universe as a whole and in our lives.

# Cayson Artist Expressions of The Goddess Making Sense of the Chaos

Well....What a week this has been!!! As we wake up this Sunday morning, we can look back on the past 7 days and say without a doubt that this has been one of the most intense and emotionally draining weeks we can remember. If you live here in the US or in the UK or Europe, switching on the news has resulted in an relentless onslaught of political craziness, deep heartache, uncertainty, disaster and bloodshed. We have been bombarded with the reality of a chaos that feels out of control. Deeply ingrained racial wounds and injustices within a country, mass shootings, terror attacks and governments unraveling and coming apart at the seams - we are being faced with a pain, chaos and mayhem at a level we cannot remember.

Likewise, on a personal level, so many of us are facing our demons, our paths are being challenged, relationships are falling apart or shifting, our actions are being brought into question and light is being shone on all our deepest wounds and dark shadows. At times like this it is important to remember that our outside reality is showing us our inner reality. What we witness in our outer world, is a reflection of

what is happening to the collective consciousness within. It is so easy, and quite natural for us to point fingers of blame for the tragedies we witness outside of us all and in this blame, try and analyze and find reasons for its origins so that in our broken hearts we can make sense of the madness and chaos.

The truth however is that as with all that is outside of us, the answers always lies deep within. Many of us are very familiar with the quote by Ghandi "be the change you wish to see in the world". Many of us understand it from an intellectual position but many of us have not truly understood it from an emotional and spiritual perspective.

Human beings passionately want to fix things on the outside of themselves, whether it be a person who isn't quite exactly how we want them to be, a relationship that's not going exactly how we want it to go, or an experience that falls short of how we imagined or expected. However its a futile endeavor to try and fix things from this position, since it is the rule and law of the universe that all things are a reflection of

a frequency and a vibration that is being held within.

Given that this is the case (and no amount of stomping your feet in frustration will change this law).....then it seems wise and less exhausting to attempt to look inside and take responsibility for what you are experiencing and see what is within you that is being reflected at you now amidst the current events.

This is not to say that we, as a single personality, have created this age of terror and fear and deep racial divide by our own personal actions, but it is to say that as a member of the whole collective, we do have a responsibility with everyone else for the world and its happenings around us. The majority of this human race that we are a member of, wish for peace, harmony, inclusiveness and acceptance. There is a minority however that does not focus on this. This minority is a reflection of what it is inside of all all of us, that does not align with peace, harmony, inclusiveness and acceptance. As members of this one collective, we as a whole are responsible for that minority and for bringing that minority back into wholeness.

I know you Want to walk With me Pepol I love it Baha You are Always gentle Direct and Heartfelt My heart is full (ome on Baba Let's go up to The edge Of sun and sky Let's walk dently Hand in hand Let's open the door together To a new way A new day Your way Over the threshold We go You are my quide My heart is happy As we Go forward together Thanks Dear Baba

#### Anne Weichberger

#### Two Poems

The silence is broken
By birdsong
The stillness comforts me
Baba help me
To love more
To share love
More and
More
And still yet more

FEATURED ARTIST:
KARL MOELLER

Karl Moeller recently moved to Asheville, NC with his wife Irma Sheppard after 33 years in Arizona. He is a musician, composer and recording artist, graphic artist, computer expert, and writer. He is a video editor and has an EMMY award in Sound Design. He has had a solid connection since the 1970s to the Chishti Order in India and Pakistan. Full disclosure: he is the layout-walla for OmPoint.

LW: When I first met you, Karl, you self-identified more as a Sufi than a Meher Baba follower. Can you share a little bit about your Sufi journey, and where did it start -- in Michigan was it?

In 1972 I was 22, working in the Dearborn, MI headquarters of an auto industry supplier as a programmer. Thanks to the Beatles and Maharishi I was in thrall of the Mystic East, and occasionally attended SRF meetings. Abdul Samad was a Muslim Pakistani engineer, in the US on the equivalent of an H1B visa, going to university and working full time at my company. About the time I met Samad, I had moved on to books by Gurdjieff and Ouspensky. We

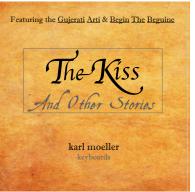
became friendly, ate lunches together, trading books, moving onto Idries Shah and Hazrat Inayat Khan and Sam Lewis (Sufi Sam). Finding an American (Lewis) who had been initiated this deeply into the heart of Sufism was very exciting.

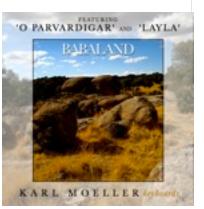
After several years of friendship, I gradually discovered Abdul Samad and his wife were longtime murids of a famous Chishti murshid in Karachi, Pakistan, Mohammed Jamil Arifi Sahib, 'Sarkar' to his followers. Sarkar had evidently been initiated into ten separate Sufi orders. I had some extraordinary dreams, and dreams are especially meaningful to Chishtis.. Abdul Samad encouraged me to write them down and send them to Sarkar. The message came through: "clean your heart."

Over those years Abdul Samad was able to travel back to see Sarkar multiple times. In 1976, I was honored to be a witness to Samad's naturalization ceremony: he became an American citizen. He also earned at least one doctorate in those same years, and went to work for one of the Big Three American auto companies. I spent many evenings at his house, discussing practical Pg. 17

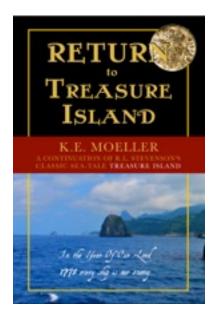
Music CDs

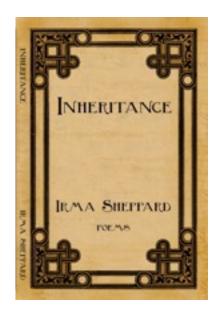


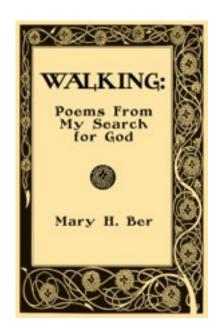




**Book Covers** 









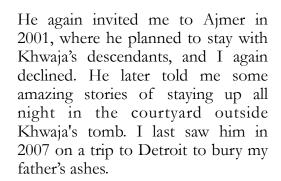
spirituality, Islam, and listening to Qawwali records.

In the summer of 1977, Samad and I visited Lama Foundation in northern New Mexico, where Sam Lewis is buried. At that time Abdul Samad told me he had been made Khalifa, able to start a branch of the Chishti order in the USA, should that be necessary. He had been initiated into at least four Sufi orders that I know of — Chisti, Qadiri, Naqshbandi, and Suhrawardi.

Six months later, Abdul Samad, having given me a Sufi name, instructed me to travel again to Lama, in the winter months when visitors were not allowed. They invited me to live there, but I'm too urban a creature for that rural lifestyle. Upon my return to Detroit, reunited with Samad, he and his wife told me that during a visit to Karachi, by his murshid's grace, he 'graduated' to full murshid status.

Despite this strong connection, my instinct told me to leave Detroit, and I did, without his permission. My travels took me around the USA where I reconnected with my future wife Irma Sheppard, a Meher Baba devotee, and we settled in Arizona where we married in 1983. For 14 years I had no contact with Abdul Samad. He called me in 1996 and invited me to travel with him to Ajmer, India, home of Khwaja

Moinuddin Chishti's dargah. This invitation led me to believe I had in fact cleaned my heart sufficiently to pass muster with the Sufis. However, I stupidly declined the invitation.



There has been sporadic email correspondence with Abdul Samad in the past five years. He is now widowed and his children have moved away.

LW: So, then how did you first hear about Avatar Meher Baba? And coming from such a strong Sufi background, what was your initial reaction to Baba's statements that he was the Christ, the Avatar?

In the late 1960's I lived in an elderly house in a quiet downscale neighborhood in Birmingham MI, a Detroit suburb, with the Eastin brothers, Michael and David. David and I are still close friends. Michael was an avid reader and there were books on or by Meher Baba around. typical quasi-spiritual hippie house, lots of India prints, cannabis when we had it, record albums around, blues or ragas on the turntable, and a lot of brown rice. I read these books on or by Baba, absorbed some things, especially the idea '... things

that are real are given and received in silence.' Michael must have been in contact with some early Detroit area Baba Lovers because he heard that Baba had passed in January, 1969. When he



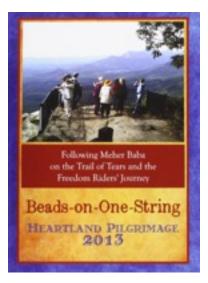
told us, I thought, '... and without breaking his silence.' ... another promise broken, just another spiritual cheat, alá the Maharishi.

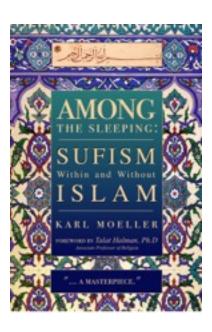
However, being married to an intelligent, articulate, very dedicated Baba devotee, there were always Baba books and parties, and I slowly, slowly, verrry slowly, came around. The Tucson Baba community watched this erosion of resistance with amusement.

LW: The first work we did together for Baba was the Flagstaff Beads on One String seminar, right after September 11, 2001 followed by our book Celebrating Divine Presence: Journeys into God. How did the seminar work and writing the chapter on Sufism affect your spiritual life?

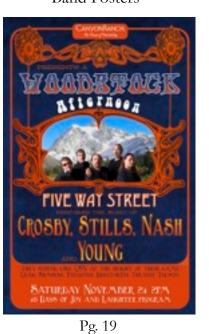
Well, there's several things rolled up there. Your recognition of my background and knowledge of Sufism, and inviting me to speak about Sufism, meant a lot. Creating my notes and doing the online research forced me to focus and crystallize some experiences and impressions I'd long had. The decision of how wide-ranging the scope should be was an interesting one.. historical only? my personal experiences? present-day Sufism? what about Sufism outside Islam?

Working on my segment also gave me a reason to be in contact by phone and email with Samad the Chishti murshid in Detroit.. he was invaluable in shaping some of the presentation. I also discovered from him how down the eastern Chishtis really were on Hazrat Inayat Khan's groups, and by extension Samuel Lewis.. since they weren't observing Sharia, the





**Band Posters** 



Indian Chishtis considered all these weak-assed westerners were simply deluded, pretend 'sufis.'

So I focused like mad for several months, and came up with a talk I called 'Sufism in 6700 Words'. When I did speak, I had a hideous throat infection and fever, and my memories of the actual event are quite vague. Croaked my way through it, foiling my expectations of Seminar Starhood.

After the event at Northern Arizona University, Laurent and I were emailing back and forth, and one of us said too bad we can't take that Beads event on the road a Buddhist, a Vedantist, a former nun, an American Sikh, etc. And both of us claim the idea: "Let's ask the participants to turn their NAU talk into a chapter in a book." Some people dropped out, some just never produced, Laurent found substitutes, and seven years later, 2009, the book was published by Companion Books, not under its original name Beads On One String, but as 'Celebrating Divine Presence.' I'd used every one of those seven years in further research and discussion with Sufis as far away as Lahore, Pakistan the Internet is truly amazing - and the chapter grew to about 20,000 words, almost sixty pages in the book, not counting illustrations.

As to affecting my spiritual life, I'd be the last to know. Meher Baba talks about veils, and I've got 'em.

The year after the book was published, 2010, my wife Irma Sheppard and I accompanied Don Stevens on his last India trip - a Beads On One String pilgrimage in the flesh. Over a thousand kilometers around India, trains and

buses, to Ajmer, where I was permitted to lead Zikr at the Dargah of Hazrat Moinuddin Chishti.. I finally made it! On to Jain sites, Hindu sites, Buddhist sites. In subsequent years we participated in other Beads on One String pilgrimages, one across the Heartland in 2013 (book available on Amazon, http://tinyurl.com/h62eztt) and one to Meher Baba's Four (spiritual) Pillars in Europe in 2014.

All that must have made changes, but I lack the perspective to verbalize what they may be. One effect may be detachment. Irma and I recently relocated from Tucson Arizona, where we'd lived for thirty-three years, to Asheville North Carolina. We drove away without a qualm. (Or maybe I gave the qualm away or sold it at a yard sale.)

