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issue #25

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CREDITS: Cover drawing by Vanessa Weichberger (November 2019), "The Avatar," 12"x18" pencil on paper. All other words and images remain property of copyright holders. Photographs of Meher Baba courtesy © AMBPPCT. All rights reserved.

Letter to the Editor

Jai Baba, Laurent and Joe,

First, I want to thank Joe DiSabatino for his marvelous piece on *Begin the Beguine*. [OmPoint #24, Fall 2019] It was a joy to read. Many thanks.

Secondly, I want to add two additional pieces of information.

Years ago, in Myrtle Beach, Baba Lover Mary Lloyd Duggan, (now deceased), and I were talking about Baba and *Begin the Beguine*. She told me that her great uncle was on a ship in the South Pacific in the early 1930's. He was an American Episcopal Bishop, (I think she said), and he spent time talking with Cole Porter, who was also aboard, during that sea voyage. She believed that her relative may have told Cole Porter about the Beguineage Movement of the Middle Ages, 12th to 15th centuries in northern Europe...a subject I have studied since, myself. This gives a very different meaning to the title of the song. Beguines were lay women who chose to serve God, living in communities usually adjacent to churches, schools, hospitals and libraries, working as teachers, scholars, nurses and supporting the communities of nuns who might also be present in these institutions, BUT, the Beguines had chosen to remain single in the world, neither nun nor wife, neither under the control of the Church/Vatican, or a husband. This was a very radical movement at that time, which flourished in Brussels, northern France, UK, Germany, Scandinavia and other northern European locations until the Pope made it illegal, in the 15th century, as these women were just too educated and too independent for comfort at that time.

There are many articles on-line about the Beguineage Movement, including Wikipedia. With all due respect,

I think this a much more likely source of the name for Baba's favorite song, than a South American dance. Additionally, Richard Bollig, (deceased Baba Lover, and greatly loved singer of this song), and I prepared a program about *Begin the Beguine*, in 1993, NYC.

Richard researched the song extensively. He read that it was written while Cole Porter was aboard a ship sailing in the South Pacific, which corroborates in part, Mary Lloyd Duggan's information. Baba had great regard for strong, independent women. Just look at practically every one of his women Mandali, Indian and Western.

Tomorrow is the 25th anniversary of Richard Bollig's death, in NYC. 10/6/1994. I know he would have greatly appreciated this article, Joe.
In His mysterious embrace.

Susan Paul

Joe DiSabatino replies:

Hi Laurent and Susan,

Additional note:

From reading Cole Porter's biography, there's no indication at all that he had the slightest interest in spirituality, religion, etc. His songs were only about human love. When writing *Begin the Beguine* there's no reason to believe he intentionally was composing a song with spiritual meaning. No one would have guessed that until Meher Baba said it had spiritual meaning. In his mind, he was writing a song about human love and he said he was inspired by the Beguin dancers from Martinique for the title and rumba rhythm--10 years before he was on the ship in the South Pacific finishing it up. That's my vote for the inspirational source of the song. I don't think the Middle Ages Beguines would have interested him at all as an inspiration for a song.

Half Human, Half Divine

poem by Robert Oberg

It is like the night you died
I cannot sleep
Every night I wake up earlier
Thoughts and feelings swirl inside my mind and heart
I think my soul is reaching out to me
In these quiet nighttime hours
The world is asleep
My house is quiet
There are no distractions
What shall I do now?

Shall I try to silence my own soul?
You see, that is what I have been doing
I have tried reading my story
I have tried the comfort of food
I have tried to just lie here
Trusting that my tired body would bring the sleep I need
And so every night I silenced my soul.

Tonight it is different
Although not with words
My soul is speaking more strongly
To listen to you at last
You have never left me
It is your greatest gift

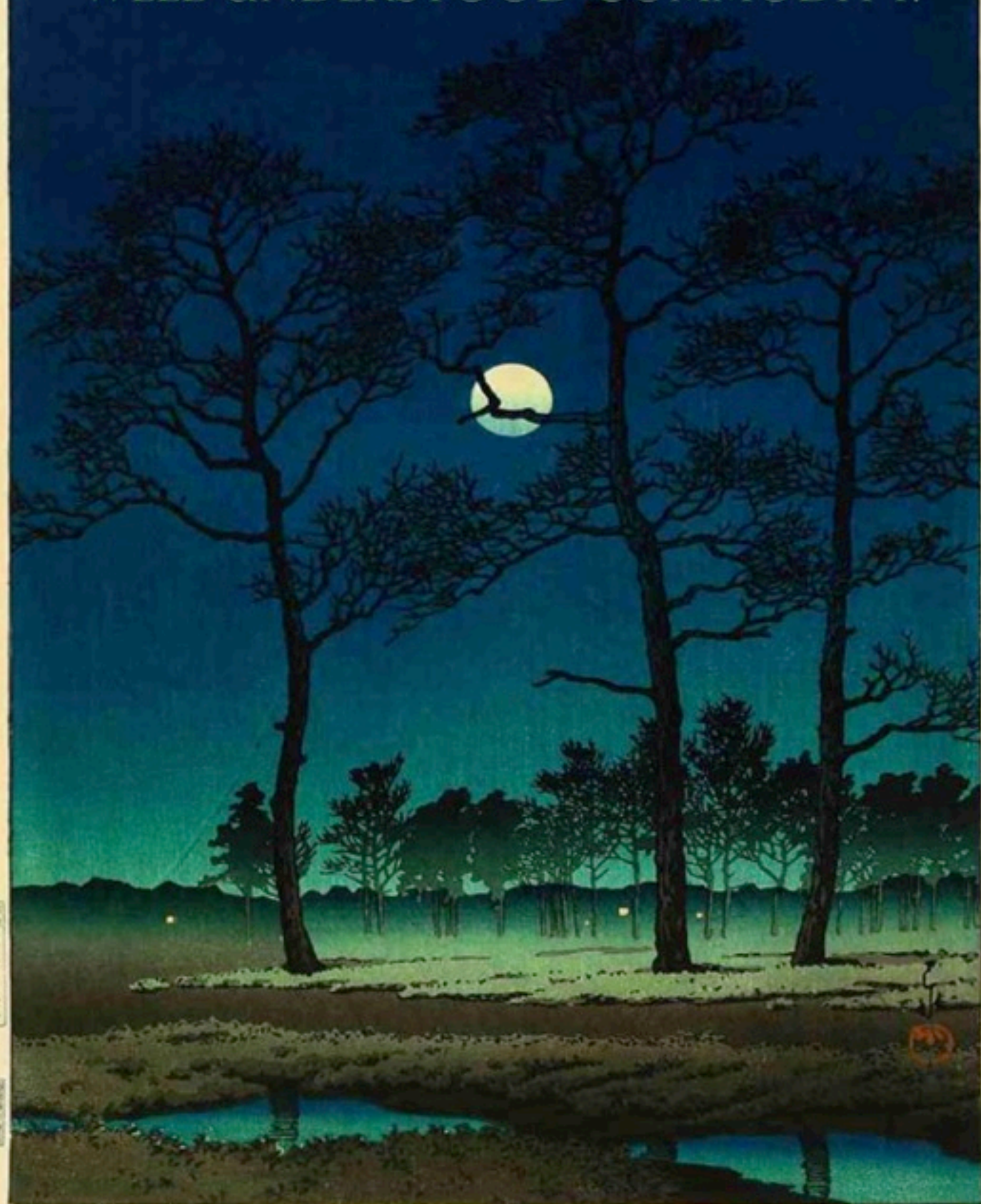
You have told me that we are closer now
And now I am a believer
You have shown it in so many ways
You are not on the physical plane
But you reach me in my heart
You reach me through my friends
You reach me through people I do not yet know
Who are lonely and suffering
And need our help.

