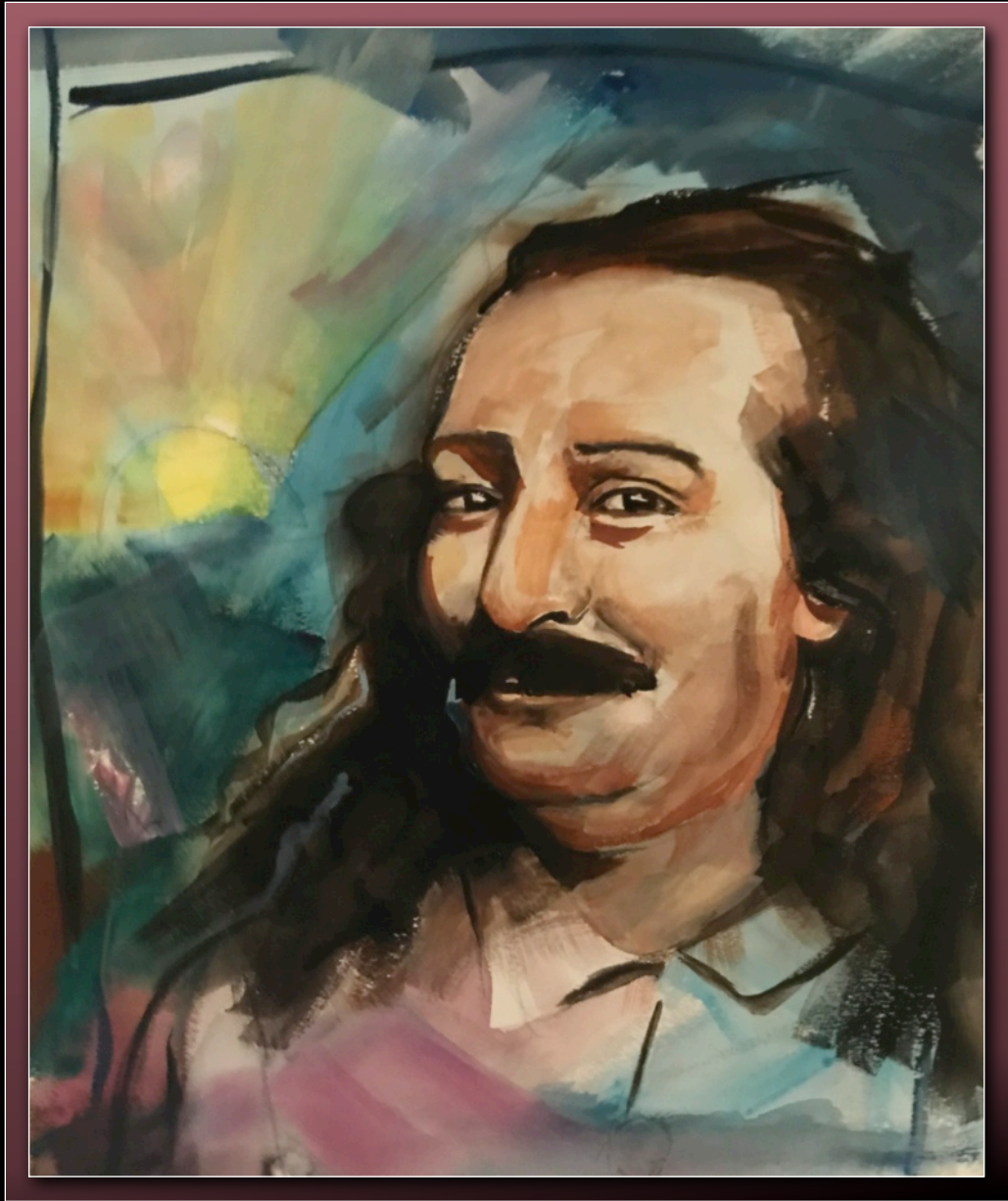


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INTERNATIONAL CIRCULAR • ISSUE 21 • SPRING 2018





OMPOINT

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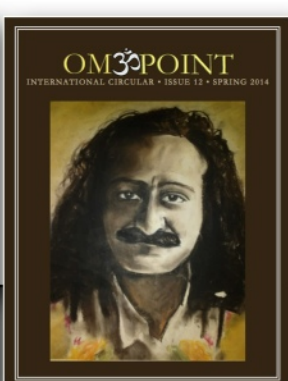
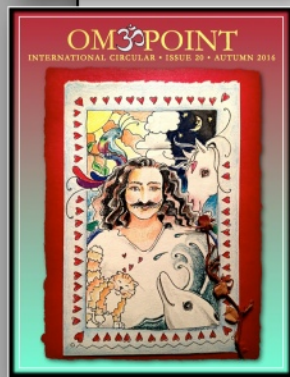
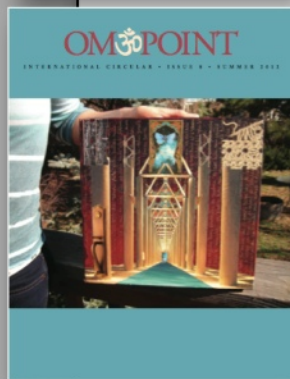
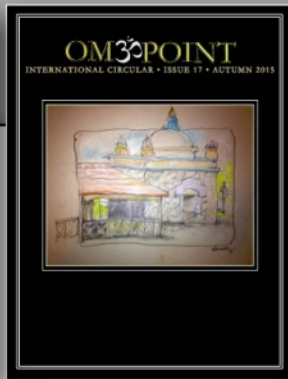
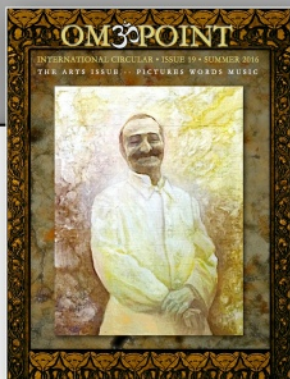
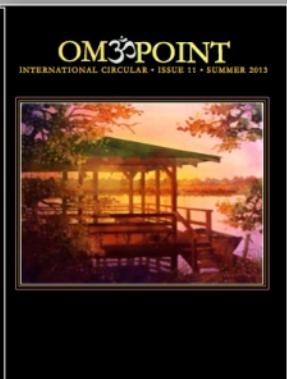
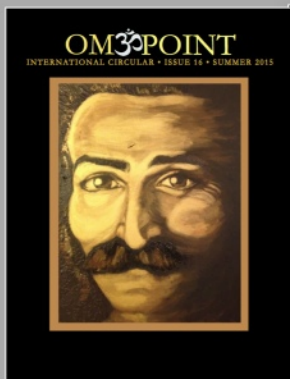
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EDITOR -
Laurent Weichberger
ompoint@gmail.com

Layout-walla -
Karl Moeller
karl.moeller@mc.com

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"What I want from my Lovers is real unadulterated love, and from my genuine workers I expect real work done." - Meher Baba



WELCOME BACK!

This is the revival of the OmPoint International Circular, dedicated to Meher Baba's message of Love and Truth - a free, downloadable PDF magazine. OmPoint began production in 2007. The editor is Laurent Weichberger and the graphic layout is done by Karl Moeller.

We ceased publication in 2016, after 20 issues. As our lives seem to have settled a bit, we have decided to bring back OmPoint.

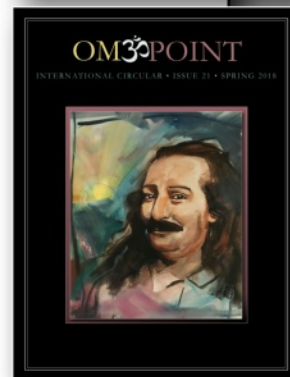
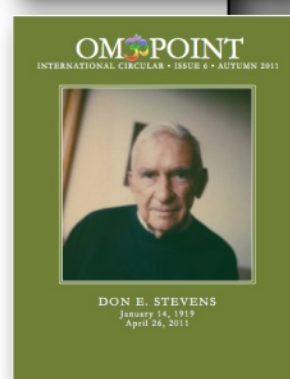
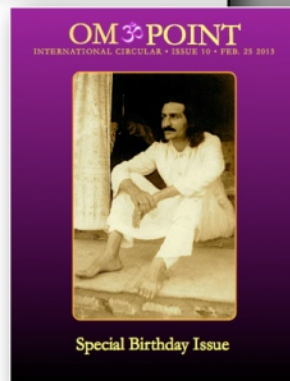
Each issue is only as good as its submissions, whether it's monographs, Baba gems, artwork, poetry, book excerpts, music or book reviews. This is an invitation to send yours to Laurent. His email is on the Contents page.


All back issues of OmPoint are available free for download online. Here's the address: [click it!]

www.ompoin.com/download.htm

You will find exclusive articles, art, poetry, book and music reviews, and other Baba related items.

We're delighted to be back and bring you OmPoint #21!





"TO PENETRATE INTO
THE ESSENCE OF ALL
BEING AND
SIGNIFICANCE, AND TO
RELEASE THE
FRAGRANCE OF THAT
INNER ATTAINMENT
FOR THE GUIDANCE
AND BENEFIT OF
OTHERS, BY
EXPRESSING IN THE
WORLD OF
FORMS TRUTH, LOVE,
PURITY AND BEAUTY

— THIS IS THE SOLE
GAME WHICH HAS
ANY INTRINSIC AND
ABSOLUTE WORTH.
ALL OTHER
HAPPENINGS,
INCIDENTS AND
ATTAINMENTS IN
THEMSELVES CAN
HAVE NO LASTING
IMPORTANCE."

— DISCOURSES BY
MEHER BABA,
6TH EDITION,
VOLUME II, P. 113

MEHER BABA AND THE BHAGAVAD GITA

TALAT HALMAN

How does the Bhagavad Gita discuss the spirituality of our lives as Baba lovers? And in particular, what does the Bhagavad Gita say about how knowing and remembering Meher Baba leads to our liberation from samsara, the endless cycle of death and rebirth? In this article I want to investigate how our lives with Meher Baba are described and supported in select passages of the Bhagavad Gita. Of course, since the author or protagonist of the Gita is Baba in his previous Avataric advent as Krishna, we can expect to find in the Gita insights into our life as Baba lovers. The Bhagavad Gita is, as you may know, a dialogue between Krishna, and his cousin, the greatest warrior of the age, Prince Arjuna.

The Gita says that one who constantly remembers Krishna (Baba) finds it easy to reach God. And those who reach God do not undergo rebirth. In the three verses of the following passage we see a sequence beginning with constant remembering of Baba, leading to reaching Baba, and finally culminating in achieving liberation:

When he constantly remembers me,
Focusing his reason on me,
I am easy to reach Arjuna,
For the man of enduring discipline.

Reaching me, men of great spirit
Do not undergo rebirth,

The ephemeral realm of suffering;
They attain absolute perfection.

Even in Brahma's cosmic realm
Worlds evolve in incessant cycles,
But a man who reaches me
Suffers no rebirth, Arjuna. (8.14-16)

Similarly, Krishna says to surrender all actions to Him and that those who follow His thought are freed not only from--but even also by--their surrendered actions:

Surrender all actions to me,
And fix your reason on your inner self;
Without hope or possessiveness,
Your fever subdued, fight the battle!