LW: Let's talk about your music. You are a professional musician as well, with East2West and Five Way Street. Where did you get your musical training, and why did you select the piano as your instrument?

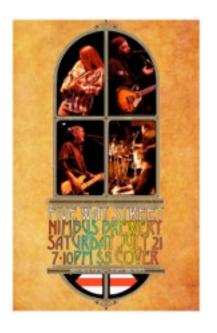
My uncle, my father's oldest brother, blind since birth, was a protegé of Josef Lhevinne, a world-famous piano virtuoso. My uncle knew Rachmaninoff and Art Tatum. So it was in the family. I began private piano studies when I was nine, and quit at fifteen, because I was in love with Motown and the Beatles. I played bass guitar in a truly abysmal kid band for about a year until I remembered all my piano studies. Saved, bought a portable organ, then a Fender Rhodes electric piano, and simply never stopped playing. Speaking of selecting, in my fifties I learned to play the didgeridoo, mate, circular breathing and all. I figured if I can learn to breathe in and out simultaneously then I can do anything!

Something special happened in music in the late Sixties and early Seventies. In my mind it's linked to the tremendous push of spiritual energy Meher Baba gave to the world, and a lot of it surfaced in the music of the time.

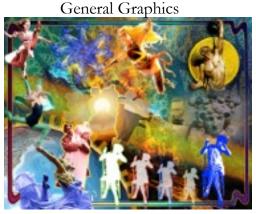
Both those bands you mention were, are (they're both still active in Tucson and southern Arizona) the best cover bands I'd ever seen. Both bands had a focus on classic rock, specializing in that very era, the sweet spot for popular music. I played piano and organ. There are a lot of great players in rock music, but I'd gigged enough to know that audiences want stellar vocals and songs they remember. Five Way Street was founded on this premise, could play everything from Stevie Ray Vaughn blues rock to Steely Dan. Then we started specializing in Crosby, Stills, Nash & Young, and became a CSNY tribute band. You've never seen one, because of the vocals. We did a show which made it to YouTube and Vimeo (vimeo.com/23841286). Through a story you don't have the time for, David Crosby found out about this, and emailed me, saying the band was "... really fing good!" High praise.

LW: What about the musical CDs you have released, I remember The Kiss and Babaland especially. Cyprus (my son) heard Baba-land and said that he immediately felt "sweetness" coming from your music. Are you trying to communicate any particular message or vibration, or is more just self-expression and fun for you? How do you relate to being a musician on the spiritual path?











My father was an audiophile before the word existed.. to this day I have a sound system anyone would envy. I learned open-reel recording, later computer recording, well enough to earn a regional EMMY award over twenty years ago. Those Baba oriented CDs are the tip of the iceberg. As a keyboardist with computer skills, I

always have some kind of recording studio in our home, and I make use of it.

As soon as we moved to Tucson in the early 1980's, I began recording, solo piano and simple livingroom productions, and putting them onto cassette. Three or four albums in the Eighties, then in 1991 I did my first CD, "Hot Cognitions," using digital and open reel recording. This was the tail end of the New Age movement, and that CD was actually picked up by a label, Willow Music, and one track was purchased by, no kidding, Muzak. So one of my tracks made it to elevators nationwide.

There's a lot of music in my archives. I'm primarily an instrumentalist when composing, not a songwriter per se. The CDs come when I have enough good enough material to sequence and master it and call it an album, and I can't put it off any more. The music comes from the same place inside as writing, computer software design and graphics design, a deep, nonverbal source I always thank.

In 2007 I took an early copy of my audio CD "The Kiss and Other Stories" to India and gave a copy to Katie Irani. About a week later she told me she'd been playing the album "morning, noon and night" in Meher Baba's house (!!!) in Meherazad, and told me to keep making music for

the Baba community. Though she passed in 2009, and this is 2016 now, here it is, Katie... the Babaland CD and The Kiss and Other Stories are available at the Sheriar Bookstore in Myrtle Beach.

LW: Would you say something about your graphics and layout skills? We've seen some of that in issues of OmPoint. Have you always been a visual artist as well?

In my teens and early 20's I really pursued art, had a drafting/ drawing table in my living room, and the start of a body of work, both realism and... undefinable. At one point in the mid-Seventies, I got a very responsible job for a computer consulting firm at the same time I was invited into the production band in one of Detroit's busiest multitrack studios. That meant being in the studio two or three evenings per week after working all day. Something had to give, and I packed away my art and gave away my drawing table. Essentially shelved visual art for over twentyfive years.





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Being in Five Way Street allowed me to do something unexpected. As the engagements came along, I began making simple posters for each gig on the Mac. Of course the wonderful Art Nouveau inspired posters of the Sixties era were my ideal, and I kept pushing myself until I could do pretty much what I imagined, graphics-wise, which led to being prepared to be OmPoint's layoutwalla.

LW: You also wrote a novel, "Return to Treasure Island." The original Treasure Island, by R.L. Stevenson was written in England before Baba was even born, and is largely forgotten. What inspired you to return to that plot and theme? It seems unlikely for a western mystic such as yourself to focus on that.

Science fiction master Robert Heinlein said, "specialization is for insects." I wouldn't say "Treasure Island' is largely forgotten... there's a huge casino in Vegas, movies, a national seafood chain named after its main character.. the most famous pirate story of all time... it's a cultural icon!

In the mid-1990's I had a brief job as network supervisor of a national control center.. 11 to 7 AM shift.. and there was only about five hours' work to do each night. So I took a pen and legal pad along. Loving 'Treasure Island' as I do, and still possessing the 1927 illustrated edition I enjoyed so as a boy, my mind started cogitating about What Happened After The End. How would young Jim Hawkins utilize his share of Flint's treasure, once home in England? What could a commoner, a taverner's son,

suddenly possessing wealth, do with it?

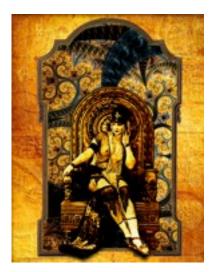
However, at first I simply had the setup. Writing it, I stalled, came to a complete and utter stop, as soon as they stepped on board the old Hispaniola -- because as a desertdweller, I knew little about the age of sail or ship-handling. A friend recommended Patrick O'Brian for authentic age-of-sail arcana, and after several years' reading, my own writing frozen, my antagonist, the entire second act, and the third act, came to me unbidden, in the shower, just as you hear about. I outlined like crazy before it faded, writing out some of the scenes/chapters that seemed most vivid (the movies call them 'tentpole' scenes), and finished the first draft in longhand while in India some years ago.

I sat on the manuscript until I'd mastered the art of digital self-publishing. I help others with their books, several of my wife Irma's, and have laid out and uploaded nearly a dozen books from people who found me. Some of those covers, also done by me, adorn this article.

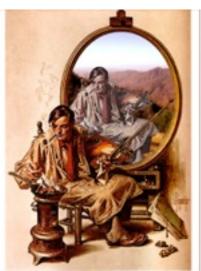
#### LW: I understand you've got a book on Sufism about ready.

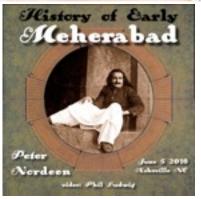
Yes, recently I completed the layout and cover for a short, definitely non-academic introduction to Sufism. The title is "Among the Sleeping: Sufism Within and Without Islam." It's an expanded version of the chapter I did for "Celebrating Divine Presence." This one took seven years, which seems to be a pattern with us. I'll approach the usual publishing suspects, and if that doesn't work, will simply self-publish it.

In fact, Laurent and I recently finished the formatting and Pg. 22









publication of his well-received manuscript, "Forgiveness with Meher Baba," available now on Amazon.com and Barnes & Noble.com. The master layout artist Ed Legum created the cover, and I did the layout. I hope Laurent's book is reviewed in this issue of OmPoint.

One Sufi incident comes to mind, not in the book. When in India in the Valley of the Saints, I had an experience at the tomb of Muhammad Muhammad al-Husayni, also known as Qatar Husaini. According to Meher Baba, he was a sixth plane saint and the father of Hazrat Khwaja Banda Nawaz, buried far away in Gulbarga.

Knowing nothing of this at the time, I wandered in by myself, properly barefoot. Entering the deserted walled compound through a green door, I saw the beautiful white tomb. I

was almost at the door when I was met by the tombkeeper.

He had no English and I had no Marathi, just a tiny bit of Arabic. He ushered me into the tomb. He repeated the saint's name, almost fifteen names in all, but the ones that I recall are 'Muhammad Muhammad al-Husayni'. On the wall was a list in Arabic, and I gestured, 'Silsila?' I could read Jibreel (the angel Gabriel), the Prophet's (RA) name, Hazrat Ali's, etc. I then asked "Chishti?" He nodded vigorously. I then pulled the red and yellow lacha out from under my shirt, and he

embraced me, and said, "Khwaja?" (i.e., you received this lacha at the Dargah of our beloved Khwaja [master] Moinuddin Chishti in Ajmer? ) This time, I nodded vigorously.

#### What language barrier?

He suddenly asked, out of the blue, "Meher Baba?" I nodded. The tombkeeper circled the tomb, bowing down to it from each side, then mimicked Baba sleeping against the west wall.

He then turned to the tomb itself, covered by a gorgeous green metallic-silk coverlet. I read aloud the Arabic embroidered on the tomb-cover -- the Kalimah ('La ilaha illa Allah', 'there is no God but God')), the name of the Prophet (R.A.), Hazrat Ali, etc. He then turned back one end of the

coverlet, exposing the stone end of the tomb. He swiped his hand over the end of the tomb, turned to me, and drew his hand over my face, and my shirt over my heart. His hand was covered with aromatic oil. He replenished it, then grabbed my right arm and began writing quickly on my forearm. Shortly thereafter I left, giving him what was in my pockets for tomb upkeep. The scent of the oil stayed on my handkerchief for quite some time.

I mentioned this incident a week later at the MPR to Dr Carl Ernst the Sufi scholar, and he said, "...he must have liked you!"









LW: You have been a Baba-lover now for at least fifteen years (I guess depending on when you start counting). So, what is your biggest concern for how you see the Meher Baba community worldwide evolving or developing or maturing?

All I can speak to is the sample I've been given, in Tucson, various L.A. Sahavases, India, the various Beads tours. I will say that demographics are a bit concerning. The vast majority of Baba devotees I've met are over sixty years of age. Of course, that's not our worry, strictly speaking, it's Baba's job to pull in new souls.

While we say that Baba is not a religion, there are still some of the trappings.. have you been to a Sahavas? A dhuni? India? Were you tight with any of the Mandali? And of course depending on the area, there's always meetings of one sort or another. Yes, I've been there and have the teeshirt.

LW: What motivates you to get out of bed each morning, and do it all over again, including the great layout and design work you do for Baba with the OmPoint

#### International Circular, and the other Baba projects you are involved with?

I've been blessed or cursed with an extremely active and inquisitive monkey mind. One of the last things I recall Don Stevens conveying was that in order to remain focused on Meher Baba, one should keep busy with Baba-oriented projects.