For it is not I alone who can help
I am half human, half divine
It is my divinity that they need
It is their own divinity that will bring them home.

Home, that is a word of magic
We all seek our home
You have shown me a simple way that we can help
We can open our lovely home to our friends
Our friends old and new
We begin small
Since I am only half human and half divine
But we begin today on First Day
And we will greet the morning sun with joy.



"LOVE IS NOT A
WELL-UNDERSTOOD COMMODITY."



中江 三郎 氏

明治三十四年

その月 (中江三郎)

明治三十四年十月

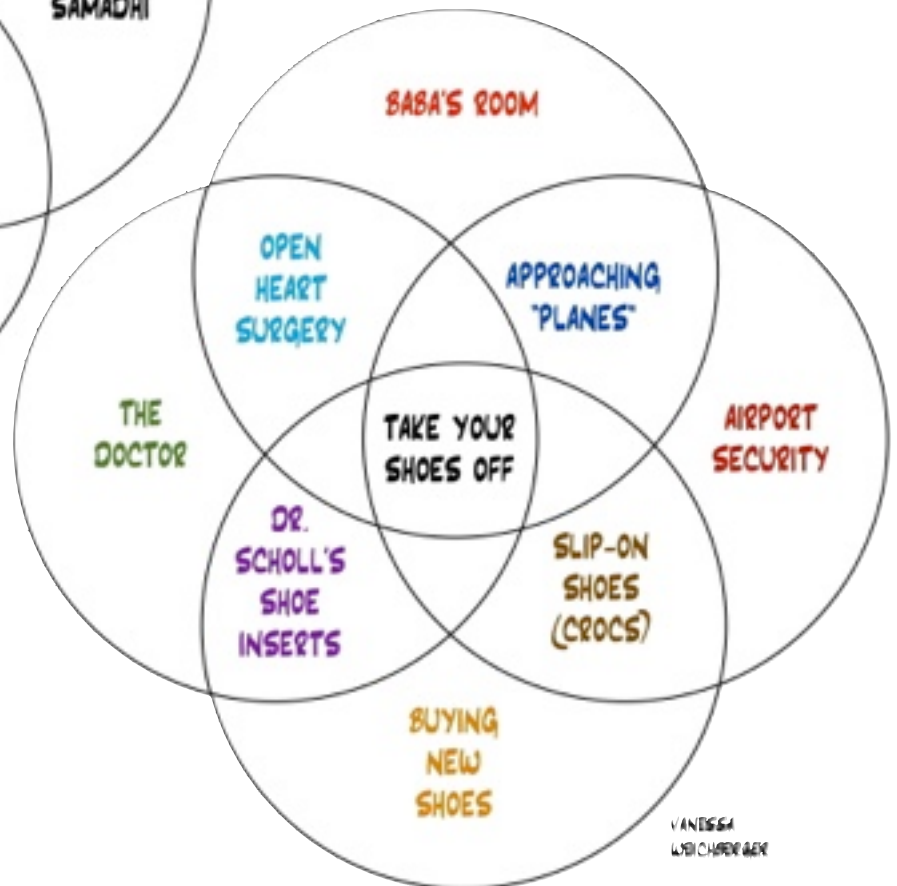
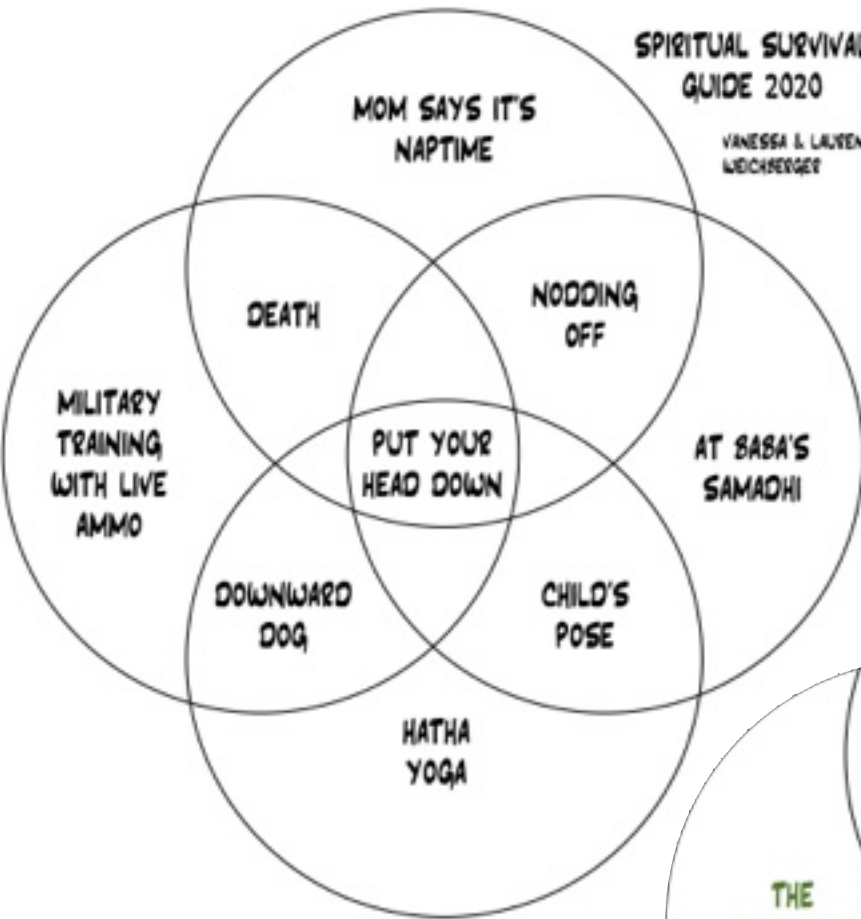
Vanessa Weichberger