Men who always follow my thought,
Trusting it without finding fault,
Are freed
Even by their actions. (3.30-31)

Here again is the promise of reaching Baba through remembering and being devoted to Baba:

Keep me in your mind and devotion,
Sacrifice to me, bow to me,
Discipline yourself toward me,
And you will reach me! (9.34)



...
When they entrust reason to me,
Arjuna, I soon arise
To rescue them from the ocean
Of death and rebirth. (12.7)

As we understand Baba a what the Gita calls the
“Unborn, Beginningless, Great Lord of the
Worlds,” we are “freed from all delusion and all
evils.”

A mortal who knows me
As the unborn, beginningless
Great lord of the worlds
Is freed from delusion and all evils. (10.3)

One who knows Baba’s divine birth and actions
escapes rebirth. And one who knows that God
desires no fruits of action and that actions do not
defile God, such a one is freed from action. Here
knowledge of Baba is described as freeing one
from actions:

He who really knows my divine
Birth, and my action escapes rebirth
When he abandons the body—
And he comes to me Arjuna (4.9)

...
I desire no fruit of actions,
And actions do not defile me;
One who knows this about me
Is not bound by actions. (4.14)

In a passage presaging the concluding paragraph
of Meher Baba’s “My Wish,” Krishna promises
that if we remember Baba at the moment of our
death, we can enter into his being.

A man who dies remembering me
At the time of death enters my being
When he is freed from his body;
Of this there is no doubt. (8.5)

In “My Wish,” Meher Baba elaborates on how to
succeed in doing this:

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 practis-

ing from now on. Even if you take my name
only once every day, you will not forget to re-
member me in your dying moments.

By taking refuge in Baba when we act, we achieve
immortality:

Always performing all actions,
Taking refuge in me,
He attains through my grace
The eternal place beyond change (18.56)

This verse asserts in positive voice that taking re-
fuge in God will lead to eternal peace. This is the
verse that Ramana Maharshi said was the sum-
mary of the Gita:

With your whole being, Arjuna,
Take refuge in him alone—
From his grace you will attain
The eternal place that is peace. (18.62)

Again, taking refuge in Baba we are freed from all
evils:

Relinquishing all sacred duties to me,
Make me your only refuge;
Do not grieve,
For I shall free you from all evils. (18.66)

We see in these Bhagavad Gita verses that first in
remembering Baba and taking refuge in Baba we
are freed from samsara. Second, we are led to an
eternal place of peace. And third, we are also
freed from all evils. Even in just knowing about
Baba we are freed from the bondage of actions. It
is a great blessing to experience confirmation of
the spirituality of Baba lovers stated explicitly and
literally in the Bhagavad Gita, the ancient scripture
of Dharma given by Meher Baba in his previous
advent as Krishna.

The translation quoted throughout is Barbara Stoler Miller,
The Bhagavad Gita: Krishna’s Counsel in Time of War. New
York: Bantam 1986, 2004.

**H. Talat Halman, Ph.D., author of multiple
books on spirituality, is in the Bektashi
Sufi Order and is a devotee of Meher
Baba. He is Associate Professor of Relig-
ion at Central Michigan University.**

HIDDEN IN LIGHT

This separation is the path
This way of longing
It has to be so.
And we walk
Without much hope
Limping along beneath a canopy of stars
Blind to His 'prasad'
Though shattered trees raise broken arms
Towards the gift of light
That gently washes over
Aching hearts and battle scars.
"Will He come?" "Will He ever come?"
"Maitreya" "Christ" "The twelfth Imam?"
"How long?" these voices ask.

We have praised you under countless skies
And named you with a thousand names
Through as many lifetimes
Forever looking outwards
For the sign of your return,
Longing for the sight of you
While still hanging onto our protocols
And battered hold-alls,
Complaining,
Denying the light within us
And always with us
As we walk.

Sarah McNeill

MEHER BABA'S BIRTHDAY 1954

~ BY DARWIN SHAW ~

This piece was read out during the Meher Baba Birthday Celebration in Asheville this year, held on the top floor of one of Asheville's oldest (1927) high-rises. There is an active Archive Committee in Asheville, and Molly Irani had made a treasure trove available to them - Fred and Ella Winterfeldt's archive. Volunteer Barbara Katzenberg found this typewritten document and immediately realized its import. We are delighted to present this long-lost and heartfelt piece by Darwin Shaw, whose love for beloved Baba shines in every line.

Although Baba is just completing his 59th year, there is so much about him that is timeless, that it is difficult for us to think of him in terms of age. The Great Being behind that face and form we know and love so dearly is, we are sure, not measurable by the passage of time, but is as immortal as the Divine Love with which we identify him. In celebrating Baba's Birthday, therefore, we are really celebrating the return to the Earth of Love Divine in the form of a man we can see, love and with whom we can communicate. A Being who has, ages since, completed the long evolutionary process of the Soul through numerous cycles of lives, from the original state of unconscious Divinity, to the final state of fully-realized God-hood. This is Baba, our Spiritual Master, Eternal Friend and Divine Beloved.

We have found in him the living Beauty of all our highest hopes, and we have experienced, through his Grace, a precious taste of the Divine Nectar which is, indeed, the true panacea for all the suffering, disillusionment and mayavic ignorance which, in one way or another, besets all humanity. And this Divine Nectar is the touch of the Master's Awakening Compassion which has, somehow, in mysterious ways known only to the Master, found us in our far corners of the Earth and aroused some measure of our slumbering consciousness from the darkened dreams of life, as seen through the distorted vision of our own selfhood.

Through Baba we have been touched by a Love too great for us to comprehend, much less, ever to have deserved. We have come to him in various ways; sometimes groping, often wondering, but always with faith and longing; and he has taken us into his Infinite Heart where we have found the secret Highway to God.

We have discovered that Baba works through the very fabric of our prosaic, everyday lives to reveal an ever greater measure of the Spiritual Splendor of his True Being and, through inwardly drawing closer to the Un-

veiled Reality we discern in him, we find that the Way has become clearer, easier and more sure; that the once remote possibility of actually experiencing God has now become a vibrant promise which, even in this lifetime, may be fulfilled.

As the Messianic-Avatar of the Ages, Baba again comes forth to succor the great need of the immortal spirit of man. As such, he leads the way out of the labyrinthine maze of selfhood's false impressions, and declares in unequivocal terms the true nature of man and the Real Goal of Life.

"It is time", Baba says, "that man had a fresh vision of the Truth that all life is one, and that GOD IS THE ONLY THING WHICH IS REAL AND THE ONLY THING THAT MATTERS." "God", he continues, "is worth living for; and He is also worth dying for; all else is an empty pursuit of illusory values."

... we have been
touched by a Love
too great for us to
comprehend ...

Again quoting Baba, "Because in the beginning imagination gave a twist to Substance, and thus importance to Shadow, we, who are eternally Free, find ourselves bound, having lost our original Self in the maze of Illusion. Therefore, in spite of possessing Infinite Bliss, we have

to experience misery, worries, doubts, failure and helplessness. When in a flash the Real Knowledge comes that we are not what we seem, but are the Infinite One, then all worries disappear, because in reality pleasure and misery do not exist. To get rid of this persistent ignorance and to know the true value of Reality, we have to experience God; and God who is the Breath and Life of our lives can only be experienced through honest love."

"We have to love Him silently and honestly even in our everyday life. While eating, drinking, talking and doing all our duties, we can still love God continuously, without letting anyone know. When God is found you can have no idea what Infinite Bliss and Peace is

gained. I give you all my love so that some day you can Love God as He ought to be loved.”

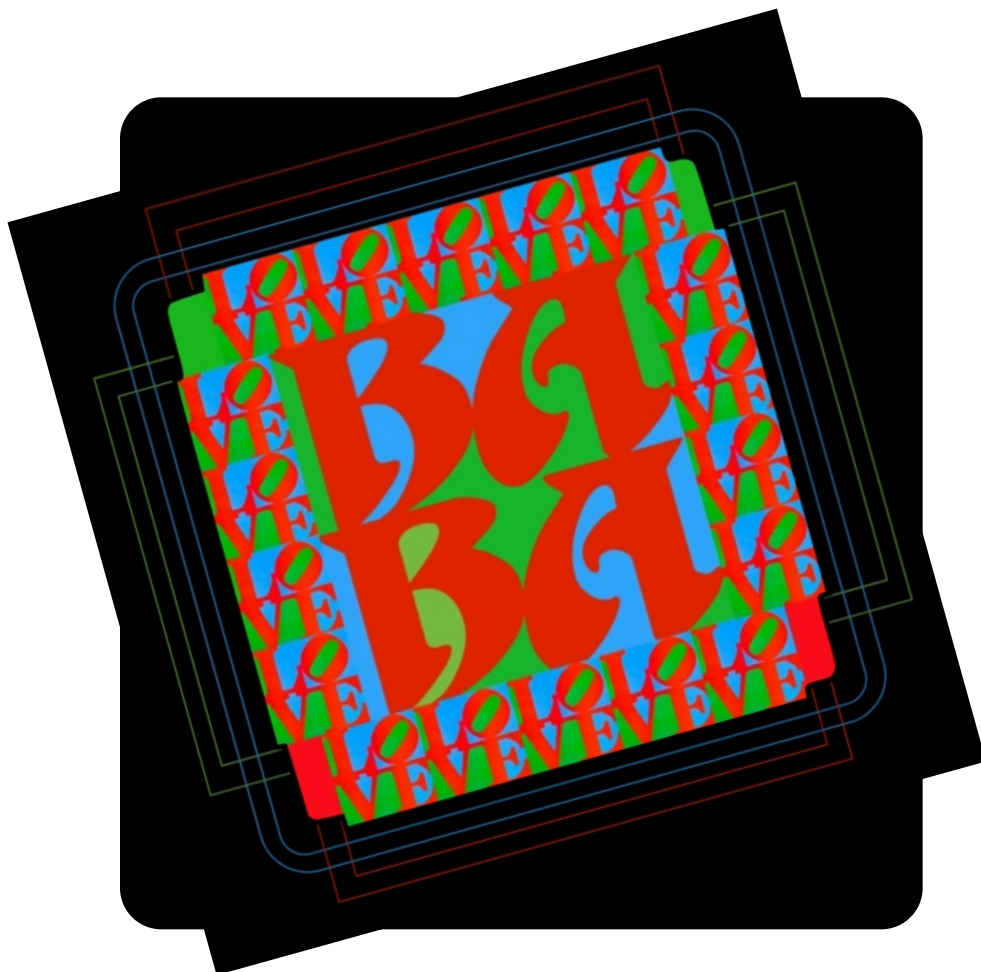
Strange as it may seem to those who do not know, we have found that through loving Baba we are actually loving God; and that his Love leads us into the inner mystery of the Ocean of Divine Love that God really is. This is the Key to one of the most beautiful and overwhelming of all mystical experiences; for when we love, and inwardly keep company with the God-realized Master, we in turn become the recipients of immeasurably greater Love; and this outpouring is more than the hard-shelled ego can bear, so it begins

to die. But that dying is actually the beginning of Life, for it is the beginning of the annihilation of the false by being in the conscious Presence of the Real.