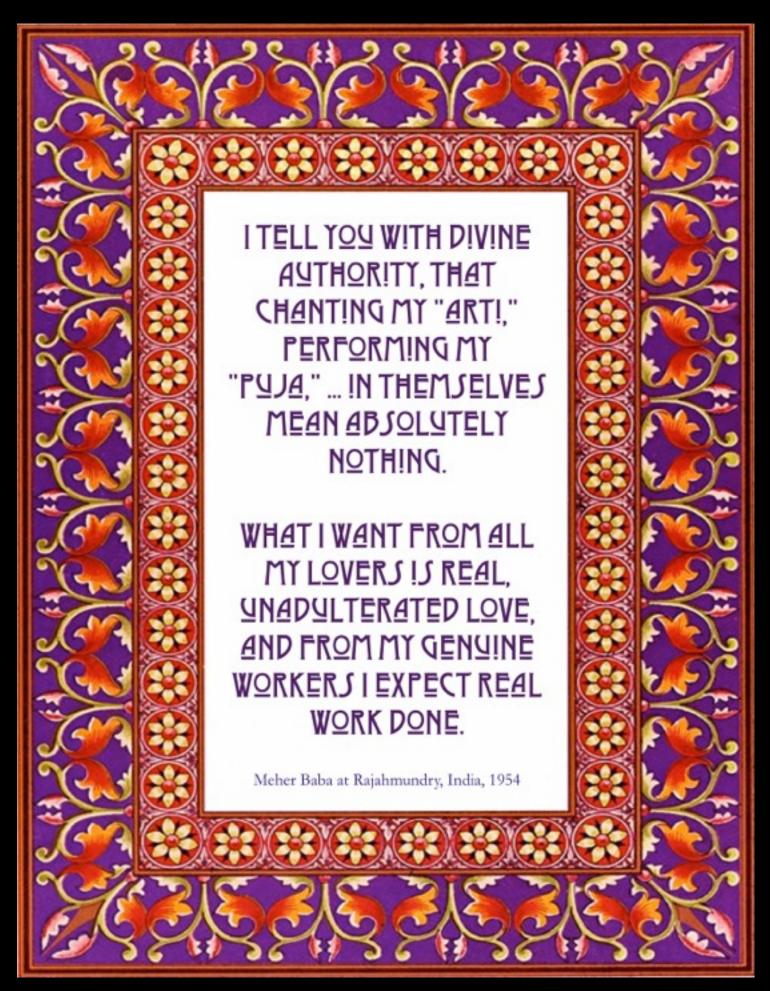
Thus the music, moving to Asheville, doing the OmPoint layout, various book projects, and music and video editing for the Asheville community. Meher Baba said, "What I want from my Lovers is real unadulterated love, and from my genuine workers I expect real work done." Since I'm a pretty crappy Baba lover, I'll do the best I can as His worker.

#### LW: Is there anything else you would like to share with our readers?

There are a lot of hours in the day. When I was working full time I used my art, whatever it was, as a mini-vacation from work. Now that work is part-time, I keep as busy as possible on Baba projects. Because Maya is always waiting. Thank you.

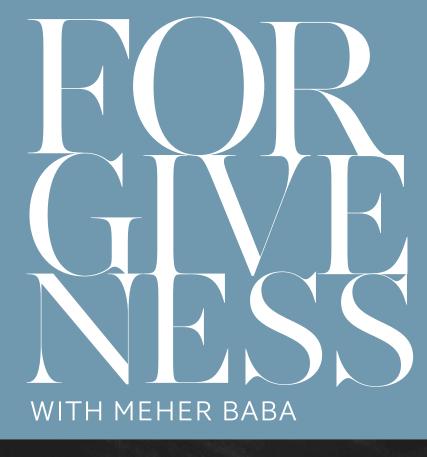






#### Hi Laurent -

I've only just started your book but it is magnificent! The combination of frameworks, hows, Baba's words and your own personal journey makes it so I rich. I have got so much clarity on forgiveness and this is from the first few chapters. Many, many thanks and so much appreciation. ... I am reluctant to finish your book - seriously because I'm finding it so powerful and deep! In His Love -- Ralph Lewis





Available Print on Demand through Amazon.com http://tinyurl.com/hdjm462 and Barnes&Noble.com

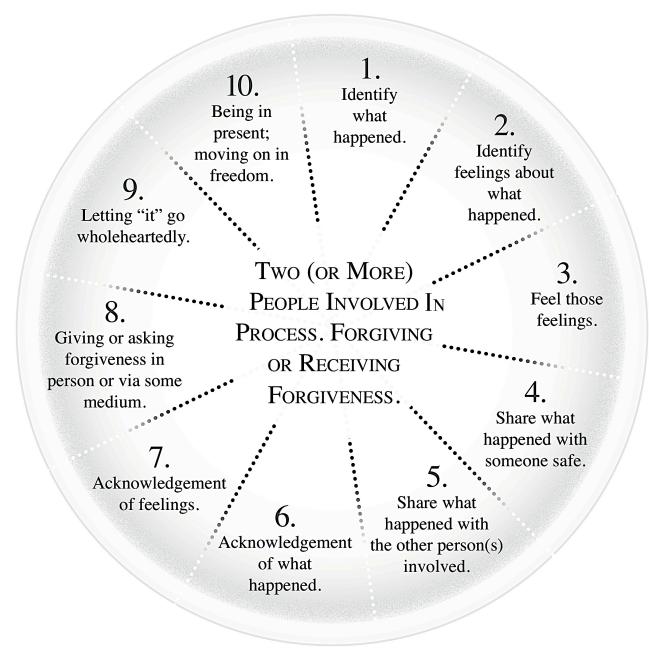
Also available from Sheriar Books in Myrtle Beach, SC.

Laurent's book will transform lives. Laurent shows what is needed on earth to break these violences and we need this in this world of today. This life-cycle diagram he created should be used in the schools or in conflict resolution programs in university. Good job Laurent.

~ Jean Paul Samputu, Ambassador of Peace

Interreligious and
International
Federation for rld Peace

# Life-Cycle of FORGIVENESS



#### Chapter Eleven A Sample Forgiveness Life-Cycle

Forget the past, and make the most of the present.

Keep your own hearts clean. Learn to love each other first before you tell others about my love for one and all.

Give love, receive love, gather love; everything else is dissolved eventually in the truth of divine love. — Meher Baba<sup>54</sup>

This chapter is dedicated to a simple diagram I was inspired to create after being asked a question by Randy Overdorff at the Meher Spiritual Center: "What is the difference between 'letting-go' and 'forgiveness'?" We had a lengthy conversation about this on the porch of my cabin, The Farmshed, and then later that afternoon, in the Refectory (where we cook and eat) while he and Aspen played Scrabble, I made this forgiveness life-cycle diagram in a flash.

I will discuss the idea of the life-cycle first, and then dive deeply into each point, in the clockwise order they are shown. The idea of a life-cycle of forgiveness was first presented to me by Don E. Stevens at the Young People's Group gathering number seven, which became the basis for the book *The Doorbell of Forgiveness*. At that time Don admitted to the

gathering that while he did not know "the mechanics" of forgiveness, he knew we would find out. He emphatically charged us to do forgiveness work "in our own backyards" as he put it to us, meaning in our own lives and relationships, and then we would be authorized to share about forgiveness with others. At that time, I had never done forgiveness work anywhere, not in my backyard, or with anyone ever. I had no idea what the mechanics were, that is for certain. It wasn't until I started working on this with forgiving my father for his suicide, and then moving on to other personal relationships that extremely gradually this notion of mechanics or a life-cycle started to dawn.

Early on in the "Forgiveness with Meher Baba" seminars I started to see patterns emerge of what is required for forgiveness to flow, and I will attempt to share that below now, in the context of this diagram. I believe that one or all of these steps are needed, however the order may be different depending on the situation and how many people are involved. After making this diagram, I started composing a new set of diagrams (in my head) about forgiveness triangles, squares, pentagons, etc. based on how many people are involved in the situation and what their roles are, but that is another chapter.

My Forgiveness Life-Cycle has at least 10 stages, in this order (although some stages may be happening in parallel). This life-cycle assumes there are at least two people involved in the process, and there is giving forgiveness, asking for forgiveness, or both:

- 1. **Identify what happened.** In Non Violent Communication (NVC) terms this is the "Observation." While this stage may seem like common sense it can get more complex, such as when a memory is repressed or only partial. In my work with people, I have seen that in the retelling of the incident, more than once, the details of the incident may in fact become more clear. The story may change from a dim memory of what happened to a clear and potent story with many more details and sometimes greater depth of injury than in earlier versions of the incident. Identification can be done in many ways, such as writing about the incident (e.g. the NVC Forgiveness form we created), or verbally, or through artwork like art therapy. Whatever medium of communication is best for the situation is fine, as long as the problem can be as clearly identified as possible.
- 2. One of the benefits of the NVC approach is that Observations are separated from Feelings in the describing of an incident. This is helpful on many levels, in that it can untangle the thread of mixed feelings, and memories of what happened, which if communicated all at once can be confusing. To move into only communication about the "feelings" associated with the incident is helpful. To be fair, some people have great difficulty describing emotions and feelings. This stage would benefit from a handy list of feelings as is easily found on many websites.
- 3. Once the feelings are identified, it is important to fully feel the feelings. Aspen said, "...allowing oneself to

become immersed in the emotion is paramount." Again, this may seem to be obvious, or common sense, but I have found that many are resistant to feeling their own feelings around a painful incident. This can lead to other problems, such as is found in psychological circles of splitting or fracturing of the psyche, or other "shadow" related issues. Since I am not psychiatrically trained, I won't go into that more here except to say that allowing oneself to feel the feelings associated with the incident will naturally lead to the next stage. In my own life, during my second forgiveness project from Baba, when I felt my feelings, they went so deep that I literally had a seizure and fell off my chair onto the floor while trying to express myself. I have never had a seizure before or since, but the pain of my emotions caused an electrical storm in my mind, I am certain. I hope this doesn't dissuade anyone, all I am saying is, that was a transformative day, and it did naturally lead to the next step for me in my life.

4. Share what happened with someone safe. It may be that we share directly with Baba (or God) within first, before involving another person. It is also possible that all these stages are done with a therapist, or in the absence of a therapist many people work on their issues with their circle of family and friends. So, in this stage, "someone safe" it means that it is important when sharing about the incident, and the associated feelings, you select someone who is safe. Safe is a relative term, and it means many things to different people, but because of the nature of trauma and

forgiveness, it should be a trustworthy person who will not go around telling others what you are disclosing in confidence with them. Choose someone who will not judge you, and someone who knows how to listen and honor your words, your experience and your feelings. If you have no one like that in your life, then it is recommend a therapist be invited into your process.

Aspen asked at this point, "Can God be that safe person? And, what if someone doesn't have the freedom to tell others?" Of course, throughout history God has always been present and available to all who reach out wholeheartedly and with love. And Meher Baba has and does play this role of being present and guiding those who love him. Baba said, "Remember me and I am with you, and my love will guide you."

In conversation with Jeff Wolverton on this point, Jeff said that in addition to being safe,

Someone who can help you by keeping the feelings alive at the deepest level, for an extended period, so that they can be more fully experienced, is important. In other words, to help you face this issue, and facilitate you delving as deep as possible into those feelings. Even then the awareness will want to pull out of something that is uncomfortable. Bringing it before Baba, as if he is right here, is of

Input from Annie and Jeff came at Meher Spiritual Center, March 2016.

course the safe place, and it invites him to be a part of the process. And in the healing process, he has infinitely more options on how to deal with forgiveness than we do.

As Annie Lovett shared with me, also on this point, "It is important to fully feel your feelings."

5. Share what happened with the other person (or people) involved in the incident. This is where the stages of forgiveness may get the most intense. There are many issues involved in sharing with the other person. This brings up the forgiveness directions, and the need for continued safety in your life and process. It is possible that you feel it is impossible to share your experience of what happened with the other person. It may be that the only way to share with them is through a third party, like a friend or mediator, or a therapist involved. During the seminar work we have done, I have repeatedly heard that an individual attempted to share, but there was no interest on the part of the other to listen. Another case is when the other is no longer reachable (they moved, or you lost contact), or they have since died before you were able to bring this issue up. In any case, we feel that while this stage can be vital and helpful it is not required. My own case, when forgiving my father for his suicide is a great example of this. In that case, I decided to share my forgiveness with my father at Meher Baba's Samadhi, since he had long since died and there was no question of what had happened. Many times, when

sharing what happened, the other person involved may have great difficulty hearing about it, either interrupting, or becoming less than gracious in the listening. This is a natural part of the process, and if it is too frightening, again involve a third party, or a safe mediator, or therapist.

6. **Acknowledge what happened.** Of all the things that seem to block forgiveness, the one that comes up the most in the forgiveness work I have done is the one wanting to forgive says about the person they are trying to forgive, "But they didn't even realize they have done anything wrong, and they don't agree with me!" In other words, there is a fundamental disconnect when, in attempting to forgive, there is no acknowledgment of the incident itself as needing forgiveness. When this happens, it can be a long and painful process of either waiting for that acknowledgment (which can take months or years in some cases), or just cutting to the chase: "Letting go."