VENN DIAGRAM Funnies



SPIRITUAL SURVIVAL GUIDE 2020

VANESSA L. LAURENT
WEICHERGER



VANESSA
WEICHERGER

New Access Ramp for Refectory Meher Spiritual Center

photos by Laurent Weichberger

Stuart Baker performing construction. Dec. 2019



که به مژگان شکند قلب همه صف شکنان
گفت کای چشم و چراغ همه شیرین سخنان
بنده من شو و بر خور ز همه سیم تنان
تا به خلوتگه خورشید رسی چرخ زنان
شادی زهره جبینان خور و نازک بدنان
گفت پرهیز کن از صحبت پیمان شکنان
که شهیدان که اند این همه خونین کفن
از می لعل حکایت کن و شیرین دهنان

دامن دوست بدست آر و ز دشمن بگسل
مرد یزدان شو و ایمن گذر از اهرمنان

شاه شمشادقدان خسرو شیرین دهنان
مست بگذشت و نظر بر من درویش انداخت
تا کی از سیم و زرت کیسه تهی خواهد بود
کمتر از ذره نئی پست مشو مهر بورز
بر جهان تکیه مکن در قدحی می داری
پیر پیمانه کش من که روانش خوش باد
با صبا در چمن لاله سحر می گفتم
گفت حافظ من و تو محرم این راز نه ایم

Hafiz Ghazal

Translated from Farsi by Azita Namiranian, and Vanessa and Laurent Weichberger (November 2019)

That King of kings, our beloved is stealing the hearts of His Lovers,
one glance of his beauty enchanting them,
broken hearted and intoxicated with love,
they rush to his side.

He joined my path and approached this dervish with His intoxicating presence,
addressing me as "Mashuq," his sweetheart among the inspired poets!

He asked me, "How much longer will you live alone like a poor fakir,
when you can live abundantly just as my fortunate slave?"

"If even that tiny speck, like a dervish, spins around the sun -- don't sell yourself short!
Love me, and you'll find yourself whirling towards the heart of the sun itself!"

"Don't depend upon anything in this harsh world, instead
pour into your chalice only gentle beauty and tenderness."

That wine bringer, peace be upon him and his family,
admonished me then to stop associating with deceivers!

Beholding the field of succulent red tulips,
I wonder who was so cruel to break their pure hearts?
So many martyrs drenched in blood.

Hafiz answers his own question,
"You and I are not allowed to lift this shroud of secrecy.
Remain focused on His love, and the beauty of His luscious mouth!"

To escape from the antagonist, just hold tightly to the robe of 'The Friend.
Become the man of Yezdan, and be protected from true evil, Ahriman.

Farrukh, a ghazal by Hafiz of Shiraz

My heart's longing for my Beloved is like His tousled hair.
Only the curls of his dark mane are so fortunate to be near the face of my Beloved.

I wish I was that dark fortunate one, as His constant companion.
The majestic Cypress tree will look like a weeping Willow compared to the enthralling presence of my Beloved.

Oh Saki, pour us your purest wine, my zikr is remembering my Beloved's intoxicating beauty.
This pain of separation from my beloved has arched my back, like the curved eyebrows of my Beloved.

Even the aroma of the best Turkish perfume cannot be compared to the bouquet of my Beloved's hair.
If everybody's heart is longing to be somewhere, my heart's yearning is only moving toward my Beloved.

I am the servant of those who are so completely like Hafiz, who have become a fortunate slave of my Beloved.

Translation by by Azita Namiranian and Laurent Weichberger (October, 2019).

Original found in, The Divan of Hafiz, compiled and edited by Ismail Salam (Tehran: Arena of Persian Art & Thought, 2011). Farsi provided here.

بُود آشفته همچون موی فرخ
که بر خوردار شد از روی فرخ
بُود همراه و هم‌زانوی فرخ
اگر بیند قد دلجوی فرخ
به یاد نرگس جادوی فرخ
ز غم پیوسته چون ابروی فرخ
شمیم زلف عنبربوی فرخ
بود میل دل من سوی فرخ

غلام همّت آنم که باشد
چو حافظ چاکرو هندوی فرخ

دل من در هوای روی فرخ
بجز هندوی زلفش هیچکس نیست
سیاهی نیک‌بخت است او، که دایم
شود چون بید لرزان سروستان
بده ساقی شراب ارغوانی
دو تا شد قامت هم چون کمانی
نسیم مشک تاتاری خجل کرد
اگر میل دل هرکس به جایی ست

I PRAY

I pray for a heart of nobility like Queen Esther who knew her purpose and the hour she lived in and how to touch the heart of a King.

I pray to be like Abigail who understood how to show respect and build a man's confidence up with her words and actions. She was wise.

I pray to be like Deborah who knew how to dance and praise you even in the midst of difficult circumstances.

I desire to be like Rachel who had a servant's heart.

I long to be like the Shunammite woman who was a great lover and the "favorite" of the King.

I desire character and perseverance like Hannah who pursued what she longed for and did not give up.

I want to be like Ruth who was faithful and loyal and considered a noble woman who captivated the heart of a kinsman redeemer and received blessings.

I want to be found highly favored like Mary who's calling impacted the entire world.

Make me and mold me to be a woman after your heart...A woman of virtue, wisdom, and grace. A woman who walks in her destiny and purpose. A woman who is remembered long after I am gone. That I leave a lasting legacy.