“If you who keep company with me”, Baba once said, “are sometimes attracted to worldly maya, do not get disappointed. I, too, was once like you, but the grace of Babajan descended upon me, and She, the Perfect Saint, presented me with the pearl of God-realization.” And the following lines have been quoted by Baba, as they explain so well the beautiful relationship between the sincere devotee and the Master: “Constantly repeating Thy Name, I be-

came one with Thee, nothing was left of me (self). How can I sing Thy praise, O Guru mine? Wherever I cast my eyes, I perceive Thee and nothing else.”

With this as the pattern of our devotion, may our Birthday remembrance to Baba be a greater effort to understand the incomparable importance of his life as it touches ours; and let us, in all sincerity, have the courage and the humility to let go of every darkening shade of self-centered ignorance within ourselves; and truly, wholeheartedly undertake to tread the glorious Path to the Highest of the High.



Meher Archive Collective

Asheville, NC

Why Asheville, why an archive project?

As many are aware, there is a large Baba archive in India. Some are aware of smaller archives spread around the globe here and there from California to Australia. However there are still mountainous quantities of archival material relating to Meher Baba's advent that has not been preserved, copied, and shared in an archival manner. The amount of letters and Baba related artifacts and treasures that are just in the United States is staggering. And the desire of the owners/caretakers of these collections, to preserve, protect, and share what they have, has only been stymied by the sheer amount of time and labor that goes into doing the job right. For a single person, it can take decades of "spare time" to sort, clean, rehouse, digitize, catalog, and then find a way to share offsite (at least) and with the public (at best). And so, it became apparent that there was a need for a collective effort to help facilitate that vision.

We seek to work collaboratively with other archives to undertake this enormous project to make available to the world Baba's words, His advent, and the messages from His Mandali to us. There is in fact so much to be done to preserve and share, and time is of the essence as many Baba Lovers are at a point where they want to and need to have their legacies eventually placed in a secure facility while being made available to Lovers of Baba worldwide.

Asheville has many ideal aspects for this undertaking. There is a substantial and growing Baba community ready to support this project now and in the future. We have a growing group of volunteers who are ready to help rehouse, and share online as quickly as possible the many and varied letters, pictures and other printed materials. We can

also work with you to scan documents for preservation. The climate and location in the mountains of NC happen to be very amenable to the requirements of an archival facility.

MAC is established as a nonprofit, has a board, and has developed a space for doing archival work. The group is actively seeking building opportunities or established buildings that could be made archival friendly and we are working with Peter Noreen, a professional builder who has worked on Baba related buildings from Oklahoma to Meherabad as our builder / contractor; and Ty Provosty, a world class architect who designed Baba's tower at Meherabad as well as all manner of commercial buildings as our architectural consultants.

Volunteers have just finished rehousing the FredElla [Winterfeldt] collection and several newly discovered treasures have emerged. The MAC website is evolving and we are in the process of establishing a section devoted to letters from the Mandali.

We are putting final touches on a video to demonstrate how to take proper care of the letters, printed materials and how to store your pictures/slides/videos in the home to immediately avoid any further deterioration. Since treasures have been lost and pictures damaged in the past, we now urge everyone to write down right away the stories and history of any treasures or artifacts you have and to make provisions for your own Baba treasures. We have suggestions on our website to assist in this.

If this work resonates with you, if you have questions, and if you wish to support it in any way, please feel free to contact us through our website, Meherarchive.org.

METAPHOR

JUST WHEN I WAS THINKING I WAS UP TO SPEED
AND MAKING PROGRESS OF A SORT
YOU POINTED OUT THE RELATIVITY OF TIME AND MOTION
AND HOW THE ONE AT THE TOP OF THE MOUNTAIN
TRAVELS FASTER THAN THE ONE BELOW. Hmm...
I USED TO THINK I WAS GOING IN A STRAIGHT LINE
AND THEN YOU TOLD ME SPACE WAS CURVED
WHICH MAKES ME THINK
I MUST BE GOING ROUND IN CIRCLES.
“SPIRALS ACTUALLY,” YOU SAY, “AND WAVES AS WELL
THAT ROCK YOU ON THE SPATIAL SWELL.”
I HAVE TO SAY I WAS INDEED UNCONSCIOUS OF ALL THAT
AND OF THE VASTNESS OF UNCONSCIOUSNESS
SEEMINGLY UNKNOWABLE – AND YET IT SEEMS
EACH PHOTON OF THE CONSCIOUS MIND
SHINES LIGHT INTO THE DARKNESS
MAKING THE UNKNOWN, KNOWN.

LIVING TO SURRENDER

IANA LAHI

“The easiest and safest way to lose one’s finite ego is by surrendering completely to the Perfect Master or to the God-man (Avatar), who is consciously one with truth. In them the past, present and future of the individual are drowned and during his implicit obedience to the master, he is no longer bound by those actions, good and bad.

Such complete surrenderance is in itself complete freedom.”

— Avatar Meher Baba

Divine Love is the Highway Home to Oneness

We all want to individuate. Whether its through the kind of music we listen to, the clothes we wear, the phone that we have, how we wear our hair, who we spend time with, how we communicate to others, how we serve, what we stand for, where we live, how we pray, etc.

The path of individuation is tricky because as we open to our spirituality, we can use the power of the ego Self who only wants to build its own credibility to increase the power of illusion—Maya in our life. We are raised by the world mind to follow the fulfillment of our dreams without being rooted in our connection to divine Oneness. For many, dreams do not manifest completely, they succeed partially through their unhealed fear, and need for recognition and power. For others, they cast aside their true dreams in the quest to fulfill their personal will. This happens all of the time. Until they surrender their personal will to God’s will—they may attain statue, power, money and outer stability, but lose out on the possibilities waiting to be found through Oneness with God.

How we hold on to the memory of being one with God through the choices that we make and the one’s that we do not make are unraveled through living in surrender. Until we choose surrender as a life path, we say one thing and often do another. Through lifetimes of forgetting who we are, our trust in ourselves falters, until we meet the God-Man.

The doors that we have kept closed are gently opened and for some the doors are flung open wide to the infinite sea of love that fills us with the nectar of heaven, and suddenly we realize that we are willing to give all, and surrender our minds and hearts to the eternal dance with the Beloved.

“I have emphasized in the past, I tell you now, and I shall age after age forevermore repeat that you shed your cloak of Life and realize Existence which is eternally yours.

To realize this Truth of unchangeable, indivisible, all-pervading Existence, the simplest way is to surrender to me completely, so completely that you are not even conscious of your surrender, but conscious only to obey me and to act as and when I order you.

If you seek to live perpetually, then crave for the death of your "deceptive self" at the hands of "complete surrender" to me. This yoga is the Essence of all yoga’s in one.”[1]

—Avatar Meher Baba

To experience being fully united with God—Beloved Baba, requires the complete surrender and letting go of our personal will. When we are attached to the pain and fear of our core wounds, we have to constantly dodge being pulled down by them. Our health, relationships, dreams and goals are side tracked or become the drive of our unhealed addictions, and unresolved inner pain. We become addicted to keeping the sadness, hurt, anger, and fear out of sight, out of mind, and instead live out our personal will and maintain our subconscious mask. In the ego’s drive to exist it will empower the lower will—our personal will—that acts out by living in separation from the higher will. At some point the power of living in surrender strengthens us to forget our attachment to living in separation from God—Meher Baba. We begin to experience being in a new relationship with all there is—the heart of Oneness.

Before divine surrender, we hold on to what we want and can get stuck in the groove of our sanskaras, the imprints that we carry within our soul that only the Perfect Master or Avatar can dissolve. Until we surrender our will to God—Meher Baba, we know there is something missing deep inside of our heart, but we do not know what it is. We want more and more—more money, sex, security and possessions, as we refuse to surrender to what we know deep inside of

ourselves that we need to do. We fear letting go because we are afraid of being alone and without what we believe we need to survive. If we believe that God is not really there for us, we hold on to the ways that we avoid being alone. The fear of being alone is what holds most of us back from walking through the gateway to God—Beloved Baba.

As Laurent Weichberger shares in *Surrender with Meher Baba*, “If I am attached to what I want, I don’t leave room for Baba to guide me to what is best for me. And ultimately what is best for me is Self-realization, and this is the path he has laid out for me, step by step. So, I can either walk my own path, that is the path of self-will and ego-centric desires, or I can walk the spiritual path of self-effacement, self-giving love, God’s wish and will for me, and what He wants. This is most likely the single most difficult thing I can aspire to as a human being, as it goes against the very grain of all that I have been taught in this world.”

The alone state disappears into the all one state. If only for a moment we pause and surrender our mind and heart to the effervescent embrace of the Avatar of our Age, our experience with love is changed forever. Once touched by the grace and presence of Lord Meher, the experience of being alone vanishes forever. Meher Baba created His human form to fulfill the deepest longings within the seekers heart through His constant guidance and love to help them to let go of their fears that they are alone, and to experience the love of the Avatar in their daily lives. In these first 100 years after Meher Baba left his physical form, the power of his God form is completely accessible.

Each day offers the opportunity to surrender one layer of hesitancy, arrogance, pride, fear, with holding, intolerance, judgment, etc at a time while being held in the sweetest love possible. To be still in one’s heart, and to feel and listen to Baba’s Divine Presence, opens the floodgates to His endless guidance and gifts to us, and lifts us out of the sufferings created by duality and the wheel of karma.

“If the disciple is to be free from all weaknesses and attain incorruptible and infinite purity, he has to dedicate his life to the Master without any reservations or provisions. He must offer his weaknesses as well as his vices, his merits as well as his sins. There should be no “if’s” and “but’s” about his offering. His self-surrender must be so complete as to allow no room in his mind for even a shadow of any secret self desire. Complete self-surrender and unquestioning love become possible when the disciple achieves unswerving faith in the Master.” [2]

Surrender is a small action for what the Lover is given who obeys the word of God. To surrender to the inner voice of God lifts the Lover out of their daily struggles, and battles with duality, into the bliss and spiritual breakthroughs that Beloved Baba provides.

When you surrender to the direction and instructions given by Beloved Baba, what you receive in return is the infinite



love that completes your circle of life and your soul. The more that you let go and surrender, the more Beloved Baba comes into your heart—until the two are made One.

To break through resistance and fear, we have to allow the divine to move through us and touch our soul. We have to allow a greater will, a stronger power—the pure power of love to wash through us. We have to be willing to be consumed by the fire of infinite love—God. The gift of the Avatar is the breath of God embracing us and holding us close.

When we surrender how we think something should be, how we should be, or have any opinion about “anything”, we create the momentum for Meher Baba to unravel the polarities of our existence in an instant. As we stand in the flames of transmutation, we forget who we want to BE when we “grow up”, and become who we are destined to be through releasing our mind and heart into the universal heart of God—Beloved Baba.

We move from holding on to illusion and living through our fantasies, projections, and imagination, and step into the light of truth in our soul.

We must be willing to surrender our lower needs and feelings that were originally created by our past life circumstances, and be willing to surrender the pain, suffering, confusion, chaos, trauma and drama that we so splendidly became attached to while existing in separation from God—Baba.