I have found that the NVC process of writing out observations, feelings, needs and a request can discharge a lot of the pent-up emotions surrounding an incident, and pave the way for a more fruitful and healthy dialogue between two or more people. Emailing, or snail mailing such an NVC letter also has the benefit of allowing the recipient to review the issues before being thrust into an intense conversation. One might write such a letter, send it and then maybe a week later, follow up with, "Hey, did you have an opportunity to read that letter I sent you? It is

important to me." Or something that allows the other person to enter into the process in their own time. Naturally with such charged material, it is ideal to have a facilitator, such as a therapist, but it is not always possible.

Another possibility is that this stage is surrendered as a "nice to have" but since it is not happening, working with all the other stages as fully as possible. In the case of my father's suicide, I never got any acknowledgment from him, other than what I wrote about in my chapter in *The Doorbell of Forgiveness*, which was a response I felt came from Meher Baba about my forgiving my father.

# 7. Acknowledgment of feelings about what happened. This stage is similar to the previous stage about acknowledgement of the incident itself, but it goes much deeper. If one cannot acknowledge what happened, it is almost impossible for the process to go deeper into the vulnerable place of sharing the feelings and emotions surrounding the incident. Once shared, naturally there is a desire to have the feelings acknowledged. As with the previous step, that acknowledgement may come, or it may not. We encourage the sharing of the feelings regardless of the response or result. This sharing of the feelings also can be in many forms, or mediums. It may be a written letter or email, or it may be verbally, or via some artistic medium like a song or a painting or drawing. Whatever communicates can be helpful.

I remember in Flagstaff, Arizona, there was a project where victims of sexual or physical abuse were invited to make a t-shirt design with colored paint and hang the t-shirt on a clothes line along other abuse t-shirts. I participated in this, and made a shirt. It was a powerful acknowledgement process for me indeed. Reading the other shirts alone was healing.

Aspen reminded me that another example of acknowledgment is the fabulous book, *Post- Secret*, in which individuals wrote extraordinary secrets anonymously. Frank Warren created *PostSecret* and invited anyone to simply *PostSecret: Extraordinary* mail him a secret on their homemade *Confessions from Ordinary* 

*Lives*, by Frank Warren

(William Morrow, 2005).

postcard. He received over a million postcards, and published the best of them. This response must be a reflection of the

need for this acknowledgment step in the global psyche of humanity.

#### 8. Giving Forgiveness or Receiving Forgiveness.

Depending on the people involved and the forgiveness directions, this can be complex, but this stage of giving and receiving forgiveness with love is the crux of the process, and it can be quite beautiful. There are as many shades and tones, and hues, and sounds related to this work as there are hearts, so no two forgiveness acts are ever the same. Let it be whatever it is without trying to compare it to anything else.

9. Wholeheartedly Letting It Go. This stage of letting go may not happen overnight, but what it means is that at some point you stop obsessing over it in your head, and you wholeheartedly release it. It means – at least in part – to let go of wanting to punish someone (or oneself) for what happened in the past. Admittedly, this step can take days, months, or even years, depending on the situation. One indicator, in my experience, that it has been let go – is that it no longer pushes itself into your daily consciousness. It is as if it has receded, and left gentle peace after the raging storm. Naturally it can be remembered and brought back to awareness, but it no longer intrudes on daily thoughts.

Meher Baba emphasized this stage in the 1930s when he repeatedly told his Western Mandali (close disciples) and other followers that after a heated argument one should just let it go — release it. Here is an example from Baba's life, when two of his female disciples had been quarreling, and he directly intervened:

Love and forget. This is the only thing that matters, and it pays. Almost all of you are weak. By weak, I mean taken up with desires. Anger is weakness, pride is weakness, and so on. If a mother found her child weak, she would love it all the more. So all love more. Don't you remember what I told you in Nasik? Learn to say, 'Janay-doe' [Let it go in Hindi]. Give up wanting the last word. Give up all wants and be happy. But you must try

#### FORGIVENESS WITH MEHER BABA

consciously. Now be happy. I forgive you all, but continue trying.<sup>55</sup>

10. **Being in the Present, Moving on in Freedom.** When I first created this diagam I was skeptical that there could really be ten stages to forgiveness, but the more I reflect on this diagram and write about it, the more certain I am there are probably more than these stages, and these are just the most obvious ones to me. The last stage is to live more in the present moment and move on from the past in freedom. This is harder than it appears, most likely because it is the nature of the ego to remain attached to past wrongs and hurts, but it is the nature of God and the angels to move on and heal.

Meher Baba said,

Duality signifies separateness. Separateness implies fear. Fear causes worry.

The way of Oneness is the way to happiness; the way of manyness is the way to worry. I am the One who has no second, so I am eternally happy. You are separate from your Self, so you always worry. To you, what you see is absolutely real; to me, it is absolutely false.

I alone am real, and my will governs the cosmic illusion. It is the truth when I say that the waves do not roll and the leaves do not move without my will. The moment the

#### FORGIVENESS WITH MEHER BABA

intensity of your faith in my will reaches its height, you say goodbye to worry forever. Then all that you suffered and enjoyed in the past, together with all that you may experience in the future, will be to you the most loving and spontaneous expression of my will; and nothing will ever be able to cause you worry again.

Live more and more in the Present, which is ever beautiful and stretches away beyond the limits of the past and the future.

If you must worry at all, let your only worry be how to remember me constantly. This is worthwhile worry because it will bring about the end of worry.

Think of me more and more, and all your worries will disappear into the nothing they really are. My will works out to awaken you to this.<sup>56</sup>

#### REFLECTIONS ON THIS LIFE-CYCLE

This is the life-cycle diagram I created for this project. As you read through this book, you will see other approaches that use some, but not all, of the same steps, or which have different steps completely. I invite you to think for a while and create a sample life-cycle of your own, which you can use as a starting reference point for your own work on forgiveness.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>54</sup> *Listen, Humanity*, by Meher Baba, p. 73.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>55</sup> *Lord Meher*, p.1922.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>56</sup> Ibid, pp.4372 & 4373.



"If we regard the illusory world - instead of God or the Master - as first cause and base our reactions on this false premise, we have created a second degree of falseness. We get caught up in a continuous chain reaction, where an event (a "cause") results in a reaction (an "effect"), which becomes the cause of the next reaction - and so on. As this chain of cause and effect continues, we go further and further into the falseness. We find that we are continually dealing with contingencies all the time; we are constantly postulating that certain conditions cannot come about unless other certain conditions are met.

But there are no contingencies or limitations with God... This means that we focus on the Master or God as the First Cause - the cause of everything that happens to us."

- Darwin Shaw, in 'Effort and Grace'

#### **CD Music Liner Notes**

**01 Meherabad Raga** 0:56 A

lighthearted minute of upbeat

fun. I thought it would be an

easy introduction to my musical world.

by Karl Moeller

### Babalan

'Babaland' and 'The Kiss' CDs are available in the Sheriar Bookstore.

**07 Telemann in Rio** 1:54 A classical chordal movement in samba time. Short and strange.

**08 Suite Part I** 4:37 by Cyrille

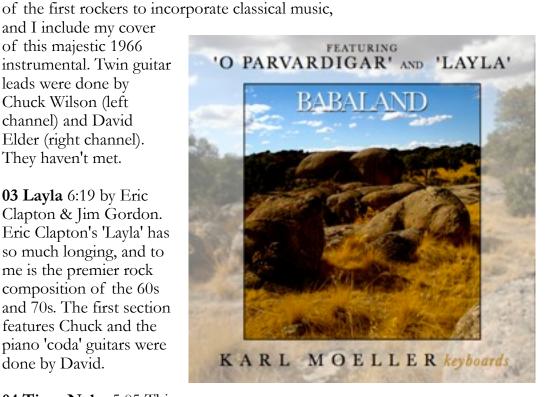
**09 Suite Part II** 8:04

Verdeaux. French-born Brazilian composer Cyrille Verdeaux gave me permission to do an arrangement of his Overture To the Messenger of the Sun.

**02 Repent Walpurgis** 4:58 by Matthew Fisher. Procol Harum ('Whiter Shade Of Pale') were some

and I include my cover of this majestic 1966 instrumental. Twin guitar leads were done by Chuck Wilson (left channel) and David Elder (right channel). They haven't met.

**03 Layla** 6:19 by Eric Clapton & Jim Gordon. Eric Clapton's 'Layla' has so much longing, and to me is the premier rock composition of the 60s and 70s. The first section features Chuck and the piano 'coda' guitars were done by David.



**04 Timo Neko** 5:05 This

started out as a Steely Dan-style keyboard instrumental, but acoustic guitar and dobro, played on keyboards, plus the arrival of the LSI African Choir, put this piece in another place entirely. Ends on a 'Picardy Third'. So I'm told.

**05 Kenas** 4:22 (Traditional) Chuck Wilson and I joined an amazing Peruvian musician, Ricardo Silva, in the studio and arranged this traditional Quecha song. Ricardo on bamboo flute ('kenas') and panpipes. Will Hillis on percussion. Piano, synth, bass by me. Ricardo left soon after for Peru... too bad, we would have made a killer worldmusic album.

**06 Asheville Cats** 2:10 Backwoods picking meets EDM, electronic dance music.

Written as a second section, with a meter-free spooky middle movement. Ends in a major key. As close to classical orchestration as I'll ever come. Special thanks to the LSI

Philharmonic and Choir.

**10 On the Hill** 3:34

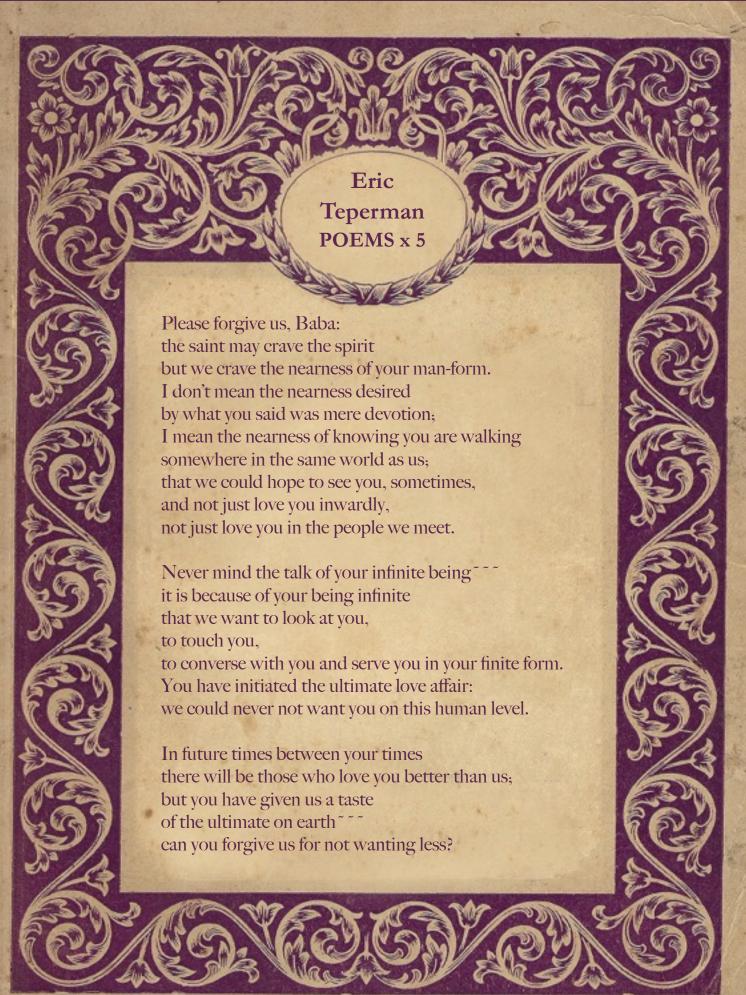
More genre-mixing, with tablas underpinning a piano composition. Synth and piano and strings and tablas, oh, my...

11 East-Hafiz-West 5:31 Lower Meherabad resident Bif Soper

recorded a visiting Irani woman singing Farsi acapella in the old PC Dining Hall. Obviously a pro singer, she had entered India illegally to visit Baba, and gave her name only as "Daughter of Hafiz". Bif sent her vocal to me, and I built an arrangement around it. I emailed a dub back to Bif, who forwarded it to her. She gave her support, so here it is.

**12 O Parvardigar** 5:48 by Pete Townshend. Pete Townshend's 'O Parvardigar' is known throughout the Western Baba community. Because I know the lyrics so well, it makes it difficult to recite the Parvardigar Prayer properly. Tucson guitarist Mike Serres sat in on 12-string. The piano carries the melody.