In Jesus' name, Amen

Brigitte Bartley

www.brittebartley.com



The Beginning of Meher Baba's Avataric Period

by Michael Schall, Meherabad

Meher Baba has described the Avatar (the periodic descent of God in human form) and the associated Avataric period in His discourses (5): "Avataric periods are like the spring-tide of creation. They bring a new release of power, a new awakening of consciousness, a new experience of life—not merely for a few, but for all." The definition of Avataric period was given by Baba (6): "The Avataric period... is of one hundred years' duration after the Manifestation of the Avatar on earth... The 100 years after the Manifestation of the Avatar is the period encompassing the direct living and personal radiation of the Avatar."

Bal Natu has given much thought to the timing of the start-up of the current Avataric period. As Bal wrote in his book *Samadhi – Star of Infinity* (6): "Meher Baba began functioning as the Avatar and Head of the spiritual hierarchy from either December 1921 or January 1922, when Shri Upasni Maharaj folded his hands before Merwan, saying, 'Merwan, You are Adi Shakti. You are the Avatar!' Yet, this does not seem like the public manifestation of the Avatar, for the simple reason that Baba had disclosed His status to only a few, but did not publicly declare Himself to be the Avatar to the world. Thinking about this disparity between Maharaj's explicit declaration and Baba's public reticence has helped clarify in my mind my understanding of Baba's public manifestation."

"There are many facets implied in the word manifestation. Most people, I think, when they refer to Baba's manifestation are referring to His Universal Manifestation. I hasten to admit at the outset that I do not know what Baba meant by that particular term.... There are other aspects of Baba's manifestation too. There is a personal manifestation which occurs within one's heart when a person recognizes Baba as the Ancient One, the Eternal

Beloved. Baba manifests in a unique way within each one... A God-realized soul, a saint, a lover, and an ordinary devotee all experience and reflect Baba's manifestation differently. This makes it very difficult to try and pinpoint when Baba's manifestation occurs, because it unfolds in innumerable ways.

"Therefore, in this book, I am limiting myself to trying to determine when Baba manifested publicly as the Avatar... To His close ones, in both the East and West, Baba disclosed His Avatarhood in a variety of ways, but to the public, Baba was generally referred to as a Perfect Master or Sadguru.... In the early '50s, Baba began giving more public hints about His status, as in the message "The Highest of the High," which was given in Dehra Dun in 1953. But the date that seems to me to symbolize Meher Baba's public declaration of Avatarhood is February 10, 1954..." when Baba publicly declared His Avatarhood to His devotees in Mehersthan, Hamirpur (India).

We have to concede the logic of Bal's proposition. However, if we contrast and compare Baba's declaration of His Messiahship (i.e., Avatarhood) to Western journalist Paul Brunton during His Panchvati Cave Seclusion at Meherabad, on Nov. 23, 1930 (2), we might tentatively arrive at a much earlier date. Paul's interview includes what Prof. Rathore calls "the first-ever and most complete statement by Baba on His mission as the Avatar of the Age" (7). This interview itself might be called a "public statement", in the sense that the purpose of Paul's interview was to write a book for the Western public. Paul's book "A Search in Secret India" has been in print continuously since it was first published in May 1934, and it has often been used as a text in religious courses in the West (2). Baba told Brunton: "Go to the West as my representative. Spread my name as that of the coming Divine Messenger... I will help you to render service to me in the West." Might this order have been the actual start-up of Meher Baba's Avataric manifestation?

In support of the possibility of an earlier timing estimate we quote from a "Meher League" information page probably written by C.V. Sampath Aiyangar, published in The Meher Gazette in Dec. 1930 (1): "In this Godless age an Avatar is absolutely necessary to tell us how we should shape our lives and conduct our activities. We have in our beloved Babaji such a living Avatar. We believe that He is so. Others may or may not believe it. But, every one, who has come in contact with Him must admit that He is the visible embodiment of Divine Love."

The timing of 1930 as the possible start of the Avataric period may be additionally corroborated by a remarkable statement made by Baba in 1955, as recorded in Bal Natu's book (6): "In 1954, Baba led a large group of His lovers up the Hill to His future resting place and instructed them to bow down at the threshold. The bare crypt inside and the steps leading down into it were clearly visible. One day during the Sahavas of 1955, Baba allowed His lovers to come inside and circumbulate the crypt; Baba Himself stood silently inside the structure for some time, in the left rear corner. After Baba came out, He began an informal conversation with the group of His lovers gathered on the Hill, during which He conveyed that after a period of seventy-five years, this little structure would be the center of world pilgrimage." It is recorded in Lord Meher (4) that Baba stated during the 1955 Sahavas, that "It is your great fortune that I myself brought you to my last resting-place. After 60 years [i.e., following Baba's interment in Feb. 1969], this place will be a world center of pilgrimage." These accounts appear to bracket 2029 or 2030, the presumptive approximate end of the 100-year Avataric period.

A slightly different date is obtained if we consider Baba's "planting of the seed" of His Manifestation (approx. 7 months after the Panchvati Cave Seclusion, between 7 and 17 June 1931) as the actual start of the Avataric period. Baba said, "The seed of the tree of My Universal Manifestation is planted in Mashhad, Iran, from where it will grow and spread, ultimately covering the whole world." (4,8)

Let's say for the sake of speculation that 1930 (or 1931) was the start of the Avataric period, and the end is accordingly 2030 (or 2031). It was (in Bal Natu's version) declared by Meher Baba in 1955 that the world religious consciousness will shift its primary center of focus to Meherabad at or by this time. We might further speculate that some major world event would occur to create such a shift. Such an event might speculatively be the breaking of His Silence, and His "Universal Manifestation."

Much has been written on the subject of Meher Baba's Manifestation, in its various aspects. Bhau's Avatar of the Age Meher Baba Manifesting (written at Baba's request) provides his elucidation of this topic (3). There may be as many disparate opinions on this subject as there are Baba-lovers - it seems that Baba has left the matter open to individual interpretation. We just present the foregoing for whatever it may be worth to those interested.



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“All that failing means is ‘not knowing.’”

~ Dream Guide (to Laurent Weichberger on Sept. 5, 2019)





Marla Faith, author and artist, has sent us more artwork. Her work may be viewed on her website,

www.marlafaith.com

OmPoint used a piece of Marla's on the cover of OmPoint issue #22, Fall 2018, which was a preliminary sketch for the painting to the left.