When we first begin to surrender we awaken to all of the ways that we hold on and hold together our thinking and feeling patterns that were originally created through the moments of living in separation from our True Self. Before surrender we spend our lives fulfilling the illusions of surviving without God—Baba.

Meher Baba gives us the opportunity to surrender the patterns of behavior and thoughts that once held together how we lived in pain and separation from God and choose instead to become One with the Beloved. The joy of divine Oneness with the Beloved is a constant wave of connection that helps us to live in surrender. Through grace alone and our willingness to serve and obey, Meher Baba guides the way home through separation and illusion by dissolving our limited self.

“People generally have a very superficial understanding of what is actually meant by complete surrender of one's all — namely, one's possessions, body and mind — to a Perfect Master. The complacent belief of a disciple that he has completely surrendered to a Master is due to ignorance and hypocrisy. Because, if the significance of the words were weighed literally and pondered over deeply, it would be seen that if one's possessions, body and mind — the very core of one's existence — were entirely

submitted to the Master, there could then be no room given for even a single thought of one's own, the mind now belonging to the Master.”[3]

The result of practicing daily surrender is the experience of falling, rising, and being in love with God—Meher Baba. A task may appear too big or daunting until we let go and follow without question what is being asked of us to do. In our surrender to Baba, we lose our Self, and gain the bliss of remembering our true purpose.

Your desire to give the most that you can give to help others expand and grow while your mind and heart are in God—must be what guides you each and every day. When you have God with you every moment in the form of the Ancient One, the Avatar, realization can happen faster than the completion of a full breath. As you surrender, you are given the gift of infinite expansion beyond your self-limitations, and reliving past stories based in anger, fear and hurt. The willingness to give everything out of love to the heart of God dissolves the illusion of being separate. When we surrender from love, the armor surrounding our heart begins to crumble and the love from the Avatar comes in to mend the ways we have created separation. Illusion melts. Love takes its place.

“Progress from one surrender to greater surrender is a progression from a minor conquest to a major one. The more complete forms of surrenderance represent the higher states of consciousness since they secure greater harmony between the aspirant and the Master. Thus the infinite life of the Master can flow through the aspirant in more abundant

measure. Spiritual advancement is a succession of one surrender after another until the goal of the final surrenderance of the separate ego-life is completely achieved. The last surrender is the only complete surrenderance. It is the reverse side of the final union in which the aspirant becomes one with the Master. Therefore, in a sense, the most complete surrenderance to the Master is equivalent to the attainment of the Truth, which is the ultimate goal of all spiritual advancement.” [4]

—Meher Baba

Laurent further shares in *Surrender with Meher Baba*, “If you make Me your real Father, all differences and contentions between you, and all personal problems in connection with your lives, will become dissolved in the Ocean of My Love.”[5]

Laurent also calls our attention to Meher Baba saying, **“I have emphasized in the past, I tell you now, and I shall age after age forevermore repeat that you shed your cloak of Life and realize Existence which is eternally yours. To realize this Truth of unchangeable, indivisible, all-pervading Existence, the simplest way is to surrender to me completely, so completely that you are not even conscious of your surrender, but conscious only to obey me, and to act as and when I order you. If you seek to live perpetually, then crave for the death of your "deceptive self" at the hands of "complete surrender" to me. This yoga is the Essence of all yoga's in one.”[6]**

The joy given by choosing to let go into love opens the door to

eternal realization through the hand of the Avatar. As we surrender our identity, our past, our present and our future, we experience Beloved Baba and our limited Self expand and release into infinite intelligence, expression and bliss.

The universe will do everything it can to guide you to surrender to the ultimate truth of the power of devotional and infinite love within you, because it is who you are.

In one of Laurent's personal prayers to Meher Baba he asks, "Please help me to know *You*, to see *You*, to feel *You* and to become *You*. I re-dedicate myself to *You*. I re-surrender myself to *You*. I give You my heart and my mind, my soul and my energy and my body—I give *You* the work of my head and my heart and my hands. I give *You* all I was, all I am, and all I will be. I give *You* the richest blood in my body. "

Once we allow divine Source to move through us we are naturally awakened to the power of inspiration, vision, and expression that is birthed by listening and following the instructions of Beloved Meher Baba. Whether a person lives in poverty or has millions in the bank, they can both be impoverished. If they both are stuck in their own perceptions of not having, or not having enough, or feeling secretly that who they are is not enough, the mind is encased in fear. Once the light of the soul is ignited by the Perfect One—by God itself, the mind can let go of its controls and allow for the full divine presence and manifestation of Baba's will to be felt, seen and received in our daily life. This is done through humble surrender and the willingness to let go of false humility, pride and desire through listening and serving the presence and living word of God —Beloved Baba.

Trust that all of the experiences that life brings to you have a specific purpose to help you.

Listen, feel and surrender in love.

Release resistance.

Strive to surrender to the highest truths being awakened within you.

Through surrender you will know union with the divine.

Your choice to receive HIS love no matter how difficult your life circumstances, guide your way home through the veils, brambles, and obstacles of illusion and self-deception.

Living to surrender awakens the divine aspects of your soul that intuitively know how to reach for the hand of the Ancient One.

Walk in peace.

Jai Meher Baba!

1. Lord Meher, 1954, pg 3427, Dehra Dun/1953
 2. True Discipleship, Discourses, Vol. II, p. 45
 3. Lord Meher, 1953 pg 3291, Dehra Dun/1953
 4. The Dynamics of Spiritual Advancement, Discourses, Vol II, pg 183
 5. Meher Baba, from My Dear Workers message, 1962
 6. Meher Prabhu: Lord Meher, V.S. Bhau Kalchuri pg 3427
- <http://www.lordmeher.org/rev/index.jsp?pageBase=page.jsp&nextPage=3427>

The article *Surrender with Meher Baba* was published in The Glow (Spring 2018)

Pencil drawing of Meher Baba by Laurent Weichberger, 1996

Mandala by Cyprus Weichberger, 2018



David Fenster has just added a page to the Lord Meher website, which details every place Meher Baba ever went, literally every place (it is a very long list). Enjoy:

<https://tinyurl.com/y95e9aog>



Longing to Surrender

It feels like seven o'clock in the evening of my life.
Time for prayers and open-heartedness,
followed by the sweetness of love given and received —
preludes to the midnight of light passing into Light,
the yielding of time to Eternity.

- Irma Sheppard)

MEHER BABA AT JACKSON WELLSPRINGS IN ASHLAND OREGON

BY LAURENT WEICHBERGER

I moved from Flagstaff Arizona to Ashland Oregon (by way of Half Moon Bay, California) in 2013. Upon arrival in Ashland I was told by many to visit the Jackson Wellsprings, a hot spring in the area just north of Ashland well known by the locals. When I finally did arrive there one day after work, to soak and relax I was surprised to find bolted to the tall wooden fence around the hot pool a quote from Baba, alongside other quotes, which read:

“God has been everlastingly working in silence, unobserved, unheard — except by those who experience his infinite silence. - Meher Baba”

Naturally I was thrilled to soak beneath Beloved Baba's words, and it made me curious, who put that quote up and why?

The next time I was visiting the hot springs I noticed a man going

around the place watering all the flowers. So I got out of the hot pool and approached him, and said, “Excuse me, do you work here?” He said he did, so I said, “I have a question, would you happen to know who put the quote of Meher Baba over the hot pool?” He smiled and said, “Yes, I did.”

I responded, “Oh, are you the owner?” And he replied, “Yes, I am. I wanted to put a photo of Meher Baba making the silence gesture...” (and he put his finger up to his lips), “But I didn't know where to get a photo of Meher Baba.”

So I said, “Well I know how to get one. I will get it for you.”

Then upon returning home I called Laura Smith at the Sheriar Bookstore in Myrtle Beach and told her this story. She said they have two photos like that one

when Baba is younger and one when he is older. I said I want both, and big prints, because I knew he wanted to hang them up outside at the hot pool. The prints came and I delivered them to my new friend, the owner of the Jackson Wellsprings, Dr. Gerry Lehrburger. He was ecstatic to finally have the photos now years after putting the Baba quote up.

About another year or two went by and while visiting the hot springs I saw no sign of Baba's photos, and I didn't remind Dr. Lehrburger either. What's the hurry? I forgot all about it.

Finally about a week ago, my dear Baba sister Mette sent me a text from her visit to the hot spring with this photo. Looks like Gerry got them put up after all and even added another Baba quote!

Love and Jai Baba to all. - Laurent





“No matter how harshly the opposing party treats you, always be calm. Always, however much you are found fault with or are blamed or have high words said to you, bear all with patience. This is real bravery and courage.”

—Meher Baba

Amartithi

A day as any other
But not the same
Baba you are here now
Our hearts hold
You inside
We think of you always
Yes you're gone physically
But here so deep within

Years ago
Thirty one to be exact
You broke into my heart
With extreme care
And
I wept deeply
From within
Through tears I felt
Your calm presence
Electrified through
All my limbs
The clarity to stop
The crying
The heart full up
And over
Love took over
Love continues
To guide and teach
Who you really are

I can't say you're missed
Because you are never gone
Ever present
Through love
Jai Baba

- Anne Weichberger

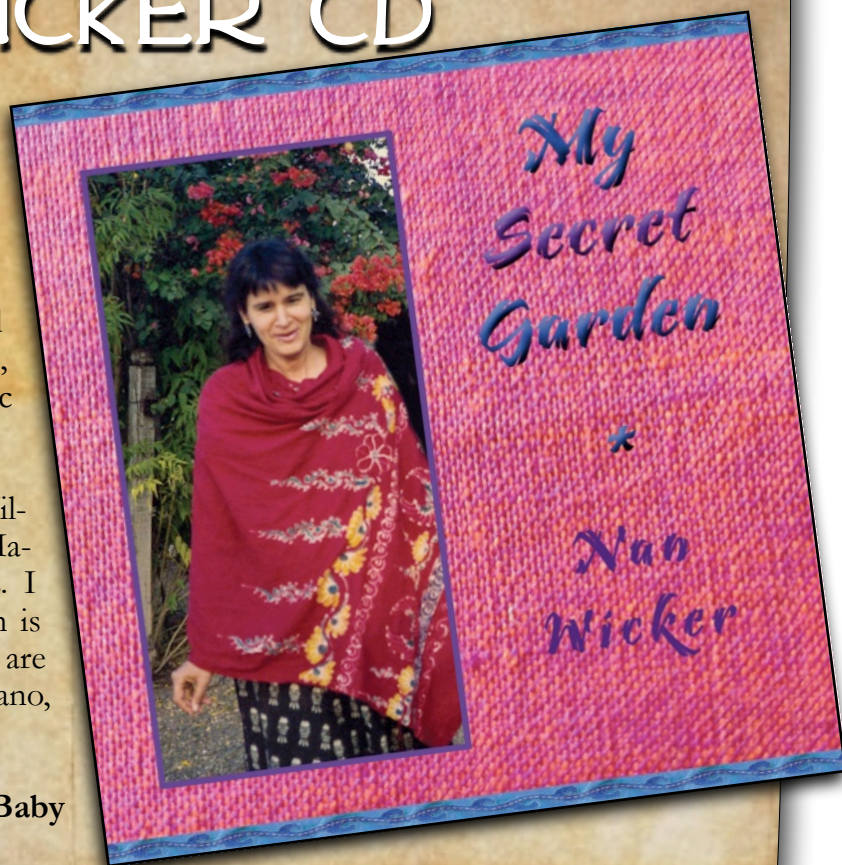


NEW NAN WICKER CD

I'm pleased to announce that my new CD, called MY SECRET GARDEN is now available in hard copy and digitally. This is an inclusive spiritual album that you can share with your friends and relatives who are from different faiths and with open-minded atheists and agnostics. I use the name friend, home, and Lord for God rather than specific prophet and avataric names.