Thanks to Irma Sheppard for the title 'Babaland'. We'll see you again in Babaland, she says.









When we were younger we followed, always, the Big Sound. By the time you came, we had followed one sound after another; and you, you just pulled aside all that sound as if it were no more than a curtain and entered our world with your silence.

Whatever each one of us might have thought about love, we found that all the love in the world (and more) comes from you.

Baba, you are like everyone but there is no one like you. You look just like us, but when you look at us you penetrate our secret hearts; then our hearts seem expanded until they're beating right below the skin, all over, so that your touch of love is greeted with love; and we can finally grasp, with our hearts, the un-understandable.

Baba, you are like everyone but there is no one like you. You ride with us in our cars and walk with us on our streets. but it seems that everywhere everything is going to you. We are not mystics, Baba, but you make us feel your reality behind all these forms and love you all the more.

Baba, you are like everyone but no one is like you. You sit with us in our kitchens and die with us in our beds: and people, somehow, don't seem like people anymore, but something else; and we don't understand exactly what we all are anymore, but it's you, Baba, it's you.

You are like everyone, Baba, but there is no one like you.









Your silence is so much the most beautiful part of everything I hear.

it's amazing that I wish so much to hear your voice. Not the voice you use to break your silence, but the voice you used in the beginning, when you spoke to those who did not yet know that you are the Avatar; the voice you used when you sang as a young man, your hair disheveled, your clothes in rags, your heart already nothing but a great, white fire

I can see you now: transfixed ~ ~ ~ the Indian dust on your pants and feet, your voice filled with such fire and tenderness, such love and subjugation, that all who heard you were carried not just to God's feet but straight into His heart.

Even now I can hear the sound of that voice in this silence.

All my life I have sung the harmonies:
first, to the ballads of this world,
then to your song, your silent song.

These harmonies are so limber
they sometimes can startle as they complement your tune;
but when you pause, I just get lost in mid-phrase ~ ~ ~

and I wish I could have the strength to sing the melody of your love
and not just depend upon it to dance my harmonies around.

I wish I could sing your melody with you, Baba, and I wish I could not just know you now as your garden comes to full flower; but be there at the beginning, when the seed-beds weren't even laid out yet; it was just you, so young and beautiful, your voice so extraordinary, so transforming of all who heard, so human.

My friend, you stand there and ask me, "Who is Meher Baba?" If I tell you that he is the living Christ, that would not be enough even though he is that. If I told you he is the ultimate beloved of all my heart, that would not fully describe him even though I can express myself fully, through love, to him as I can to no other; and he is far more full of love than I could ever be. If I told you he is my best and dearest friend, my constant companion, who is with me even when I am not expressly thinking of him, that would not be enough, because as my friend he never fails me, while as his friend I sometimes fail him. Maybe more than sometimes. And even when he corrects me and guides me, it is always benevolently. If I told you he is my real father, that would not be enough, because he is also the whole of my family, in the realest sense, all by himself; and he is also the father of all; and more than that, he is the inner-dweller of all,

So, if you ask me, "Who is Meher Baba?",
I can easily say to you, from my heart,
"He is this wonderful man I've been following for over forty years,"
and that is a true thing I can tell you;
but when you ask me,
you, who are yearning for Truth,
you, who are looking for the source of undying light in your own heart,
then that answer would not be enough,
and my response, in one way or another,
would be like Meher Baba himself,
and have no beginning
and no end.

making me feel an unbreakable, loving bond with all I meet and all whom I haven't met.

Our cover artist: a new Korean Baba lover introduces himself (translated by Mark Choi) July 13, 2016 (Korea)

Lee hyun

저는 한국의 수원대학교를 중퇴한 후 2002년부터 저 만의 그림세계를 구축해나갔습니다. 그러나 삶의 목 적, 세상의 진리에 대한 풀 수 없는 질문들로 방황하다

가 한국의 기명상을 하게 되었고 마음의 정화를 통해 지금까지 작품활동을 이어왔습니다.

I was attending Suwan Uiversity but dropped out in 2002 to pursue my career in the Art (design) world. But I was lost about the purpose of life and plagued by questions pertaining to seeking the Truth. But then through a form of Korean Ji mediation I've been working on my art work since.

기명상을 활용하면 거짓된 스승들을 판별할 수 있는데 2014년 메허 바바를 체크하게 되었습니다. 메허 바바는 한국에 소개되지않은 미지의 존재였습니다. 바바의 에너지장은 다른 성자라 불리는 존재들과는 전혀 다른 모습이었습니다. 그는 인간으로서 상승해가는 존재가 아니라 이미완전한 모습으로 육화된 존재였습니다. 그러나 이 의미를 이해하지 못했습니다. 이후 기명상 관련 책을 출판하다가 메허 바바에 대한 책 출간 문의가 있었고 그 작업에 참여하게 되었습니다. 바바의 글을 읽으며 바바께서 화신이라는 믿음을 키우게 되었습니다.



The Ji-meditation offers a way to distinguish false gurus, and in 2014 I had an opportunity to check on Meher Baba. Meher Baba was an unknown entity of mystery in Korea (and still is) at the time. Baba's energy chart was so vastly different from other Saintly types and this got my attention. He was not a human (person) who was spiritually advancing, but a physical manifestation of a completed (flawless/absolute) being. But I was not able to understand the deep implications of this at the time. Thereafter, I joined the Meher Baba book publishing effort. As I began to read the words of Baba— my faith that He Was indeed the Avatar (Savior/ Mietra) began to solidify.

바바의 생명의 말씀들을 한글로 번역해주시는 분께 감사의 의미로 바바의 그림을 그려 선물하게 되었습니다. 저는 제가 할 수 있는 그림이라는방식으로 바바를 찬양하고 바바를 기억하려 합니다. 한국의 역사에는 왕이 있었고 '어진'이라고 하여 왕의 모습을 전통적인 재료와 방법으로 비단위에 채색하는 그림 형식이 있습니다. 저는 한국의 전통적인 방식으로 바바의 '어진'을 그리려고 계획하고 있습니다. 바바는 진정한 왕이시니까요.

I came to draw the paintings of Baba as a present, to thank the person who translated the words that Baba spoke during his life. Now through painting, I praise Baba and try to remember Him always. In Korean History we have Kings and there is a traditional format for painting kings called 어진(Oh-Jin). I plan to paint Baba in this format soon. —







For He is the True King of Kings.

(Oh-Jin style of King Portrait)





Pg. 48



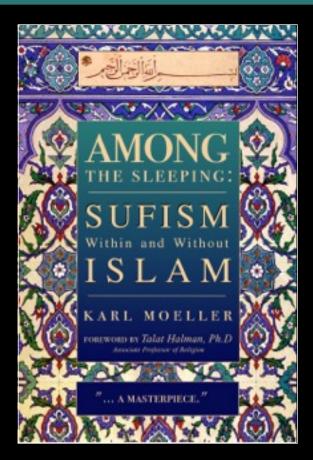
In silence You speak Love within me and still the fears of old.

In words I speak the Love that You are within me—relay what I am told.

In utmost splendor
You shine
through eyes of kindness—
gleams both true and bold.

In solitude You sing my heart's joy beyond earthly treasure—what only heart can hold.

–Irma Sheppard



This small book on Sufism is a masterpiece. It surveys the vast range of types of Sufism as well as the vast ranges of phenomena and traditions — both in Islamic Sufism and in Universalist Sufism.

H. TALAT HALMAN, Ph.D. Associate Professor, Religion Central Michigan University

AMONG THE SLEEPING

The Real Work may not be educating junior Sufis at all. While the Sufi Work depends on a populace of evolved practitioners, teaching is by no means the most important function of the Sufi hierarchy, historically or in the present day.

One favorite Hadith of the Sufis is,

"Human beings are asleep, and when they die they will awaken."

This Hadith's apparent meaning is that all will become clear upon our death. A deeper meaning is

that the mass of mankind is in a deep hypnotic state in which physical reality is all, intuition is seen as unreliable, security equates to a large family and/or money in the bank, and religion is an obligation, necessary for social standing.

The Prophet also said, "Die before you die," which opens the possibility of awakening to our true nature and relation to the Creator while still alive. The Sufi considers that 'sleep' mentioned in the Hadith above is the deep illusion resulting from the Real Self being obscured by the False Self. The 'death' is the death of the False Self, or Nafs. The Sufi Hakim Sanai (d. 1131-1141 est.) wrote, "Everyone in the ordinary world is asleep. Their religion — the religion of the familiar world — is emptiness, not religion at all."

While Sufism does indeed aim to assist the properly motivated and capable human to awaken, i.e. training of murids, it has a parallel and deadly serious purpose. Earlier, certain spiritual personages were mentioned, the Awtad and the Abdal. The number of these people vary, and they are assigned to specific locales, depending on the area's history, population, and overall state of spiritual readiness. They may or may not reside in the area for which they are responsible. They have specific duties. Sufis would say that in addition to helping members to rise, the Sufi Work includes two other main phases: absorption of the negative emanations from entire sleeping populations and distribution of positive emanations from Allah to those sleeping populations.

This leads to an outrageous statement, nonetheless a core belief of Sufis and of those associated with Sufis — without this absorption of "evil" and dissemination of "good" performed by the corporeal Sufi Orders along with the hierarchy of Sufi Preserving Saints, humanity would have ceased to be long ago. In that sense advanced Sufis benefit everyone in the world, whether they know it or not. These self-sacrificing advanced beings deserve our deepest possible gratitude. This is a secret that is concealed by its very improbability.

#### THE TRUE TEACHER

A murshid, or pir, or shaykh, is not the founder of an order. He has risen through the ranks, as khalifa, or lieutenant, has received the khirqa, or mantle, from an acknowledged murshid, and later may be granted permission to take murids and begin a branch of the order, if he so chooses and conditions are right. At that point that person is referred to as Murshid, or teacher.

There are in fact formal qualifications for a murshid. Most Sufi Orders have the tradition of a written 'license to practice', called 'ijaza nama'. The ijaza nama specifies the duties and responsibilities of the murshid as given by his own Shaykh, plus one or more complete silsila records (depending on how many orders to which the new murshid belongs) — tracing the spiritual lineage back to the Prophet and (with noted exceptions) to Caliph Ali. Simply having the license does not mean the bearer is a perfected teacher, a 'kamil shaykh'.

A kamil shaykh is considered to possess:

- Knowledge of the Sharia, Qur'an, Hadith, and Islamic jurisprudence
- Expertise in the rites and rituals of his particular order
- Practical knowledge of the stations —
  maqqamat that mark the progress of a murid
- Personal experience with the stages of Fana, annihalation of the false self
- Continuous inner bonding rab'ta with his own murshid, and with the founder of his own order, and with the Prophet Muhammad

Some would-be students of Sufism are not aware that their motives include the wish for exotic, unusual experience, or are motivated by what can only be called spiritual greed. The teacher must provide a real context in which each murid can grow at his or her best pace. The teacher is not there to provide psychotherapy to the murid, but to adjust and open perceptions far beyond psychotherapy's scope. The teacher must be able to diagnose the stage of the pupil, and the learner must come to the stage where he can

accept this without resentment or pride. Beyond this, the true murshid strives to make himself irrelevant — except in inner connection — to the murid. Rumi says:

"Wool, through the presence of a man of knowledge, becomes a carpet. Earth and stone may become a palace. The presence of a spiritual man creates a similar transformation."

Alchemy, in other words. Base materials become fine, and useful. But how to recognize the true teacher? The proof of the teacher is in the quality, nature, and accomplishments — the refinement of heart and mind — of the students. The Sufi master ibn al-Arabi stated,

"People think that a teacher should display miracles and manifest illumination. But the requirement in a teacher is that he should possess all that the disciple needs."

Because spirituality works and expresses on the intuitive level, the opportunities to choose poorly are many. While one would hope that the Silsila and investiture ceremonies and even possession of an 'ijaza nama' would eliminate them, there are as many false teachers in Sufism as in other spiritual disciplines.