Top, "Tryptich"

Bottom "Lamentation"

Next page

Top: "You Are My Love"

Left "Meher Baba with Lucky"

Right "Heartbeat"





By your Love I am
drawn through the maze of Karma—
release all that's passed.

In this paradox
allow the mystery to be—
no solving of Love!

Cast off all image.
Who you are, you cannot see—
being, not seeing!

Keep smiling at me,
Beloved, please. It keeps me
hanging on Your line!



Irma Sheppard

AVATAR MEHER BABA, GOD SPEAKS, AND THE WISDOM OF KABBALAH

By Laurent Weichberger
(Wilmington NC ~ December 23, 2019)

Introduction

My grandmother Elizabeth, was a German Jew from Berlin. Her father, Fritz Meyer, got them all out of Germany, in 1939, right before the Holocaust, by God's Grace. My grandmother's uncle, Mr. Otto Meyerhof, won a Nobel Prize in "Physiology or Medicine" in 1922.[1]

Because my mother is Jewish, by Jewish law I am also Jewish. However, I was not raised Jewish, for my mother didn't reveal this part of my ancestry to me until I was a teenager. When I did find out, I actually had no idea what this meant. I eventually found a conservative synagogue in New York City, shortly after I came to Baba. I attended services to better understand what it means to be Jewish. My darling daughter Aspen asked me to add more about why learning about my Jewish heritage is significant.

I think that finding out I was Jewish at an age after a young man traditionally has a "bar mitzvah," or Jewish coming of age ceremony, made me want to know what this label, "Jewish," means to the world, and then how I would feel about that meaning. What I discovered with the Rabbi was that the Jewish culture, religion, and understanding are profound, ancient, and in the modern world still highly relevant, in that the Jewish values still provide a guiding light to so many wondrous and sincere souls. I so happened that I had already found Baba (or Baba had found me), so this added understanding just deepened my relationship with Avatar Meher Baba.



I studied with the Rabbi there, and I learned a lot. We would sit in classes with the Rabbi at the Synagogue. It was a sea of white haired old ladies and me. The Rabbi liked me, I could tell, and I learned some Hebrew, and we would read through the Torah (the “Old Testament” of the Bible) and he would explain it to us, and we would discuss it. I love what I was learning.

Later I found out about Kabbalah, the mystical side of Judaism. I read that Kabbalists feel you need to be forty years old to begin the study of Kabbalah and I decided to honor this. I have been studying Kabbalah for eleven years now.

What is the Kabbalah?

The Kabbalah is many things to many people. At its heart, it is a mystical understanding of the Divine. In fact, having been in the Meher Baba community since 1986, 33 years now, I can say that Kabbalah and Sufism are the two paths I have experienced which are closest to what Meher Baba continually shares about in his literature. Naturally in *God Speaks* Baba also uses Vedantic (Hindu) terms, as well as Christian terms, however the sentiments of Kabbalah seem incredibly close to what Baba has shared.

There are many sources of Kabbalah, including books, and teachings going back hundreds of years, but for the purpose of this article I will focus on what I have found in the book: *The Essential Kabbalah, the Heart of Jewish Mysticism*, by Daniel C. Matt. The best known writing of the Kabbalah is a book titled: *The Zohar*. One of the most common symbols of Kabbalah is known as The Ten Sefirot, or the tree of life, which we see here below:

What is *God Speaks*?

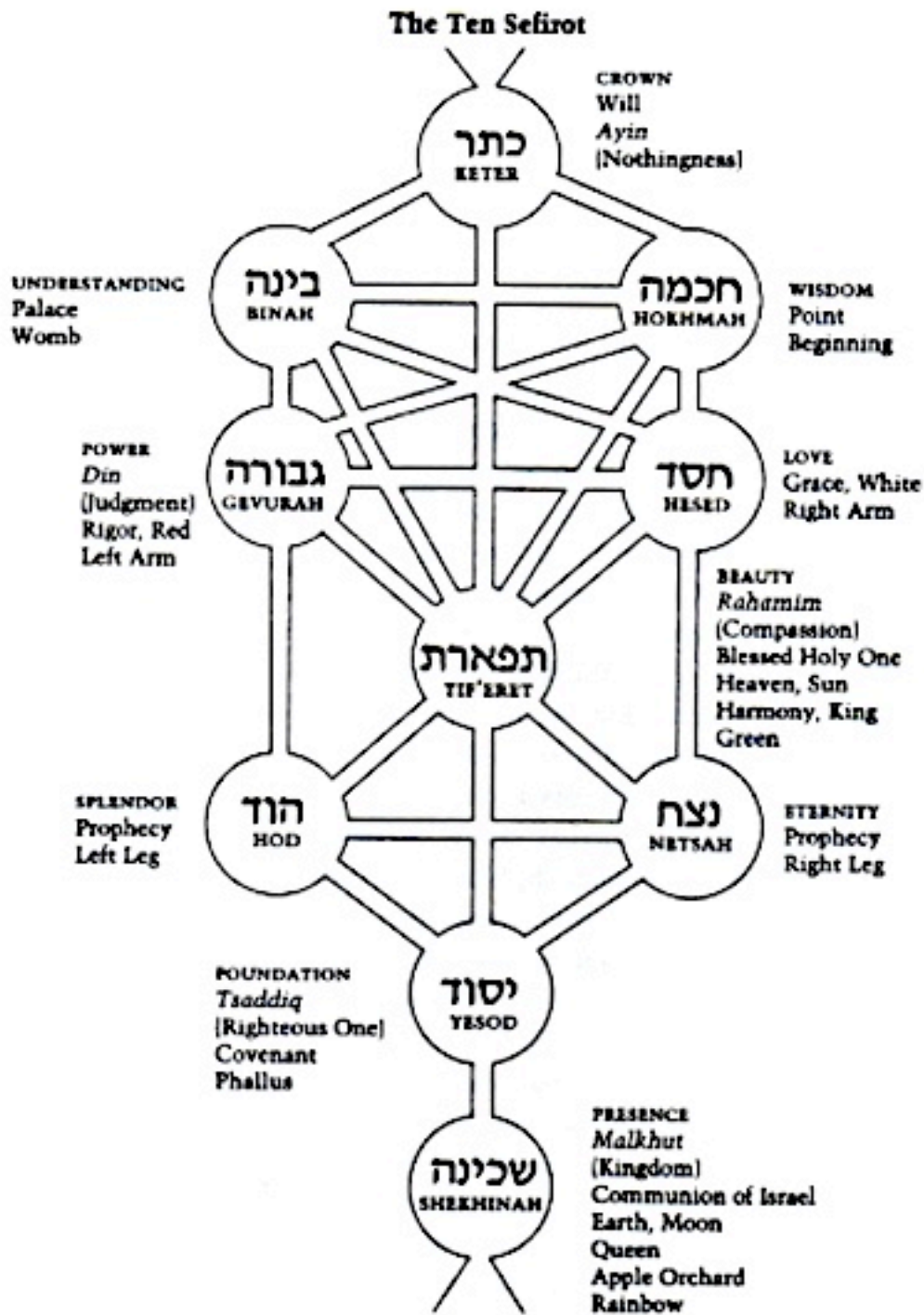
Avatar Meher Baba’s seminal book is *God Speaks*. He wrote it by dictation from his alphabet board to his chief male disciple, Eruch Jessawala. Eruch later explained he took the notes from dictation, and wrote