The songs I sing were written by David Wilcox, Brian Darnell, Kirtana, Joe Henry (Madonna's brother-in-law!) and Steven Walters. I am on vocals and guitar and Jeff Wolverton is singing on the choruses on four songs. There are wonderful musicians on guitar, mandolin, piano, cello, horn, viola and drums.

CDS are available at Sheriar Books, CD Baby and Amazon.



Cyprus Weichberger receiving prasad from Meherabad, given by Ron Lansing in Portland, Oregon March 2018.

Twice this weekend my son Cyprus (age 11) asked for Baba's Prasad from Meherabad (the little hard candy orange ones)... here was our conversation this morning:

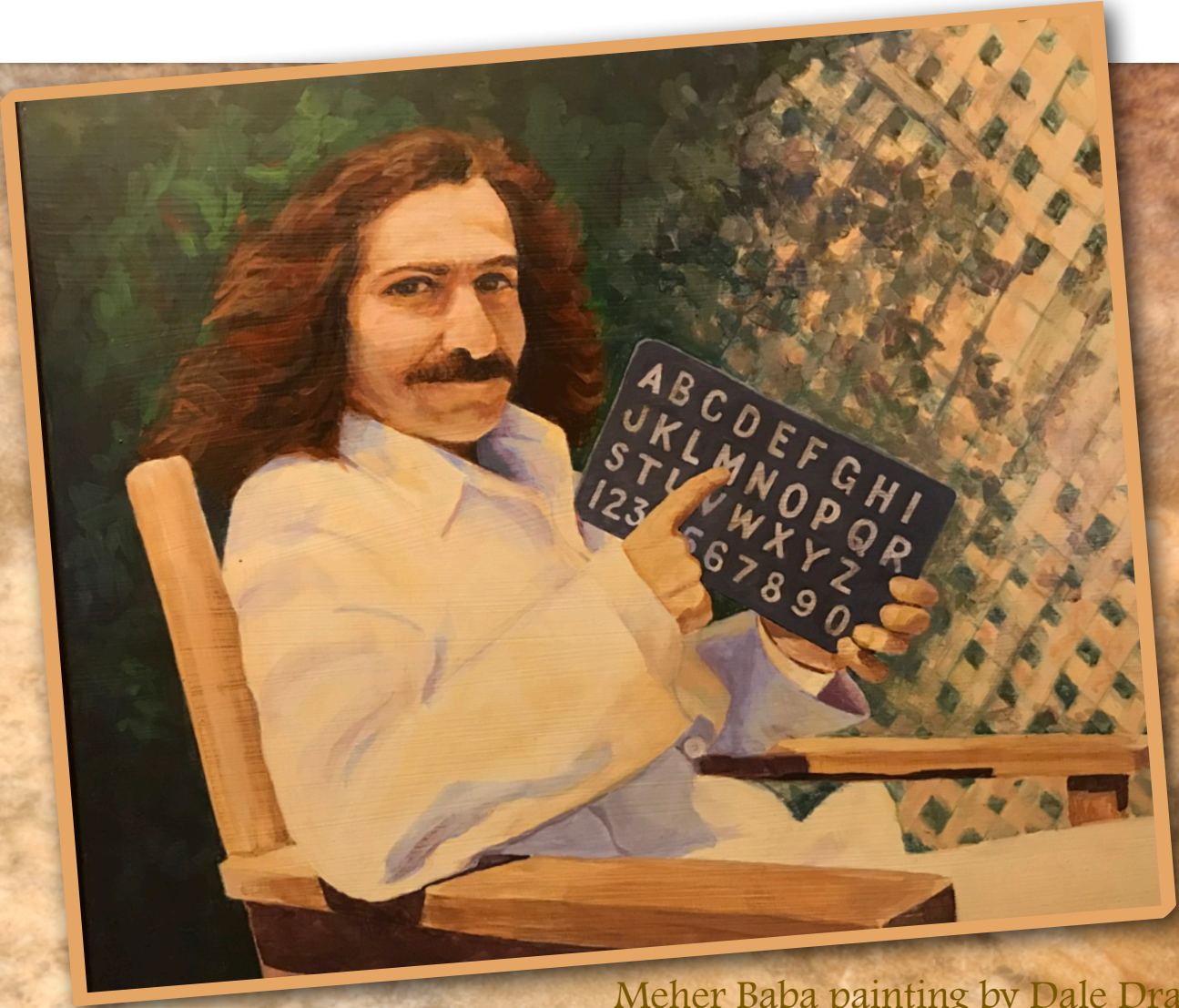
L: Cyprus, what made you ask for Prasad?

C: It tastes good.

L: You know it has Baba's blessing?

C: That's probably why it tastes so good!

Laurent



Meher Baba painting by Dale Drager

When the goal of life is attained, one achieves
the reparation of all wrongs,
the healing of all wounds,
the righting of all failures,
the sweetening of all sufferings,
the relaxation of all strivings,
the harmonizing of all strife,
the unraveling of all enigmas,
and the real and full meaning of all life —
past, present and future.

Meher Baba
Life at its Best, p.59

Meherabad

Donuts

Chai

Popcorn

Prasad

Grace Food while in His arms

Marble stones holding foreheads

Divine love opening hearts

All roads becoming one

Taking His hand and singing

The ancient song

The lullaby that silences our separation

The music that guides us

HOME

beads on one string tour 2010



The Beads On One String pilgrimages began with Don Stevens' conviction that Baba wished him to take Baba devotees to sacred sites around India, places which Baba had indicated to Don were special to Baba himself. The first pilgrimage was in 2004. Another large tour in 2009 with around 50 people, and one in 2010 with around 25 people. The 2010 pilgrimage was Don's last time in India, and he passed away in spring 2011. There were two more 'Beads' tours, one in 2013, the 'Heartland' pilgrimage, with 15 people, and one with five people, the 'Four Pillars' pilgrimage in Europe. Each of these was extraordinary in its own way. Every pilgrimage, even if it's done in air conditioning and with credit cards, extracts a toll from the participants. It's not just being in India. Below are some prose vignettes with images from the 2010 India tour, Don's last.

Irma Sheppard

Toward the One

In Mt. Abu, we tour the magnificently carved, white marble Dilwara Temple. Here Meher Baba slept on its front step. Mahaveer, we learn, is an important figure in the founding of the Jain religion. We gather into a circle in one of the many intricately carved Jain temples. Several Indian pilgrims show open curiosity about our group, composed mostly of Westerners and a few Indians.



For five minutes we chant "Mahavir, Toward the One," then stand in silent meditation on universal and personal harmony and forgiveness. Michelle drapes Meher Baba's sadra, a simple white muslin robe, over the front of their baby stroller. One by one we touch finger-tips and foreheads to His sadra in continued silence and prayer.

Indian pilgrims join us, bow in reverence to Baba's garment, kiss a sleeve or the hem, not knowing Whose it is, drawn by His ineffable love, and the magnetism of ultimate Being.

Blessings

Only men are allowed to enter the tomb of Zar Zari Zar Baksh in the Valley of the Saints. I crowd in around the entrance with the other women. A little man in a white robe blesses us with a small palm frond



on a long stem. He flutters it down on my shoulders, one and the other. Dubs my head, my back. Moments later, not as if he'd forgotten, but smiling, he swats me, lifting lifetimes of burdens, unforgiven debts from my shoulders, brushing off cobwebs of unworthy thoughts, opening the airway of my heartmind. Blessing not just me, but each of us to become who we really are.

Karl Moeller

Encounter In The Valley Of The Saints

On the last day of the pilgrimage, while in the Valley of the (1400 Sufi) 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.



Courtesy © Bif Soper

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, the fellow in white performing du'a in this photo.

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 to Dr Carl Ernst, a Sufi scholar I met at the MPR a week later, and he said, "He must have liked you!"

The Disobedience Trail

Okay. I've had my post-Beads 2010 recovery days in upper Meherabad, shuffling around, sleeping late, visiting, enjoying the food in the MPC.. what I haven't been doing is walking across the fields and taking Baba's darshan. Why? Because I'm engaged in a childish tit-for-tat with the Great Withholder.

Time after time I lay my head on the cool marble of Baba's tomb, waiting for an awakening, or some kind of response from Him.. nothing. This afternoon I'm gonna have it out with Baba. I'm striding across the fields on the Disobedience Trail, having an argument with God. I tell him he's the Lord of Creation, would it be too much trouble to just give me SOME kinda response there in the Tomb? I'm not asking for Realization or anything, just a sense of something living responding to my plea and presence. Of course, I admit, with a sly smile, if he DID give me some unmistakable message from within the Tomb, I'd secretly lord it over others, this being evidence of my spiritual status.

All walks come to an end, and in midafternoon the Tomb is almost deserted. So I have plenty of time grinding my knees and resting my forehead on the stone, waiting, and waiting. With a disgusted grunt I rise and back out, get my prasad, and walk over to the Pandal and sit on its edge.

No sooner am I seated than one of the hill dogs sees me and runs over, tail wagging, pushing its head at my knees. I've seen the hill dogs before, I know which ones are cared for and how to recognize a stranger.. this one jumps up onto the Pandal and snuggles right up against my right leg and side, while I scratch his/

her head, bemused. And here comes another one, a cream-colored hill dog, also nosing for pets, and this one jumps up and settles down on my other side.. I'm a loving dog sandwich. I look at the dogs, the trees, Baba's tomb-shrine, look up at the sky, and say, "Baba? .. Dogs!?!?"



I Turned into Prayer Flags

Baba strung a clothes line out in the desert.
Hung upon were empty husks of clothes~meat.

Clip by clip he placed the colors of my heart out to dry.
The known, unseen, has yet to find a home.

The wind of transformation,
the sun of His merciful love.
What great clothing is His, to rest my head upon.

I see His sadra fluttering beside me,
Emptiness is His fullness.
The clothesline, the Reality connecting me to Him.

No more clothes, they've all been given to the poor.
Bleached by the sun, tattered and abandoned,
what have I become?

Prayer flags endlessly praying to Him.



~ Julie Engsberg & Laurent Weichberger
June 5, 2017 (Navajo Reservation)

GORDON NEALE

PARVARDIGAR PRAYER SERIES

I spent three weeks at the Meherabad Pilgrim Retreat Center last fall. This was my second trip to India, the first was in 1980. I took many photos on this recent trip which I've been using in recent art work along with images of Meher Baba. This process helps me to reconnect with the sense of wonder that I experienced during the trip. And the process allows me to experience Baba's presence on a deeper level where I may catch a glimpse of his humanity and divinity.