The problem is compounded because of the Sufi's disregard for externals. A seeker may encounter a false teacher who takes pains to look and act the part, and therefore appears genuine, while a kamil shaykh with real knowledge is avoided, because he does not match the seeker's immature idea of how a spiritual teacher should look and act. Many teaching-stories involve a teacher acting in a non-spiritual or irreligious manner, scaring off the unready. This process frees the genuine master of the task of dismissing indiscriminating, incapable would-be murids; misled by externals, these people dismiss themselves in advance.

An elegant system.

#### SUFIS WITHOUT ORDERS

In the nineteenth and twentieth centuries there appeared in India several prominent spiritual persons with visible Muslim backgrounds, but who apparently achieved their status without rising through the ranks of any Sufi order.

The most famous of these was Sai Baba of Shirdi, Maharastra State (1838 est. - 1918). He remains possibly the best-known of all modern Indian saints. He taught a mixture of Hindu and Muslim elements, and this was reflected in his devotees. He practiced the Salat, the Muslim prayers, lived in a mosque, yet gave it the Hindu name 'Dwarakamayi'. Sai was a saint with a sense of humor. In the book 'The God-Man,' Charles Purdom wrote,

"When Sai Baba wanted to move his bowels, people would take him in a procession with a band and pipes."

Sai's mix of Muslim and Hindu devotees is reminiscent of Hazrat Moinuddin Chishti's approach to spirituality, where followers of all religions were welcomed. Sai never claimed to be initiated in any of India's many Sufi tariqas or orders. However, Meher Baba said of Sai that Sai's actual spiritual mentor was the famous Chishti master Zar Zari Zar Baksh, a Qutb of his age, buried in Maharastra State's Valley of the Saints, who died 700 years before Sai's birth.

Other remarkable Indian saints of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries were Tajuddin Baba of Nagpur (1861-1925) and the remarkable female saint Hazrat Babajan of Pune (1806 est. - 1931). Both these had Muslim backgrounds, yet there are no claimed or traceable antecedents for either as a murid or murshid of any known Sufi Order.

Professor Talat Halman has equated these undeniably high yet unaffiliated beings with the Arabic term "Al-Afrad", or "Fard,", the 'solitaries.' Murshid F.A. Ali Al-Senossi has written,

"These men (sic) are outside the supervision of the Qutb, or Pole. Their head is the Green Prophet, Al-Khidr."

In his website almirajsuficentre.org.au this term 'Fard' is further defined:

"(Fard/ Mufrad). Within the Sufi hierarchy he is the man called fard (or mufrad) 'The Solitary'. He stands equal to the Pole, but without a specific function such as that possessed by the Pole. He is the one who knows that he undergoes constant fluctuation of knowledge in each breath. He is outside the supervision of the qutb. He is compared to the 'Enraptured Angels' (al mala'ikat al muhayyamin)."

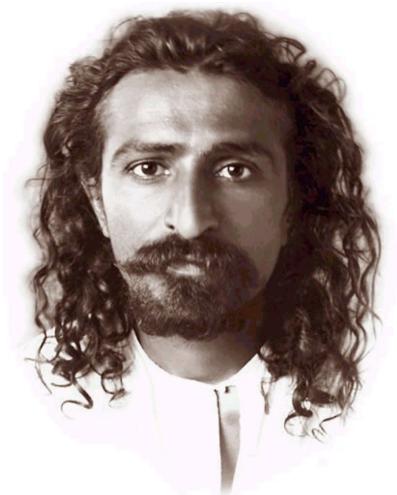
"Nothing corrupts a man so deeply as writing a book."
- Nero Wolfe

#### THE KALIMAH

"La Ilaha Illah Allah wa Muhammad ar-Rasul Allah"

"There is no god but God and Muhammad is his Prophet"





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

## Chapter Five of Christ Come Again

by Ed Flanagan

Merwan's Friends

#### **Chapter Five**

#### Merwan's Friends

#### Ghosts in the Tower of Silence

When he was 12, Merwan began stealing away at night to the Parsi Tower of Silence. It was a Zoroastrian custom for the dead to be left here to be devoured by gathering vultures. Fascinated by the dead, he'd stay well past midnight following in his father's footsteps. When he was a boy, Sheriar's father was keeper of the Tower of Silence in Iran, and young Sheriar would accompany him. Merwan had some unusual experiences here.

Baily was fascinated hearing about these good and pious spirit sightings. It sounded like great fun. So Merwan suggested maybe they'd go together, warning, "But none of your recklessness." With Baily's promise to behave, one dark moonless night they set off on their bikes. The Tower of Silence was on a desolate hill 2 miles outside Poona. Even in daylight it was a haunting forest wilderness surrounded by foreboding dark stone walls.

When they got to the tower at 11 in pitch darkness, Merwan whispered, "Baily, promise whatever happens we stick together and keep silent climbing the tower steps. We don't want to draw anyone's attention. And don't turn back home before bowing to the tower itself." Baily promised. "And whatever spirits we see, just keep silent and make sure you pray the whole way going up the steps." Baily agreed to the complicated conditions.

But knowing only a couple of very short prayers and feeling uneasy, he was having 2<sup>nd</sup> thoughts about this whole nighttime adventure. The moment the tower was in sight, Merwan silently dropped to his knees, placed his head on the ground and offered his silent prayer. He stayed like that for some moments as Baily mindlessly imitated him.

As all the caretakers had gone, no one was around. No voices or sounds were heard except the distant barking of dogs and foxes and the eerie fluttering of hungry vultures' wings nearby. Slowly but surely the dreadful atmosphere took effect on Baily. Icy shivers ran up and down his spine. He quietly implored, "Maybe we should just go back home."

"What's the matter?" Merwan whispered. "We're not going back. We've come this far." Baily wavered, "Well, maybe it wasn't such a good idea after all." Merwan was annoyed. "C'mon, be a man! I'll lead the way – just stay near me. I'm telling you there's nothing to be afraid of." Walking a bit further they came to a door where the corpses were taken inside. No one but the priests were allowed to enter . . . .

Approaching the Tower, Merwan bent low to offer his obeisance. Baily did the same, but on rising, was scared out of his wits seeing a tall, thin, aged spirit dressed in white with a flowing white beard. The spirit ominously stretched out his hands, warning the boys to *stop*!

Terror-stricken, Baily tightly shut his eyes and started perspiring. His knees went weak. As Merwan started advancing toward the door, Baily couldn't contain his fear and cried aloud, "Merwan!" But as if led by some unseen force, Merwan kept walking. Baily was too frightened to turn back alone, so he grabbed Merwan's sleeve, pulling and pleading that they leave. Merwan obstinately shook him off.

"No! We're going on. Why are you trying to stop me?" Baily's tongue stuck to the roof of his mouth. "I-I saw something – his . . . ." "So what? That's what we came here for. If you're afraid of seeing things, stop now. I'll go on alone."

Baily burst out, "But if something happens to you . . ." "Don't worry, just go! Even if I die, fend for yourself." Baily pleaded, "For God's sakes, Merwan, *please!* Let's get the hell out of here. Don't be so stubborn. For my sake come back alone some other time!"

Shrugging his shoulders, Merwan sighed. What could he do? Again he knelt in salutation to the dead, with Baily, knock-kneed, doing the same. Creeping out, Baily stole a

glance at that spot, glad the spirit had disappeared. As they descended the steps, Baily sighed in relief. They got on their bikes to ride back toward the city.

Regaining some of his composure, Baily then made a bold, out of place macho remark. Well, this was too much for Merwan, so he started teasing Baily. "Say what you like," Baily retorted, "but if you'd been alone and saw what I saw, I doubt you'd have been able to stand it." "What are you talking about? What else could I have seen except a bearded old man in white, guarding the door with outstretched hands?" "Uhh!! You saw him, too?"

"Well, I *think* so . . . but now I'm not so sure," Merwan teased. "Stop kidding! Honestly, did you see that spirit or not?" "Baily, don't be so thick-headed. I saw exactly what you saw." "And still you wanted to go on?" "Why be afraid?" "Were there more spirits?"

"Baily, did you lose your common sense with your courage? If I were in the least bit frightened, would I've agreed to go there in complete darkness? I'd have turned back like you, believe me. I didn't go there to die. My father told me it's good to meet such spirits and gain their favor." Baily was now convinced of his friend's courageousness.

After they rode their bikes in silence a while, Baily sheepishly said, "Merwan, just don't tell the guys I got scared." Merwan chuckled, "Don't worry." A nearby clock struck 2 AM as the boys parted. They had spent about 3 hours wandering in the night. This was Baily's 1<sup>st</sup> and last visit to the Tower of Silence, but surely not Merwan's . . . . 129–32

Sometimes for hours late into the night Merwan avidly gazed up at the stars. Friends often joined in, but he'd become so absorbed he'd be lost and not reply to questions or share in conversation. These late nights and very early mornings were the best times for he and Baily to meet so as to avoid Shireen, for by now it had escalated into her strictly forbidding Merwan to hang out with him, with "all spies on the lookout."

So they'd sneak out at night to stargaze. Merwan ravished the stars with eyes like fathomless pools of love to be drowned in. When Baily would ask what he saw in the sky, Merwan might say, "Oh, I saw the court of *Emperor Jamshed*, and oh, a *peacock's throne*." Once he said, "I saw the *formlessness of God in form!*" Then he'd laugh just to annoy Baily.

On summer vacations in their early teens, Merwan and Jamshed would spend a week in the countryside outside Poona. Merwan loved hiking the woods and hills, so they'd stay where Jamshed was raised till age 5 at their uncle and aunt's who ran a restaurant in Lonavla.

#### Two Saints Seek out Merwan

It was noticed each time Merwan visited, 2 spiritually advanced men suddenly appeared at the restaurant. One was a God-intoxicated soul known as *mast-Allah*. The other was a more advanced saint known as *wali-Allah*. The ragged-looking *mast* [pronounced *must*, meaning God-intoxicated] would sit outside, while the neatly-dressed *wali* [saint] would enter.\*

These advanced souls living outside town were venerated by the local residents. Seldom venturing from their places, as soon as Merwan arrived, both would suddenly appear at the restaurant and remain there morning till night.

People would offer them tea or food, but they'd accept nothing – only from Merwan. So he usually gave the *wali* tea and the *mast* a loaf of bread. On the day Merwan would leave to go back home, both these spiritual personalities would just as suddenly stop coming to the restaurant, much to the amazement of local townsfolk.

133–34

#### One Father – Different Children

As a youth, Merwan never favored any particular religion, caste or creed; something characterizing his future life as the Avatar of our age. He advised his friends, "All are from

<sup>\*</sup>A "wali" is a 5<sup>th</sup> mental plane saint. He can read, control and direct anyone's thoughts. A *mast* is stuck in bliss.

*one God.*" He even wrote poems on that theme:

"Never criticize other religions. We should respect them as our own – one soul, one father with different children, different natures different bodies. Others' religions – why speak ill of them? All religions are good; only we are bad." These lines from an early poem of Merwan's show his understanding and purity of religious thought even as a teenager, something he surely imbibed from his father, Sheriar. In later life he'd say:

"God is at the center of a circle whose circumference is the universe. The radii to the center are the various religions. The points on the radii near the circumference are distinctly and widely apart from each other; but as they approach the center, they come increasingly close to each other. In the same way, as a person becomes spiritually minded and advances towards God, the more tolerant he becomes and the less differences he sees."

Here we jump decades ahead to 1962 when over 5000 people came from around the globe to be with the Avatar at his historic East-West Gathering in India. Meher Baba spoke to them, referencing the religious wars rampant in the world:

I have come to remind all people they should live on earth as children of the one Father, until my Grace awakens them to the actual realization that they are all *one without a second*, and all divisions and conflicts and hatreds are but a shadow-play of their own ignorance.

Although all are my children, they ignore the simplicity and beauty of this Truth by indulging in hatreds, conflicts and wars dividing them in enmity, instead of living as one family in their Father's house. Even amongst you, who love me and accept me for what I am, there is sometimes a total lack of understanding of one another's hearts.

Patiently I've suffered these things in silence for all my children. But it's now time they become aware of their Father's presence in their midst and their responsibility towards him and themselves. I'll break my Silence and with my Word of words arouse my children to realize in their lives the indivisible Existence which is GOD. Over years I've given many messages and discourses.