the detailed English version in his room, with his suitcase as a desk. This was then brought back to Baba and read out for corrections and additions. Baba said that nothing like *God Speaks* had ever been written, and that it was the most important book in the world. No doubt, as humanity awakens to the divinity of Avatar Meher Baba, more and more people will read and understand what Meher Baba has shared there. For the purposes of this article, I aim to bridge the ancient wisdom of Kabbalah with modern wisdom of Meher Baba, and show how they are naturally complementary. As we will see, Baba’s book focuses on the story of the soul’s journey in and through Ten States of God, and it is my firm belief that the Jewish mystics will naturally flow from their old way of looking at all of this, into the new way Baba has shared, as they are so incredibly similar.

How are the two wisdom traditions related?

Daniel Matt, a professor at the California Theological Union, has shared in his introduction that the Hebrew word Kabbalah means “receiving” or “that which has been received.”[2] From the point of view of spiritual literature and wisdom, both what we have in the Kabbalah literature, and what we have from Meher Baba are received, in that Baba’s wisdom was received by him in his state of God-realization as the Avatar, and the Kabbalah was received by the Jewish mystics, and shared by them from teacher to student through the ages. The Avatar must be “unveiled” by the five perfect masters of the age, to experience His own inherent divinity. During this process he actually becomes Infinite Knowledge, Infinite Power, and Infinite Bliss.

The earliest form of Kabbalah seems to have started around the third century C.E. based on a scripture from Palestine, known as the *Sefer Yetsirah*, or the Book of Creation. Baba’s book *God Speaks* has as a thesis on the theme of Creation and its purpose. There are many more parallels as we shall discover.



Comparing and Contrasting:

The Tree of Life, and its ten sefirot (or “emanations”) are meant to be understood from the top down, and in a certain order, as follows. According to Matt, the first three sefirot together give birth (thus the “womb” metaphor) to the remaining seven sefirot. The first three are also considered the head. Note the zig-zag path of the unfolding of the sefirot:

1. Ayin - Nothingness, or alternatively Keter which is translated to crown.
2. Hokhmah- Wisdom or alternatively beginning.
3. Binah - Understanding or also the Womb.
4. Hesed - Love, or Grace. The right arm.
5. Gevurah- Power or Judgement. The left arm.
6. Tif'eret - Beauty, Compassion, Heaven and Harmony. The center.
7. Netsah - Eternity or Prophecy. The right leg.
8. Hod - Splendor and also Prophecy. The left leg.
9. Yesod - Foundation, and also “Tsaddiq” meaning Righteous. This sefirah is also associated with the penis, or procreation.
10. Malkhut - Kingdom, also known as “Shekhinah,” the Presence. This presence is known as female. In this sense the Shekhinah is trying to unite with the Tif'eret above, and has to go through Yesod to get there.

In Meher Baba's Ten States of God, we have these states[3]:

1. **God in the Beyond-Beyond.**
2. **God in the Beyond.**
3. **God as the Emanator, Sustainer, and Dissolver of Creation.**
4. **God as an embodied soul.**
5. **God as a soul moving through evolution of forms.**
6. **God as soul reincarnating human form.**
7. **God as a spiritually advanced soul.**
8. **A soul who arrives at purification of consciousness.**
9. **A soul reunited with the Divine consciousness.**
10. **Conscious action of a Divine soul as a perfect master.**

1. **God in the Beyond-Beyond.** In this state Baba, indicates, all we can say is "God Is." There is no Creation, as this state is the primordial state of God which existed before the Creation emerged. If we compare this to Ayin in Kabbalah, we can see that Ayin is about nothingness. Interestingly, Baba said in the Beyond-Beyond state of God there was nothing, only God, no creation, and no consciousness. Just infinitely unconscious being, as if in sound sleep.

2. **God in the Beyond.** Here consciousness is latent. This is the formless infinite unconscious state which Jews call "YHWH" or "Ein Sof." Sometimes this is known as the "I am that I am" state, which is how God self identified when asked by Moses, "Who shall I say sends me?" This is what Muslims have named "Allah," and the Hindus refer to as "Paramatma." Christians refer to this state as "God, the Father." It is here, according to Baba, that the Whim first emerged as God's desire to know itself consciously, and Baba said this Whim can be expressed as the question, "Who am I?" Interestingly, Matt says of the sefirah Binah, "She is called Who, the meditative question, 'Who am I?'"[4]

3. **God as the Emanator, Sustainer, and Dissolver of Creation.** The Hindus call these states respectively, "Brahma, the Creator; Vishnu, the Preserver; and Mahesh, or Shiva the Destroyer (or dissolver)." In God Speaks, Baba explained that these roles are played by Archangels and he names them. This state three can be compared to the sefirah, "Binah," as the womb, or creation point. The Jews call this state "Elohim," The Creator. In God Speaks, in state four we have God as an embodied soul. That state of God enters the Creation. God says, "This Creation is here for Me to experience..." God enters the Creation, and according to Baba, the first forms that God inhabits in Creation are gaseous forms. The first seven gaseous forms are the beginning of evolution, and that the seventh gaseous form is hydrogen. Apparently the first six of those seven are beyond normal human comprehension. But that state of God uses these states of matter to experience creation. It is difficult to trace the entering of God as soul into His own Creation, back to the Kabbalah, but suffice it to say, Meher Baba's explanation is that the infinitely unconscious soul enters Creation, to gain consciousness of its own divinity. It must also return to God through gaining experience in Creation, until ultimately it turns, at the human form, and traverses consciously all the layers of existence, material, energetic, and mental until it arrives at the original infinite state consciously. The fact that the Kabbalah has made an anthropomorphic layer in the Ten Sefirot is fascinating. In Baba's cosmology, all life is moving towards the human experience so that it can turn the awareness back to the divine, and reunite as a whole and complete human with the divine nature within.