I attended Arti at Baba's Samadhi many times during my visit. And now working with images of Baba's face, images of precious places in Meherabad/Meherazad, and remembering the Master's Prayer, this has become a meditation, a way of focusing on the Beloved. On a good day, this remembrance transports me back to Him, my true self.

We call this "mixed media" ; using photography, drawing, painting, printmaking, collage, realism, abstraction etc. I try to break as many "rules" of art that I can in the process. The pieces range from 14 inches square to 48 inches square. Making art again has been wonderful, an almost unexpected joy. [ED: These are 4 of 21 in the series.]

Gordon Neale
Brevard NC







I have only one mantra.
I am the Ancient One.
I am the Highest of the High.

ASLAW

A KID'S IMAGINATION

By CYPRUS WEICHBERGER

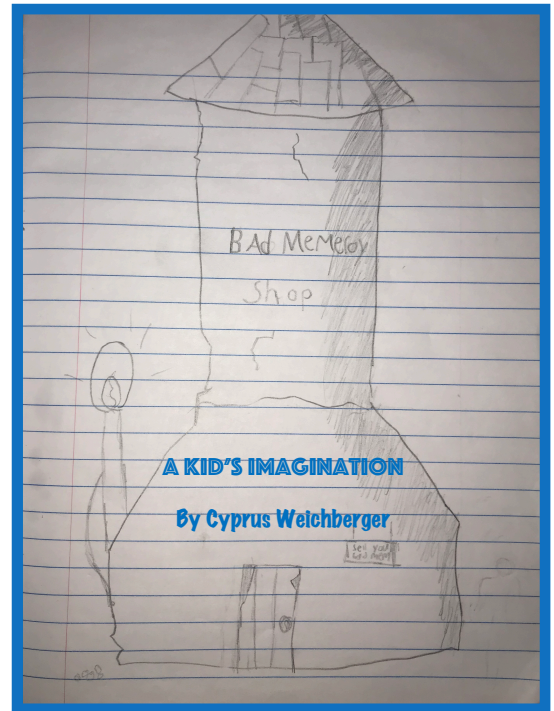
An excerpt from the new book by Cyprus Weichberger (age 11),
A Kid's Imagination, Chapter 13: Bad Memory Shop

I wake up to a beautiful morning on a Saturday. The sun is bright the sky is blue and the birds are chirping so I decide to take a walk. I got dressed put on my shoes and ran outside to the perfect day. But on my run, I noticed something that I had never noticed before. It was a tall creaky black and old looking building. I decided to explore that another day and continue on my walk. So I continue on my walk for about another hour and then I went back home. After I ran back home, I started cooking for my sister's wedding. I was hosting a giant meal for all the people to enjoy. I felt like something was weird, maybe something was wrong. Then I realized that I had been thinking about that creaky building all day, and I couldn't get it out of my head.

In fact, my head started to crave that old frightening building. So, I decided to get all my cooking done early so that I could go to sleep. When I finished making all of the delightful foods and deserts, I went to sleep. While I was sleeping I had dreams about the very same building. I dreamt that I was trapped in it with other people. And all the other people needed to get out. I knew, in the dream, that if they didn't get out they would soonly fall apart. I woke up and I didn't know what to think of it all. So I decided to go back over to that building and examine it, to see what was wrong with it, because I knew there was something fishy.

On my walk there, none of the birds were chirping. None of the people seemed as happy as they did before. And the all around attitude was just gloomy. Finally, I got to the shop and started to examine it. I saw that it had grown. It now had a name and it was called, "The Bad Memories Shop," and other people walked by it and didn't seem to notice it at all. It was like only some people could see it. Despite all of these factors I decided to go in. As I walked in the rickety old building, I felt a weird vibe. The interior of the building looked much like a run-down gas station. After looking at the structure, I faced straight ahead and saw a man greeting me with a big wide grin. His teeth were in bad condition, and his hair didn't look like it had been washed in months. He asked me if I wanted to come look at his collection of various colored crystals. The situation was so weird that I decided to say yes accidentally. And I knew if I didn't that something was going to go wrong...

The book *A Kid's Imagination*, by Cyprus Weichberger (Wilmington: OmPoint Press, 2018) is 55 pages with original illustrations by the author. Now available for \$15 from: Cyprus Weichberger in Roseburg, Oregon. Send an order request to: ompoint@gmail.com



Step in to the amazing imagination of an eleven-year-old boy, as you read twenty of his short stories and look at many of his illustrations.

CYPRUS WEICHBERGER started writing short stories when he was 7 years old. Then he forgot the stories and put them on a bookshelf. Four years later he found his notebook and decided to write in it again. He wrote many more stories and then decided to make a book out of it. And this is where all these stories come from.



Cyprus in Portland Oregon (March 2018)

SAVE THE DATE

Asheville Music Sahavas



PERFORMERS

Friday Aug 17

Gay & Greg Dunn

David Wilcox

Adrienne Shamszad

Saturday Aug 18

The Nordeen-Felknor Clan

Bob Een

Sunday Aug 19

Beverly Smith, John Grimm

Jim Meyer

Workshop Sat Aug 18

Bob Een

August 17-19 2018
Kittredge Auditorium
Warren Wilson College
Asheville, NC



This SUN

This sun rises over Mecca over Jerusalem
over the places

whose names themselves
bring calm to the blood
(or war to the mind).
Allah, Abraham

Under this sun
the Hindu marks a death
by cutting hair; the devoted Jain
with one hand on the dagger
moves his foot to avoid the insect
(while another bends and combs the dust).
Baksheesh

I point my camera
from the plane.
Grasp the moment of it.
Bow down to this thought
what is written and unwritten
(Significant pretending*).
Shhhhhhh

*Eruch Jessawalla

Poetry and art
by Annie Fahy

Frequent Flyer

(For Rick the Printer)

All of the worlds weeping flows
to an indoor swimming pool
that Jesus himself swims in.

He bathes in the reasons
the whys and the despair,
all the while

The worlds' inventory
of petty slights and failures
does not soil this water.

Selfish tears flow out
down the hill.
The tears wept for others

go into a tender-hearted
bank account
kind of like frequent-flyer points

for empathy. It is
not clear what kind of upgrade
one can expect And

Jesus is famous for changing
the rules in the middle of the game,
but still it is something.



BOOK EXCERPT

I think of this as a biographical memoir of Don, because it is told largely through the lens of my own relationship with him.

The story begins with his momentous arrival from California into the vibrant London Baba scene of the late 1960s. It tells of his impact on the London Baba world in general, and in particular on the group of mainly young individuals who met with him regularly for the next 16 or so years.

It follows him to France, where Don made his home in the mid 1970s, and later to India where, towards the end of his long life, he accompanied several of what were called the 'Beads On One String' tours. I end with a consideration of Don's writing, which was really an opportunity for me to think about him in a more reflective way. This is also true of the section about the heartfelt thoughts about forgiveness which Don came to in his closing years.

Michael Morice

MEHER BABA'S MAN IN EUROPE

a Memoir of Don Stevens



Michael Morice

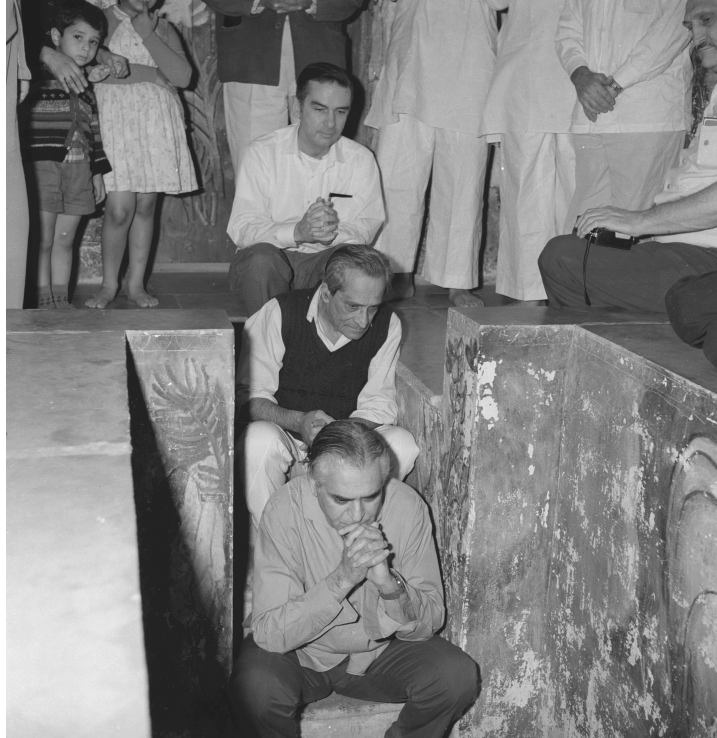
This title is available at Sheriar Books, Myrtle Beach, SC, and online at Amazon.com and Barnes and Noble.com

Meher Baba's Man In Europe

I have one vivid memory which cuts across the controversy, at least as it concerns Don and Adi. On the 31st of January 1970 on the first anniversary of Baba's dropping His body, the entombment film[5] was shown at the new London Baba Centre in Ecclestone Square. When it came to an end, there was a spontaneous silence lasting several minutes. It was filled, no doubt with sadness and grief, but surely also with wonder at the mystery of what had taken place one year before. Adi and Don both looked transported - and devastated. By design or by chance, like sleepwalkers they somehow found their way towards each other, and gave each other a long and heartfelt embrace.

Was I the only person watching? Am I the only one remembering? I doubt both of these things, but I know that the scene is engraved in my mind with a clarity and an immediacy in which the crowd around them has vanished, and in which 45 - odd years have collapsed into a timeless present. It's hard to exaggerate the significance of this scene for me. I felt a strong affection for both these men that I had known a mere six months. Until now I had never seen them together (and would never see them together again). The expressions on their faces impressed upon me their love for Baba - and Baba's love for them; and at the same time the power and the

A Memoir of Don Stevens



Adi Jr., Meher Baba's youngest brother , front,
Don Stevens top stair.
Meher Baba's entombment Feb. 1969

majesty of the occasion we had just witnessed that was known henceforth as 'Amartithi'.

The sight of them embracing was enough to convince me that these two men were as one when it came down to what was most important in life. After this I didn't pay much attention to the reports of a division between them, and was only reminded in later years of Adi's apparent disapproval.

Notwithstanding the evidence of what I have just described, there was a visible divergence of loyalties in the London Group one year or so into my being part of it. Adi, Delia and Don rarely, if ever, saw each other after the early 70s. The large number of attenders at Don's Discourse meetings began to diminish, leaving a core of people that stayed loyal to him for many years. Others veered towards Delia. Yet others adhered to Adi, such that I scarcely knew of their existence. That said, neither Delia nor Adi ever turned away a member of one of Don's groups, and many or even most of the latter had a friendly, or even a close and loving relationship with either or both of them.

So what was all the fuss about? With the benefit of hindsight through long distance binoculars, it really does look like a confection whipped up by Baba. Much of the antagonism was actually embedded in a past that most of us newcomers knew nothing about whatsoever.