Today I simply want to tell you gathered here in my love to shut the ears of your minds and open the ears of your *hearts* to hear my Word when I utter it. Seek not my Blessing; it is always with you. But long for the day when my Grace will descend on all who love me. Most blessed are they who long not for my Grace, but simply seek my will . . . . The great Persian poet and Perfect Master, Hafiz, said: "For ages, lovers of God longingly wait for What but one in 100,000 achieves." 4863-64

#### Attending a Jesuit High School

Merwan now began attending a Catholic high school – St. Vincent's, named after the French St. Vincent DePaul, known for his love and dedication to the poor. It was considered the best school in Poona and was run by Jesuit missionary priests, a few foreigners and some from the local province of Goa with whom I'd interact in 1982.





St. Vincent's High School, Poona and Merwan, nicknamed "Electricity," in 1910 at age 16

Merwan was never keen on science or geography, and of course his old nemesis, math. But good poetry always charmed him. By 16, he had read most of Shakespeare and the major English, Indian and Persian poets. He was top of his class in Persian, and especially loved its poetry and literature. Sir Walter Scott, Shakespeare, Wordsworth and Shelley were among his favorite English poets. Hafiz was hands-down his favorite Muslim poet.

This God-Realized Perfect Master's Sufi poetry made the boy's heart dance with joy, detaching him from everyday worldliness. St. Vincent's admitted all creeds and mostly boys from the wealthier Poona families. Whereas before Merwan's playmates had been Persians, his circle expanded to now include Catholics, Hindus, Muslims, Jews and Buddhists.

Religious study wasn't required, but disciple was strict, and getting the *rattan* was punishment for mischief – raps on the hand with a thin bamboo cane. Merwan took an instant liking to this school and was a favorite with both classmates and teachers.

The principal was a German priest, Fr. Wilhelm Windhausen. He couldn't help noticing something extraordinary about Merwan's personality. This stirred a bit of envy in some of the other students. The gym coach also gave him special help, building on his already lithe body, natural grace and pure sportsmanship. He wasn't tall or muscular, even slight at 5'6," but extremely agile, excelling in long-distance running and high jumping.

He was playing 1<sup>st</sup> string on several school teams with older seniors, and was cocaptain of the cricket team. He won several trophies and set many school records which remain unbeaten to this day at St. Vincent's. Besides literature, he had a keen interest in history, which is actually the extended record of all his past Avataric advents.

Of course he was blithely unaware of that. He had a remarkably sharp memory, and never forgot any particular fact about a subject he either heard or read about. Building upon the inner language of the soul his father taught him from childhood, Merwan received an excellent Jesuit education in a multi-religious setting.\*

In fact, he was considered so intelligent for his age that a couple of teachers wondered if he cheated during exams; well, maybe occasionally in math. But no one grasped that his photographic memory stored every fact and was easy for him to recall during exams.

Convinced he was cheating, a priest once caned him, then later admitted, "There's something different about you, Merwan, something special. Forgive me." "It's all right," the boy replied, "forgiven and forgotten." While at St. Vincent's, Merwan read books on various religions and spirituality. He'd ask Sheriar to read him the works of the mystical poets Rumi and Hafiz in their original Persian.

By now he was composing poetry in 4 languages – Urdu, Guajarati, Hindi and Persian. They were invariably on *Sufi* mystical themes, such as the tavern and wine shop, describing divine madness, intoxication and the soul's endless spiritual longing.

He had a deep passion for the poetry of God-Realized Perfect Masters, and though never reading their works, from Sheriar he could recite them by heart, quoting Hafiz even to the end of his life, as well as the entire *Bhagavad Gita* and *Ramayana*, even though again he had only "heard" and not read them. He also knew songs of the Hindu Perfect Masters Tukaram and Ramdas by heart. He never liked shallow novels or romantic love stories.

But good detective stories always held his interest, like Sherlock Holmes and especially Sexton Blake, published in a monthly British magazine. He even wrote a long fan letter to Blake. Later in life, Nero Wolfe would become his favorite, read to him by his sister Mani on lazy summer afternoons as a relief from his intense inner spiritual work.

<sup>\*</sup>I visited this school in 1982 to observe the students and share with them about their illustrious earlier schoolmate. I also reviewed Merwan's impressive studies and sports records. But both grammar and high school records are off a year on his birth date, listed as 1895 instead of 1894.

During his freshman high school year, one of his short stories was published in the British monthly, *The Union Jack*. Although only a teenager, he possessed an uncanny deep wisdom. By now he was also composing *ghazals* – Persian love poems to God. Baily mailed one to Bombay's popular Gujerati newspaper, *The Evening News*.

It was instantly published under Merwan's penname, *Huma*. Thereafter, without fail every Saturday's issue contained one of Huma's compositions, in Gujerati, Urdu or Persian, "Huma" refers to the mythological Persian bird of paradise, similar to the Egyptian phoenix, a bird with incredible feats of flight – consuming itself in fire every few 100 years, only to rise anew from the ashes – exactly like the Avatar.

The Persians teach great blessings come to a person on whom *Huma's* shadow falls. It joins male and female natures together in one body, each sharing a wing and a leg. Another Gujerati newspaper, *The Bombay Samachar*, started syndicating his poems as well. When both these papers eventually folded, readers were still clamoring for more of Huma's writings. They'd have been shocked to know he was a teenager.

One day visiting Bombay and walking by a music store, Baily was surprised hearing some Parsi lads singing one of Merwan's ghazals, *Money, Ah, Money!* The boys were singing and dancing to the lyrics with such zest that pedestrians were blocking the sidewalk just to take in the show. Merwan was also very drawn to acting and directing, often getting standing ovations for school plays at St. Vincent's and in local YMCA productions. 136–39

When Merwan was 15, Mr. Browne, a famous European astrologer who knew Sheriar, asked if he could predict the boy's future. He'd been very impressed with him for a long time, and now wanted to take a closer look at the boy's astrological chart. Merwan wasn't exactly keen on the idea, but consented on Sheriar's prodding.

Browne was also an adept palmist and wanted to do a palm reading on him before drawing up his chart. Looking at the boy's hand and minutely scanning Merwan's palm lines, Browne suddenly appeared very confused. He could usually do this in 10 minutes, but he was so astounded by what he saw he ended up spending an hour consulting various books.

Then he solemnly declared to Sheriar, "In the future, this boy will become the greatest philosopher of our age!" – a prediction having very little effect on either of them. Well, Merwan disliked fortune telling as well as philosophy, and so with passing time, the family forgot all about Browne's predictions. But years later, someone else gave Merwan's details to another noted Indian astrologer. Here are some excerpts from that reading:

"The Person born under the planetary effect of this chart will be the doer of great and good deeds. He will be industrious and attain fame and glory all over the world . . . . His devotion is profoundly deep and intense, and there will come a day when total renunciation of worldly things will manifest. He will be acclaimed and worshipped as a Great Being.

"All falling under his gaze will be captivated. The power of his attractive personality is utterly marvelous. This soul will do great work for humanity . . . . He is born to carry out the will and work of God on earth and be the salvation for all who come into his contact." 142

During his last year in high school, Merwan's family moved temporarily to a new neighborhood in Poona. With that change, Merwan wasn't seeing his old friends as often as he liked, so he founded *The Cosmopolitan Club* with the enthusiasm of a few wealthier St. Vincent's classmates helping to finance things. It had no fixed membership fee, but each contributed as to his means from 1-50 rupees a month.

Though some of the club's rules were strict, all were followed willingly. The 1<sup>st</sup> was no one should enter after drinking liquor or other intoxicants, and no gambling was allowed. Discussing private family matters, gossiping or making fun of others, talking ill to form low opinions of others, using "swear words" etc. were unacceptable.

Brotherliness with each other and extending all kinds of help to others were encouraged. Card games, dice and chess were also played. Not only philosophical books, but also detective magazines like Sexton Blake and Gujarati or English newspapers like *The Times* were read. On Thursdays there was public speaking. These talks were lots of fun, and Merwan being President also had to speak. His talk was always judged the best.

There was singing on Sundays, and people passing by often stood outside the club listening and appreciating the music. Thus, the Cosmopolitan Club became renowned until Merwan had to drop out to attend Deccan College.

Baily Irani's diary, Vol.1, pp. 8-9

#### The End of an Old Friendship

During their last year together in high school, Baily and Merwan, such close pals all through childhood, had a painful falling-out and finally parted ways. Baily was now over 6' tall and could be very prideful. His arrogant nature sometimes caused serious differences between them. As a result, in chagrin Baily ended up moving out of town.

He went to work at a grocery store in Lonavla where Merwan and brother Jamshed often spent summer vacations an hour away from home. Although such close buddies from childhood, it would be over a year and a half before they set eyes on each other again.

#### Lord Buddha Returns

With Baily gone, another teen named Ramnath who lived close to Merwan, became extremely attracted to him. He wouldn't go even a day without seeing his new friend. He was an orphan from N. India and a happy, good-natured lad, cared for by his older brother. Just to see him daily, Ramnath joined the Cosmopolitan Club, and a close friendship formed between them. Ramnath was a devout Buddhist and well read in other religions.

He always repeated Buddha's name and tried to follow Lord Buddha's precepts. Becoming loyal companions, the boys most likely had past-life connections. At night they liked going off to secluded spots, like the Hindu cremation grounds. Here they'd sit, repeating different names of God, sometimes as late as 10 o'clock, exchanging views on God and spirituality. Ramnath disliked worldly subjects which he found difficult to deal with and lived only for these times with Merwan.

One day, he showed Merwan a new book he'd just gotten on the life the Buddha. Going through the pages, Merwan came to a certain passage where Buddha says: "When I return to earth, I will be called Maitreya – the Compassionate One." Merwan was thunderstruck, feeling he was that very same Compassionate One referred to in this passage! Looking at Buddha's picture, he felt deeply within, "I am Buddha!" Again he asked, "Am I really the Buddha?" An inner voice again assured him, "Yes, Merwan, you are!" 3479

Then one night while they were watching burning corpses at the cremation grounds, Merwan suggested, "Ramnath, you're so interested in Buddha, why not go to that great Buddhist center in Rangoon where you can learn so much more." Taking his friend's advice to heart, the boy soon bravely traveled alone all the way to Rangoon, Burma, though he was only 16. But while there, he fell critically ill and barely made it back to Poona.

He was admitted to Sassoon Hospital where Merwan had been born and where he now visited Ramnath daily. The boy said, "I only came back to Poona to see you, Merwan." A few days later, the lad left this world with his head in his dearest friend's lap.

142–46

After graduating with honors from St. Vincent's at age 17 in 1911, Merwan began freshman year at Deccan College across the river from home. He biked to class each day across the river and also rowed on it many an evening with classmates from the rowing club. He continued playing cricket and even formed a college drama group.

MM 1: 56

They gave a few performances at a local theater with proceeds going to charity. At this time Merwan was very well-dressed and very particular that his clothes be spotless and ironed. How that would soon change. Then one fine morning during Merwan's freshman year at Deccan College, some classmates had come to Lonavla on an outing.

Needing picnic supplies, they stopped by the store where Baily was working. One of them, a Jewish teacher at St. Vincent's, Mr. David, recognized Baily and urged him to join them for the picnic. Having to work, Baily declined, but his ears picked up when someone mentioned Merwan's name. He asked how Merwan was doing.

They said fine and in fact he was right there in town visiting his brother Jamshed working in their aunt and uncle's restaurant. Still having karma with Baily and not wanting to deal with their painful parting, Merwan hadn't sought him out.

When someone mentioned his old friend would be joining the party, Baily quickly changed his mind, saying after the store closed he'd definitely try to join them. At that moment Merwan appeared with the rest of the party outside the store. Baily wanted to go out and ask Merwan's forgiveness, but hesitated, feeling embarrassed in front of all the others.

Through the store window, they both caught sight of each other, and with raised eyebrows smiled nodding glances. Now, there was one in the group who knew them both and of their painful parting. So later that evening the lad addressed the group.

He asked their respected teacher to use his influence. "Let's bring together old friends who have parted company." Everyone, including Mr. David, was in the dark as to who these fellows were, and asked for their names. Baily felt embarrassed and confused.

But then after a close look at both boys, Mr. David sized up the situation and said, "Well now, I don't think Merwan needs to be swayed by my influence . . . but I suggest both might exchange a glass of beer to renew their friendship and add to our happiness!" Merwan stood, and with a beaming smile offered his old friend a glass of beer.