Meher Baba's state five is **God as a soul moving through evolution of forms**. After gas comes the kingdoms of stone and metal, then vegetable, worm, fish, bird, animal, and finally human. When comparing this to the wisdom of Kabbalah, we read that Kabbalah is non-dual. When we say non-dual, we mean that all of the sefirot are divine emanations of the one God, not a polytheistic ten gods. In fact, all of these emanations are aspects which exist eternally and in the present moment. It is like facets of a jewel, or aspects of the human body. One part of the body doesn't exist independently of another part, and together it makes a whole. In this sense, the Kabbalist knows that all that lives is an aspect of the divine. Meher Baba says the same thing.

Meher Baba is also non-dual, in that from his perspective all that lives is a manifestation of the Divine, the soul and God are identical, there is simply a difference in consciousness and awareness. Thus the Kabbalist says: "Do not say, 'This is a stone and not God.'... All existence is God, and the stone is a thing pervaded by divinity." [5]

In *God Speaks*, state six is the **soul as a reincarnating human**. Remember this is not a different God from the earlier states, it is just a different experience that same God is having. As the philosopher said, "We are not human beings having a spiritual experience, we are spiritual beings having a human experience." So here God has become a human being, but now there are things to unlearn. There is a lot of baggage, acquired obtained in the subhuman forms, which must be unburdened. There are feelings and thoughts that just are not true such as lust, greed and anger. Any experience other than the divine experience is not the truth. This all must be purified. This purification occurs naturally in the spiritual process of reincarnation. During this process, individuals can move closer and closer to the Truth of who they really are. Who are they? They're all God, but a human being in the state of reincarnation does not experience being God. Comparing to the sixth sefirah, Tif'eret, which is the trunk of the human body, and which is compassion, and beauty, and heaven. Humans have a capacity for the divine (angelic) qualities, which the lower kingdoms do not have. Humans can aspire to generosity, love, and tolerance, even forgiveness. These are divine qualities.

The seventh state of God in *God Speaks* is the **state of a spiritually advanced soul**, who is more pure than the average human being. Such a soul experiences being closer to the Divine Presence within themselves. The God within is now clearer to them than it is to the ordinary human being, and this experience has them behaving in a more saintly manner. According to Meher Baba, Moses the Prophet was on the 6th plane of consciousness, as a highly advanced soul.

State eight is the state of **one who arrives at purification of consciousness**, where there is no feeling of separation from God, there is no "I" and "thou," no lover and Beloved, there is only One. Total complete Oneness with God is experienced, Perfection. God IS but Creation is not, and the I am God state is experienced -- that one is called "God as Divinely Absorbed."

That experience of being one with God, according to Meher Baba, means that you experience that you are God, and that the Creation is really non-existent. In other words, it means that the Creation existed to bring you to the point where you say, "Oh, I'm God." And when you have that experience, the Creation no longer has substance, it no longer has meaning or value for you. Because you become everything, the Creation vanishes as nothing. With a divinely absorbed person — "God as Divinely Absorbed" — they do not experience the Creation, and according to Baba, that person usually drops their physical body (dies) after three days. The body falls away. Why? Because the human form no longer serves any purpose. The purpose for the human form has been served when the consciousness becomes one with God. In Kabbalah, sefirah eight is "Hod" or Splendor. Aspen has encouraged me to share more about how splendor relates its counterpart in *God Speaks*. Two things come to mind. While Baba sel-

dom used the word “splendor,” he did use a related word frequently, “effulgence.” This effulgence is the experience of the light of God, first in the seventh state (in the Ten States of God) of the spiritually advanced soul on the sixth plane, who sees God everywhere and in everything. And then as the soul who becomes one with that divine light, that results ultimately in the living Perfect Master. In Baba’s explanations, once one has the good fortune of coming into contact with a living spiritual master, it is spiritually important to obey the master’s instructions. About this state of the master, Baba said, “The overflowing radiance of the Master’s halo and the effulgence of his purity and compassion are mainly responsible for creating in the pupil an unswerving faith which prepares him to follow the Master’s orders...”[6]

The ninth sefirah is “Yesod” which is procreation, and foundation, and righteousness. In Baba’s ten states, the ninth state of God is related to the eighth. As we saw in the eighth, the soul has reunited consciously with God to experience the infinite bliss of union with the Divine. According to Meher Baba not all souls have the same destiny. Some are actually destined to return from the exalted state of Self-Realization to the consciousness of Creation, and the souls in creation, and to render spiritual help. The work of the Avatar and spiritual masters, is to help the world spiritually by guiding them to become one with God consciously.

They do come back, a journey of return to Creation consciousness, with their transcendent God consciousness intact — they continually experience being one with God. Once they return into the Creation, they start saying things similar to what a Prophet or Avatar may express, yet they may not gather a following or lots of disciples. To a select few which they are destined to help they disclose: “I am now one with God. You wanted that? Well come over here, I’ll help you. I’ll make you one with God, but you have to do exactly what I say, because I just did it. So if you want that, I will give it to you directly.” What happens is, somebody becomes God consciously, and when they come back, if their destiny is to help one, or maybe two people to achieve that, they’re known as a “Liber-

ated Incarnate Soul.” They have what Hindus call “Moksha,” or liberation, because they are literally liberated from the bondage of reincarnation and karma. They can help one or two people attain that state, and they don’t normally attain to public prominence. The Hindu Saint, Muktabai, the sister of the Perfect Master Jyaneashwar, is a great example of a liberated soul.

The tenth sefirah is “Shekhinah” the female divine aspect which desires union with the source This is also known as “Malkhut” which means Kingdom. In Meher Baba’s cosmology this tenth state of God is the pinnacle of existence, when man becomes united with Beloved God. Jesus Christ gave us the Sermon on the Mount, and this tenth state of God is the fulfilment of this New Testament scripture, (Matthew 6:10) which reads, “Thy kingdom come, Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven.” The Kingdom of Heaven, to which Jesus refers, exists within each one. This tenth state of God is the human being who not only realizes this kingdom of divinity within but uses it as a Perfect Master to help the world.