Under One Umbrella: One Avatar, Different Approaches

By Alisa Genovese



In the fall of 2017, a board member of the Circle of Friends in Myrtle Beach approached the Meherlegacy.org folks and those involved in the 2015 Conference in Berkeley, entitled The Resonating Bell of Warning, and asked if we would be interested in doing a presentation at the Circle of Friends. The topic would be to discuss the history between two groups under Baba's umbrella: Baba lovers and Sufism Reoriented and share about the website Meherlegacy.org. I was asked to join that potential meeting. My first inclination was to decline the offer, feeling I had already done my part regarding this issue, and given I had no personal history around this issue I was not inclined to go further.

A few members of the board of Circle of Friends were strongly against such a meeting, feeling that it was divisive and even went as far as calling the folks at Meherlegacy a 'hate group'. This statement and the sentiment behind it was a deterrent to most involved to proceed. Although I had not planned to be part of this meeting, when I heard this characterization of the work of this group I knew that I must step up and do this meeting, for to back away would validate this rhetoric. Being a psychotherapist and conflict mediator for almost 30 years, I felt in my heart that this is what Baba would want me to do given how

strongly I had felt His Presence and Guidance during the Conference. I felt He would want me to use my skills to address this issue. I felt this would please Baba, since harmony and clarity is what He wanted from us.

In addition to my professional experience, since I was involved in the Conference in Berkeley, I knew full well what both the benefits and importance of exploring this history and understanding these differences was about. During Conference preparations I saw many examples of Baba's Guiding Hand behind this venture of reopening this issue between the two communities some 35 years later. Having participated in organizing and facilitating that Conference, I knew, from my personal experience, that the motivation behind this venture was not vindictive and those involved were in no way a hate group. Educating people about this history and working toward creating healthier and cleaner boundaries between the two communities was of great importance- this much I felt sure of.

Baba himself started this sect of Sufism Reoriented and I believe He undoubtedly knew the directions all this would go. Baba Himself stated that the two communities should remain separate and maintain a democratic structure. He further stated, in

the famous John Bass/Ivy Duce meeting, that each one should pick a group and stick with it and not go back-and-forth between the two groups. Baba always stressed harmony as the one attribute that He cannot give us, this we ourselves have to strive for to please Him and He was explicitly asking that of us for His work. How to create that harmony when this history between the two groups is quite misunderstood and at times divisive is the challenge we are faced with, if we choose to address it, and not just ignore, deny and become divided over it.

This is what I felt drawn to speak about having contemplated this issue over the past 2 ½ years. So with some reluctance and great trepidation, I accepted the offer to present at the Circle of Friends. It was a very vulnerable endeavor to speak alone on this topic, which is rarely, if ever, spoken about, particularly in groups and is greatly misunderstood by many in both communities. It came to my attention that it had never been addressed openly in Myrtle Beach among the community and many expressed deep heartfelt thanks and relief for my efforts to open this topic up for community discussion.

The talk can be found on YouTube. The link is below. I encourage each of you to listen for yourself to my presentation. But for the purposes of this article I will share some of the main points that I was endeavoring to make. This presentation is only an ice-breaker on this subject. I hope and would encourage more conversations such as this to happen within the Baba lover communities and potentially and hopefully between the Baba Lover communities and Sufism Reoriented community if they wish to engage, which I

would hope they would. If we want harmony and acceptance, as both sides seem to state, this would be an honest and clear way to that goal.

In my talk I focus on the need to define and preserve the direct approach for future generations. One such way of doing that is to understand the history between the two communities, one being the direct approach and the other being approaching Baba with an intermediary. I see the differences and the conflicts that arise between the two communities as a possible opportunity for us following Meher Baba directly to recognize and use these differences to clearly define what it means to approach Baba directly.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IIIt6U2Fy3FQ&t=479s>

What follows is a summary of some of my thoughts on the subject as I was preparing for the talk.

The importance of defining and preserving the direct approach:

•The Sufis' interpretation of this history regarding Baba's Reorienting them is the narrative to which they organize themselves around. The Charter, approved by Meher Baba, is a cornerstone of that organization. But as I explored this history in preparation for the 2015 Berkeley Conference, which included reading many letters to and from the mandali and Ivy Duce and going through the archives of Don Stevens personally, as well as listening to the taped sessions of the Mandali talking to the 5 Sufis sent by Ivy Duce in 1980, I realized that there is plenty of well documented history that casts doubt on the Sufis' interpretation of what Baba said

regarding illumined Murshids for the order.

•How the Sufis choose to believe is their business in truth, but there is clearly another perspective on this history, held by Baba-Lovers, that should to be equally respected without it meaning anyone is judging or condemning anyone else.

•The differences in the interpretation of this history are what I see as a natural boundary, one that exists of its own accord, if it were to be mutually accepted as that.

•I think it is futile for anyone to try to prove one side is right over the other. Each one's relationship with Meher Baba is their own and whatever the Sufis choose to organize themselves around is between them and Baba. The only concern for Baba-Lovers following Him directly is how to obey and efface ourselves to the God-Man and attempt to heed and live His words so that we may draw closer to Him and please Him.

•However, it is equally futile to look at only one aspect of the history, i.e. The Charter, while saying other aspects of this history are past, i.e. The Sufi delegation with the mandali in 1980, and as such, should have no current impact. It could be likened to saying slavery is past, so let's forget that history. Any piece of history shapes the future going forward and true healing is about facing, going through and hopefully learning from history, not burying it.

Summary of Key Differences:

As I see it, the key differences between the two approaches today that represent conflicts of interest in collaborating:

- The Sufis' belief that Baba's guaranteeing them an unbroken chain of illumined Murshids to which one looks to for guidance and direction with Baba until He comes again.

- The Sufis' belief in Ivy's infallibility, which has been transferred to any current Murshid's infallibility.

- *Baba's Last Warning:*

• I have come to realize this stands as the biggest difference the Sufis have with Baba-Lovers. I learned during the Conference preparations that the Sufis do not believe that *Baba's Last Warning* applies to them due to their understanding of what Baba told them regarding their Murshid.

• Those attempting to approach Baba directly, on the other hand, are bound to obey and heed His Words. Baba's Last Warning stands strongly and starkly clear as just one of the many warnings and guidance's Baba has given those of us approaching Him directly.

• For those approaching Baba directly, any intermediary speaking on behalf of Baba will represent a conflict of interest if we are preserving this path. An intermediary of any sort leaves unsuspecting Baba lovers vulnerable to the lures Baba had so strongly warned us against.

Further Thoughts on this History

This history regarding Sufism Reoriented, as well as the relationship between the two groups, is very well documented. In studying this history and coming to understand the deeper issues related to the conflicts, I have come to believe this may have significant importance in Baba's Advent, which may only be recognized in hindsight:

• Anything and everything connected to Meher Baba and His advent has great significance, whether we understand it or not.

• My belief is that Baba was the last Avatar in the cycle of Avatars, and as such He has given us an opportunity to do something different with this conflict. In every Advent the direct path has gotten buried and sects and churches form, with all their doctrines and rituals. Wars and disharmony have raged in His name.

• In this Advent each approach began with Baba, they have diverged into two distinct paths over time, as is reflected in the history. The fact that this history of the divergence is so well documented, may be of help for us to know and understand, now and in the future, because it plays a role in His work going forward. Perhaps in this Advent we have a chance to create something different in the relationship between these two approaches. Perhaps His Advent is not about creating another religion, since He himself stressed He had came to do away with all rites, rituals and religious ceremonies and bring all religions together like beads on one string. His mission was Universality and the development of Intuition as a path to His Voice within. These I feel are worthy considerations as we look at this history.

• My hope is through these conversations that an alternative perspective can be defined and respected to balance the current myth that any talk of differences is "us" judging "them" and is seen as "bad". I believe it possible for us come to see this difference as a potentially important part of Baba's work with us, learning to live in peace and harmony with each other.

My understandings over time regarding following Meher Baba

We who follow Him directly have a responsibility to define and to clearly protect this path for future generations.



•To recognize the unique blessing/grace and great good fortune of direct contact with Him. It is a great privilege—earned, no doubt, but not guaranteed.

•We have that gift and opportunity of personal relationship with Him.

•To follow Baba directly is the path of intuition – listening to His voice within. It is a path of obedience, surrender and effacement to His Wish and Will. If we begin to listen to or be swayed by any external voice or Master and it is in direct conflict with what Baba is saying within, we risk losing hold of His Damaan. Baba has left us a treasure trove to mine in each one's unique way to uncover His voice within.

•It is up to us to not be lured off toward another for guidance. I saw through my experience in participating in the Berkeley Conference that we must never take for granted our hold on Him. This became so crystal clear to me. Baba's Last Warning for the first time had vivid meaning. I never paid it much mind before as I never felt I would lose hold of Him. But I came to see and understand how vulnerable we each are and how easily we could be lured away.

I encourage anyone interested in understanding more about Baba's Last Warning to watch Mehera Arjani's presentation at the Berkeley Conference:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1EBRY-4e7tA>

Approaching Him directly: **What He asks of us**

•To love and obey Him directly without the need for intermediary. To learn to trust and listen to the voice of intuition as His voice within.

•To heed and follow His guidance, and directives. To heed His warnings.

•To always attempt to seek His pleasure in all we do.

•Not to worry: To Take His words seriously and ourselves lightly.

•To be natural and approach Him from the heart.

•To repeat His name as our sole practice throughout our daily lives and take His name at our last breath.

As Eruch has said, Baba repeatedly stressed that He is the root of all creation, and once we have contacted Him there is no need to go anywhere else.

And finally, Baba's words to Robert Dreyfuss when he met Him in 1965. Robert had been planning to go up to the Himalayas after meeting Baba to spend the New Year among the rishi's and saints.

Baba ordered, "Go straight home. There is no need to seek out Rishi's and saints now that you have found Me. I am God and my Word is Truth."

Many Baba Lovers may never have actually read the document, the 'Charter Sufism Reoriented Incorporated,' which Meher Baba, Ivy Duce, Don E. Stevens and Adi K. Irani worked on so arduously together.

The original 1952 Charter was printed by Sufism Reoriented as a booklet. We include a scan of the complete charter here as a service to the community.



CHARTER

Sufism Reoriented

INCORPORATED

SUFISM REORIENTED, INC.

1290 Sutter Street
San Francisco, Calif. 94109

SUFISM REORIENTED

PRINCIPLES OF THE ORDER

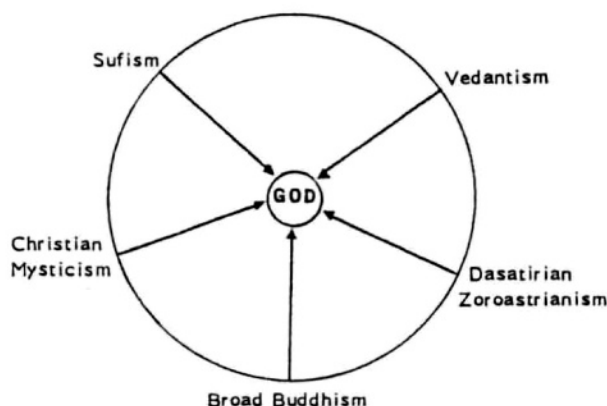
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INTRODUCTION

Meher Baba is connected with one and all religions and because each of them teaches the same divine Truth and leads to the same One God, he is also detached and above all religions. Therefore Meher Baba has only to awaken the followers of the different cults to the real meaning of the diverse “isms” in their true spirit by reorientation of the main roads that lead to the one ultimate end.