Baily accepted, deeply feeling Merwan's gesture. All cheered as the reunited friends embraced. Baily then quickly moved back to Poona to resume their close friendship, as the only reason he left was the unbearable pain of strained relations with Merwan.

Then one day in 1912 while sitting in the lane by his house, suddenly Merwan's inner sight opened. He clearly saw the divine effulgence of God. Immediately losing all bodily consciousness, he had a far deeper experience of what he'd received only a glimpse of in primary school. His eyelids remained open, but he was utterly merged in divine bliss.

Aunt Dowla, visiting Shireen from Lonavla that day, walked by and noticed Merwan sitting in an awkward position. When she called out to him and there was no reply, she went and told Shireen. Running out and shaking him, she called out, "Merog! Merog!" His eyes just flickered as he mumbled, "Oh Memo, please . . . don't bother me just now."

He was stunned for a minute before getting to his feet. Shireen thought he must have had a dizzy spell. After this experience of the *Noor* – the light of God – Merwan increasingly felt he really *was* different from other men; a feeling that persisted, though he still had no awareness of his true spiritual identity.

149–51

#### Unveiling of Merwan's Divine Consciousness

Meanwhile, time was fast approaching for the 5 Perfect Masters to take over the reins in Merwan's life and precipitate his unveiling. As John the Baptist unveiled Jesus at the Jordan, so would Merwan be, later saying John was not only a wondrous God-Realized being and the Master of Jesus, but also put his neck on the block and gave his life for him.

3596

The world has no idea of the 5 Masters' infinite love for Merwan. Veiling him for 19 years, they had watched over and protected him until the exact right moment for his

unveiling. These 5 divine ones, whoever they are in each Avataric Age, are the instruments bringing God to earth while gloriously unveiling His Infinite Consciousness.

The narrative interrupts here to explain more about the Perfect Masters, 5 of whom are always present and embodied on earth, and all of whom we will soon meet:

The 5 Perfect Masters made me take this human form to bear the Cross and undergo humiliation . . . . They are the 5 "greatest thieves in the world," stealing people's hearts. Periodically, they steal me from my highest state, for of my own accord I'd never come.

4168

The Perfect Master becomes the center of the universe as the only absolute, changeless point around which the illusory universe constantly turns like a grinding mill with the Truth-realized Master its central pin. None can escape the repetitious, eternal crushing of this grinding mill, except those blessed grains which adhere to the central pin. A Perfect Master's redeeming act is a flash of the Eternal in what otherwise is nothing but rigidly determined causation.

The key to the world is only *one*, but it is in the hands of the 5 Perfect Masters. A safe has only one key and no other key can unlock it. The 5 Perfect Masters control the safe – the world. One Master is *keeper* of the key, without which the safe cannot be opened. The 2<sup>nd</sup> *guards* the safe, which cannot be opened without his prior consent. The 3<sup>rd</sup> is the one who alone has authority to *insert* the key to unlock the safe. The 4<sup>th</sup> has the right to *distribute* the riches of the safe.

Only the 5<sup>th</sup> Master has power to *authorize* that distribution. Thus, one key is equally shared by the 5 Masters. They, plus 51 other participating God-Realized souls share control of the key. These 51 are members of the 5 Perfect Masters' parliament. 51+ 5 equal 56 – a number that never changes [56 God-Realized Beings on earth at all times, and 57 when the Avatar incarnates LBE 217]. And so the game of the universe goes on and on. All this I'm telling you up until now has been kept a secret.

The number 56 denotes perfection. The universe must be maintained, and to carry out its affairs in an orderly manner 56 God-Realized persons are required, as the view of one eye is limited. This infinity of illusion requires the 56 people for the universe's orderly management.

The 56 God-Realized human beings always on earth are completely unknown to the world at large. Only those who come back down [to regain awareness of gross illusion] for duty to the universe after God-Realization and become Perfect Masters fully understand and realize the workings of the world and the mind [the entire past akashic record of all creation].

It is these 5 duty-bound ones who constitute the earth's true spiritual hierarchy. They can interfere in the natural laws of creation's workings, but rarely do so, while the Avatar can change the divine plan by merely the breath of a wish.

What is God-Realization? It is becoming one with God. Union is possible only after the death of thoughts and imagination – false mind must die – literally and absolutely. How does one know he's realized God? It's automatic. You're human. Do you ever think to ask yourself, "Am I a human?" You don't, because you are a human being. In the same way, once realizing God, a man has full spontaneous awareness he is God by direct personal experience.

I'll tell you another important thing you must each remember well. It's a fact that I am *Lord of the Universe*.... The universe has come out of me and has to come unto me. This is not idle talk. I say it with the authority of the experience of my being the *Ancient One*.... And as such, I am Omni-Present. Only the Avatar, living amidst mankind has to undergo such humiliation.

When there are 5 Perfect Masters, God Personified who control and look after the affairs of the universe, what need is there for them to precipitate the incarnation of God on earth? They bring Him down specifically *to shoulder the sufferings* of humanity.

4168

The Avatar's action on the gross plane is like throwing the main switch of a powerhouse, simultaneously releasing great electrical forces into many channels, propelling countless factories, trains and trolleys and instantly lighting up millions of light bulbs in towns and villages.

4513

From beginning to end the whole universe is a materialization of the Original Divine Whim, working irrevocably without default, deflection or defeat, unfolding on the screen of consciousness as each sequence of the film of creation and as to the pattern of the very 1<sup>st</sup> Original Whim.

However, when God as the *God-Man* plays the role of the Audience, He can *alter or erase* at His Avataric whim anything or happening destined from that Original Whim. For even the very arising of the Avataric whim was inherent in the Original Whim.

The Avatar or Perfect Master's actions are impulsive and arise from their infinite compassion. The functioning of this whim relieves and gives beauty and charm to what would otherwise be totally rigid determinism. A Perfect Master's action can only modify a previously determined Divine Plan in a limited way. But the Avatar can cause modifications on a universal scale.

Suppose it's divinely ordained war will occur in 1950. It must take place, and the train of events will punctually meet at that precise time. But the Avatar can ward off the catastrophe by some gross-plane action. And so, in the relentless working out of Natural laws there can enter an unseen divine caprice, spelling out peace instead of war in man's diary. Do you get it?

EN 106-07

It is said only after cycles and cycles does one become God-Realized. Then very few regain normal consciousness. But One who does regain it has *Sahaj Samadhi – natural, spontaneous, simultaneous full consciousness of one's Divinity, and at the same time of the false universe, but only as an actor.* Being one with God, he is even on an ant's level, functioning simultaneously in the gross, subtle and mental worlds. He is also above everything. *Sahaj samadhi is effortless oneness –* as simple as moving the hands or blinking the eyes.

There are 5 such *Perfect Actor-Masters* on earth at all times. One among the 5 has the responsibility of being the *Qutub* – a Persian term for the center or pivot-hub connecting all the spokes of a wheel. The *Qutub* is the head of the Perfect Masters who act together directing all the affairs of the universe, including natural and un-natural disasters.

They are the spiritual surgeons attending humanity's critical illness of "divine amnesia." When one of the 5 dies, a saint of the 6<sup>th</sup> plane is raised to the 7<sup>th</sup> plane of God-Realization, completing the circle of the permanent 5. In the sweep of time, as the gridlock of impressions threatens to bring spiritual development to a standstill, the cry of mankind reaches God. This "divine love call" of the 5 Perfect Masters operating especially in messianic times precipitates the Avatar's descent. They bring down the Ancient One.

The *Son* descends from the heaven of the *Father* into human form. His Perfection is later unveiled at the time of his maturity so he may take up his mission in the world. That unveiling was fast approaching for Merwan. As givers of light, Perfect Masters also give thoughts. They not only predict things, but can tell what will happen years into the future before it is even created in the mind of an individual.

They are one with the universal mind which gives everything. They not only *predict*, but *predestine* by the Perfect Masters' will wish or will. With a burning desire to know and see God, after countless lives that final experience descends upon them.

1124–25

As the nature of Light is to transform darkness unto Itself, the Perfect Masters have incomprehensible power to bring God as the Christ/Avatar to earth in human form. One among the 5 God-Realized Masters on earth is almost always female. For the needs of his Universal work, and particularly in this age for raising the role of women in society, a female Master was chosen as the 1<sup>st</sup> to unveil Meher Baba in this advent.

Her name was Babajan, meaning "Father Jan," a very aged Muslim woman whose sole purpose in coming to India from Baluchistan in north-west India between present-day Pakistan and Afghanistan was to unveil and awaken Meher Baba to his original Divine Consciousness. In a former incarnation Babajan had been the 8<sup>th</sup> century Muslim Saint, Rabia of Basra [Iraq], a woman saint of exceptional beauty and grace . . . . 5043

# Time and its passing a prose poem in twelve parts by mickey karger

Reviewed by Laurent Weichberger / Ashland, Oregon (July 2016)

This book of poems is dedicated by Mickey to Avatar Meher Baba. That alone has me eager to read what the heart of one of my spiritual brothers has offered to the Lord of Lords. To write over a hundred pages of poetry and offer it as lovingly as Mickey has done is no small thing, so I spent some time with his words, and discovered much. Let's take a look together. Parts one and two are relatively short (about twelve pages). It is about sleeping and waking, dying (to self) and discovering the Beloved within. He writes:

TIME AND ITS PASSING

A Prose Poem in Twelve Parts

Mickey Karger

Your love for me, my love for you Will stretch the bounds of time.

My love for you, your love for me Are poems in perfect rhyme.

Though each of us must one day pass Beyond even memory's reach,

Somewhere, somehow our love will speak In silence, each to each.

Was that Mickey writing to Baba, or Baba whispering to Mickey's heart? Does it matter? This is the mystery of Mastery, and the Beloved as we have witnessed with Shams and Rumi, with Mehera and Meher Baba, and it is indeed timeless. Of course we want to keep reading... Part three is about Remembrance, a powerful theme, and it is about fourteen pages, containing this gem:

This little life, rounded by so many sleeps, is passing, passing, minute by minute, hour by hour, day by day, year by year, and this will it end. And on that last day I will not have thrown off the weight of my wants nor will I have effaced even the smallest fragment of my self, save that which His face has melted away.

I can most definitely relate to this sentiment so gracefully expressed by Mickey in his strongly time themed writing. Each section of the book is punctuated by Time Rhymes, a structured rhyming poem (or two). Part four is short (seven pages) with a Manhattan theme. I am from Manhattan (born and raised). He manages, with few words, to capture the New York spirit and mindset — with humanness rarely seen these days:

There, the old brick building, shellacked with sunlight in the late breathing air; there a shaft of sun through an embrace of trees; there, a child in a stroller, damp fingers elutehing a damp pretzel, eyes awash with pleasure ...

While this is obviously a spiritual book, the importance of humanity is clearly present in Karger's work. Part five is more directly about Meher Baba. In Lost Sunlight we read:

To have walked in the footsteps you once had trod Is to walk in the footsteps of Almighty God.

To have walked in the sun which streamed down upon you Is to have walked an eternal mile or two.

O! Lost sunlight that I can never now share Shines still in time upon lovely Meher.

O! Lost sunlight, now lost to me

Must remain for me, mere reverie.

The rest of the book continues, deeply exploring profound truths of love and loss, with seminal psalms, diary like entries in an invisible diary embedded in this book of poems. There are times at which reading one forgets the author — the voice — and transported, transcended, to the side of the Lord of Love, one feels that feeling the lover longs to feel — that Longing for Him. During his own lifetime Baba continuously praised Hafiz, and explained Hafiz especially to Francis Brabazon (His Poet). Baba encouraged Francis in his writing for Baba, then praised Francis' poems. Francis got tired of hearing about Hafiz. Baba praised them both. Now we praise Mickey Karger, and say at his best he is an equal to Brabazon. Mickey, I hope you don't get tired of being compared to Francis!

Thank you Mickey for sharing the breeze of this path with us, this path leading to His Threshold. May Baba bless you and may you write more and more. The New Humanity needs this encouragement you provide, and this nourishment.

Avatar Meher Baba Ki Jai!

"Time and Its Passing" is available at Meher Baba Information, Meher Baba Books, LA, and Sheriar Books.