Among many various spiritual ways, Meher Baba is most concerned with the five principal highways to God which converge into the one central Reality – the end of all the questing in human life. These five principal approaches leading to the core of existence, which is God, are Sufism, Vedantism, Christian Mysticism, Dasatirian Zoroastrianism and Broad Buddhism.



God is to be realized as one's own Self by actual experience through one or more or all of the above “isms.”

Sufism as reoriented by Meher Baba is based on love and longing for God and the eventual union with God in actual experience. With an eye to make it nondogmatically universal, the reorientation is fundamentally based, on the one hand, on enlarging the concept of Sufism in order to make it all-embracing for the matter of its knowledge and practice. On the other hand, the original value of Sufism, which lies in its Tariqat (Divine

Path), its Marefat (Divine Knowledge), and its Haqiqat (Divine Realization of Truth) is maintained intact.

This reorientation is symbolized by the numerical figure of one (1) embedded in a diagram of the human heart with wings of freedom on both its left and right sides –



To sum up in Baba's own words, "The fact that I am connected with all 'isms and yet detached and above all 'isms, lays bare the truth that Sufism Reoriented, emanating from me, to be conceived and practiced, will forge out into one of the few pure channels leading to One God. As a result, all who will follow any one of the 'isms reoriented by me, will come eventually to love me and realize God rather than the 'isms."

SECTION I.

ACTIVE FAITH

The ideal of the Order is meant to be put into vigorous practice:

1. *By believing* that Sufism recognizes Oneness of Truth and is complimentary to and does not contradict any honest and sincere efforts to attain the spiritual freedom of man;
2. *By accepting* that Sufism is an approach to spiritual experiences (as distinct from spiritualism) and to divine knowledge that ultimately leads to Truth;
3. *By cherishing* the fact that Sufism is mainly based on a definite acceptance of a God-realized Master and complete adherence to His guidance;
4. *By trying* to attain more and more individual freedom through greater and greater control over the mind;
5. *By aspiring* to achieve deeper and deeper contentment, joy and love;
6. *By serving* and striving for human brotherhood, universal fellow-feeling and world peace through spiritual enlightenment;
7. *By hoping* to be one with God by actual experience.

SECTION II.

STATES AND STAGES OF EXPERIENCE AND KNOWLEDGE

1. The state of illumination has three stages:
 - (a) *Divine Intuition*: When one has divine intuition, one sees colors, circles, lights (other than those ordinarily visible to the human eye), and also at the same time experiences feelings of nearness to God.
 - (b) *Divine Inspiration*: When one has divine inspiration, one experiences flashes of knowledge directly linked with Divine Knowledge and here, to a small extent, the intellect is transcended.
 - (c) *Divine Vision*: In divine vision, one is face to face with God, and with the inner eye one sees God everywhere and in everything. This also means that to see God is to cease to see everything except God.
2. A Murshid or Murshida, one whom others can follow, should necessarily have Divine Vision – the highest state of illumination.
3. After the highest illumination comes union with God; if one remains merged in this union one is Majzoob, but if one returns to sobriety, then one is the Perfect Salik – Qutub, Ghaus, Qalander, etc., according to one's range of duty.
4. The Qutub stage or state is the highest of all, the highest of the highest.
5. The Qutub (the very source of illumination) can play the part of a Murshid (the fully illumined); of Majzoob (merged in union); of a Kamil (Perfect One); of an Akmal (most Perfect One); of a Mukammil (a supremely Perfect One).

SECTION III.

PERSONNEL

1. Any of those belonging to the Order can be considered as:
 - (a) Seeker or Talib: One who becomes a member.
 - (b) Worker or Khadim: One who gives monetary assistance or free physical labor in any shape or form for the cause.
 - (c) Preceptor or Haadi: One who can and does inspire others with exposition and by examples.
2. Unless otherwise expressly allowed by Meher Baba, no esoteric titles are to be assumed by or given to anyone, by way of recognition or designation of individual advancement, as:
 - (a) *Pilgrim on the Path*: One who gets intellectual conviction, i.e., Ilmul Yaqin, which is not mere understanding but a feelingful certainty gained through intellect, which certainty remains unassailable and cannot be shaken or dislodged.
 - (b) *Advanced Soul on the Path*: One who gains conviction through actual vision of God, i.e., A'inul Yaqin.
 - (c) *Perfect Ones*: One whose conviction is the certainty of having realized God by being united with Him, i.e., Haqqul Yaqin.
3. Meher Baba may allow anyone to be called and considered as a Murshid or Murshida without necessarily disclosing whether such a one is illumined, not illumined or about to be illumined. In all such cases Meher Baba will hold himself responsible for the spiritual welfare of all those who may be prepared to and do follow a Murshid or Murshida so declared by him.

SECTION IV.

QUALIFICATION FOR MEMBERSHIP

In order to qualify as an eligible member of the Order, one must be ready to aspire for and willing to work towards the following achievements:

1. To be able to long for one and only one thing: Truth;
2. To be able to cherish no material ambitions;
3. To be prepared for any kind of sacrifice small or great;
4. To be prepared for complete abstinence from lustful actions in any form or manner except legitimate marriage relations based on mutual love and duty;
5. To be able to avoid greedy longings of any kind;
6. To be able to avoid every type of falsehood;
7. To be able to cope with one's feelings of anger, fear and hate, in a spirit of generosity, resignation and forbearance.

SECTION V.

DUTIES AND OBLIGATIONS

1. It shall be the duty of every member:

- (a) To become conversant with the principles of Sufism by reading and studying the literature of Sufi saints, poets and authors such as Hafiz, Jalaluddin, Shams, Inayat Khan, Ibn Arabi, Shibli, Hujwiri, and others.
- (b) To necessarily read and study vigorously the Discourses by Meher Baba and the book by Meher Baba called "God Speaks" which depicts the ten states of God and other important truths, and which is his last and final book on this subject.
- (c) To necessarily repeat verbally daily one name of God for half an hour at any time of the day or night; this is to be done consecutively if possible, but may be accomplished in smaller portions if necessary.
- (d) To meditate on the Master daily for fifteen minutes in any secluded spot.

2. Special Duties:

- (a) Those inclined towards love through devotion shall renounce all attachments and live for the cause of the Order and live at its Center, if available.
- (b) Those who aspire to the final attainment should renounce everything and occupy themselves in prayer and meditation most of the time.
- (c) Those inclined towards an active life should render service to the Order by giving free physical labor or monetary assistance.
- (d) Those inclined towards worldly duties should attend periodical classes at fixed hours.

3. Curriculum of the classes:

Discourses, discussions, explanations, talks, questions and answers, and lectures on:

- i. The triune attributes of God – All Power (Qudrat), All Knowledge (Marefat), All Bliss (Mussarat).
- ii. *The Path and its different disciplinary stages (Muqamat)* of (1) Repentance; (2) Abstinence; (3) Renunciation; (4) Poverty; (5) Patience; (6) Trust in God; (7) Satisfaction; *and its states (Ahwal)* of 1) Meditation; 2) Nearness to God; 3) Love; 4) Fear; 5) Hope; 6) Longing; 7) Intimacy; 8) Tranquility; 9) Contemplation; 10) Certainty; *and the supramental spheres* of the Subtle World (Alam-e-Malakut) and Mental World (Alam-e-Jabrut).
- iii. Perfect Ones, Qutub, Ghaus, Qalander, etc.
- iv. The Discourses in five volumes by Meher Baba, and the book “God Speaks” by Meher Baba.
- v. All spiritual books written by or about the great saints and masters.

A five-minute collective prayer:

“God alone is real and the goal of life is to be united with Him through love”

is to be recited respectively to music or chanted every time the congregation or classes are held.

SECTION VI.

FORM OF INITIATION OR BAYAT

The admission of members to the Order shall be effected under an open, concise and matter of fact ceremony which can be either individual or collective. Any short invocation such as Inayat Khan's, which is most suitable, viz., "Toward the One, the Perfection of love, harmony and beauty, the Only Being, united with all the illuminated souls who form the embodiment of the Master, the Spirit of Guidance," can be fixed for the Preceptors appointed to perform this function. And in response to the invocation, a grave, sacred declaration and promise to be made by the applicants:

"In keeping with God's omnipresence, I/we invoke His presence and as in God's presence, I/we do solemnly bind myself/ourselves to the faithful adherence of the guidance laid down by Meher Baba, and to faith and trust in the Murshid."

The ceremony should be sealed with a hearty handshake between the Preceptor and the members, at which time both should stand up on equal levels.

SECTION VII.

ORGANIZATION

There have to be proper institutes or duly constituted organizations in the different parts of the world for the implementation of Sufism Reoriented. The purpose of such bodies should be one only, viz: to implement the principles of the Order within the four walls of Meher Baba's guidance as a whole.

Any question of the mode is immaterial and therefore the bodies can be formed as a company, corporation, association, etc., according to the prevailing circumstances, the requirements of the people and the laws of the land concerned.

All the same, a guidance is also laid down in this respect so as to maintain a uniformity in substance between bodies that may be established in different areas, as well as to avoid the possibility of any unintentional act or thing which may prove derogatory to the very spirit of Sufism Reoriented.

1. Privileges and prerogatives born of Divine Illumination and of Realization of Truth could never be subject to statutory provisions of any kind. Where there is neither Divine Illumination nor Realization of God, there should never be any constitutional or organizational authority for the sustenance of any such privileges and prerogatives.
2. An organization for the sake of an organization should never be the remotest objective or incentive towards the formation of a body for the spiritual exploitation of Sufism Reoriented.
3. A self-supporting body has necessarily to have finances and therefore a body, as a whole, can own properties, collect income and may accept fees and donations in cash or kind but it should not be established on a commercial basis for making money or gaining profits.

4. There should be no mandatory provisions requiring contribution of money for admission to the Order, for the continuation of membership, or for the holding of any office or authority.
5. All conventions, rules, regulations, articles and by-laws must be strictly based on the democratic principles of adult franchise and equal opportunities for one and all irrespective of sex, color, creed, or country, and without allowing any exceptions to anyone on grounds of spiritual advancement or enlightenment.
6. All office-bearers including the temporal head of the organization should be elected by majority of votes for any period not exceeding three calendar years.
7. As far as possible and practicable, reliance is to be placed on conventions and practice based on the spirit of service and sacrifice rather than upon the rigidity of a written constitution.

The Order of Sufism Reoriented is intended to be conducted in any country or continent according to the wish and will of the people concerned.

If Meher Baba is satisfied with the sincerity and bona fides of a petitioner, or a group of petitioners, from any national or geographical area, and with their good intentions and capacities to undertake the responsibility of faithfully carrying out his guidance fully, then Meher Baba will on his part grant his Charter of Guidance and thereafter remain to be the Patron of the body as long as it continues to fulfil the purpose of Sufism Reoriented.



(signed) M. S. IRANI.

Meherabad
November 14, 1952.



TOP Don E. Stevens with Laurent Weichberger, Los Angeles October 2010
BOTTOM Don E. Stevens with Karl Moeller and Irma Sheppard, Mt. Abu, India, August 2010