This one is honored as a Spiritual Master. They have a circle of disciples. They make a lasting spiritual impact. We call this state as either a “God- Man,” or a “Man-God.” The difference is that a Man-God goes through the evolutionary process, arriving at Oneness and then comes back down. The Man-God has taken this huge journey from gas to stone/metal through the evolutionary process, up to human form, then traversing the inner planes and then comes back.

The God-Man, on the other hand, is the Avatar, the Christ, the Prophet. This is the most unusual case where the living Perfect Masters of the time bring the formless infinite God directly into a male human form. The living masters around Buddha brought Siddhartha down into form. The living masters around Jesus, such as St. John the Baptist, brought him down into form. The living masters around

Mohammed, and around Krishna, all these God-men were brought into form to live as the world Prophet, the Avatar, the Christ.

When we say brought into form, it means that while the mother carried the fetus to term and all that naturally happens still happens, the soul which incarnates in that form is brought there by the Perfect Masters of that age. The God-Man is an individual whom all of humanity comes to know and respect on some level. He becomes a household name. In our wisdom tradition, Meher Baba is the Avatar of this age, and all the faiths of the world will come to know this, and embrace Him in their own way.

All I have shared here is not based on my personal experience, but on a combination of what I have gathered from Meher Baba over the last thirty plus years of following Him, and also my study of God Speak and Kabbalah.

At one point, I showed the diagram of The Ten Sefirot to my lovely wife, Vanessa, and she said that it was a diagram of the return journey of the soul, from the material world, back to God through the seven planes of consciousness ending in Self-Realization. She said, “It just looks like that to me, there is a progression.”

Conclusion

Much of ancient mysticism is shrouded in cryptic language, and puzzling associations. The modern mysticism of Avatar Meher Baba is lucid, and clear, and much more straightforward. He states the journey of the soul from the unconscious infinite God through the Creation and into the human being which rises through the planes of consciousness. The goal of all life, according to Meher Baba is for the human being to consciously arrive at union with God. It is demystified, and abundantly practical and clear. May all souls seeking wisdom arrive at this state as soon as possible, this is my prayer for one and all.

Om. Shalom. Salaam. Peace.

Endnotes:

1. See: <https://www.nobelprize.org/prizes/medicine/1922/meyerhof/biographical/>
2. The Essential Kabbalah, the Heart of Jewish Mysticism, by Daniel C. Matt. (Edison: Castle Books, 1997), Introduction, p. 1. [hereafter “EK”]
3. Some of this material was originally published in Celebrating Divine Presence: Journeys into God, by L. Weichberger, Y. Weintraub, et al (London: Companion Books, 2008)
4. Ibid EK, “The Sefirot,” p. 11. See also: The Bible, “Exodus,” 3:14.
5. Ibid EK, “Ein Sof: God as Infinity,” p. 24.
6. Discourses, by Meher Baba, The Removal of Sanskaras: III (volume I, p. 89), here: <https://discoursesbymeherbaba.org/v1-89.php>

HELD SACRED

What else?

Driven by this question and impelled by a sense of continuity,
Having searched and researched all known horizons only to put
aside the wide-angle view and explore instead vistas of infinity
revealed through the lens of inner vision...

What more?

Numbers, words and music spiral, ready to take form;
Architecture, astro-physics waiting to be born,
Layered shadows of the real,
Shadows of such beauty we become utterly enthralled.

Our search is never ending

What else, what more, what other transformations?

Impelled by "*the ache of something unrealised*", certain moments occur when the finite "*transcends its limitations in the full knowledge of its really being the revelation of the infinite*"

And when awareness of the divinity within us all,
Throws light on a kernel of truth.

How sacred is the living inspiration!

That which can know and name oneness

And illuminate understanding of life itself,

This being alive and at one with an awareness

Expressed beyond mind or measurement

And sensed ultimately

In glimpses of infinite existence and eternal being

That give experience of God -

Such is the sanctity of life.

(italics indicate quote from Meher Baba's Discourses)

SARAH MCNEILL

Poem for Baba

Come in dear Baba
Join me at church
You are in the best company
I think of you as I pray
I think of you as I sing hymns to
God and Jesus
The time we share here means
To love others
People with open hearts
Saying “peace be with you” and shake your hand
You have guided me to enter this
Holy place
I will take a moment
To give thanks
For the love
That surrounds me

— Anne Weichberger



The Book

An Interview with Meherwan Jessawala

by Don E. Stevens and Laurent Weichberger

August 9, 2003, Meherazad, India

This document contains a transcript of an interview conducted by Don E. Stevens and Laurent Weichberger of Meherwan Jessawala (Eruch Jessawala's brother) at Meherazad, India on Saturday August 9 2003. Herein we use "..." when we either do not understand what is said, or there is noise, or a pause, or someone suddenly interrupts the current speaker. We use curly braces {like this to describe something going on in the room, or a problem, or issues about the environment, or what we remember about what was being said}. We use square brackets [like this] for what we think some word(s) might be, but are not quite sure because it is hard to hear precisely what was said on the tape. Laurent asked Meherwan, that same day of the interview, if he could use the material he recorded for an article or something. Meherwan basically said Laurent could do whatever he wants with the material. On April 23, 2005, the transcript below was sent to Meherwan, and he returned it on April 28 with minor corrections. Thank you, Meherwan. When we mention "The Book" we refer to that book which Meher Baba wrote by his own hand in the 1920s at Meherabad, India and which is also sometimes called, "The Missing Book."

The following is a foreword for this article written by Don Stevens on January 19, 2005:

There are several characteristics of Baba which are central to his handling of material he had given out for public consumption and which must underlie judgments passed on documents that are certain to be found from time to time:

1- Baba was not in the slightest forgetful of what he had given out, nor forgetful of what he had done with each work and where he had placed it.

2- Baba knew even long in advance what he intended to do with each work he had given out.

3- When I asked him at Murshida Duce's request if he would entrust us with editing and publishing The Book, he had Eruch bring it out of a chest in Eruch's bungalow at Meherazad where we were sitting at the time and show the wrapped package to me. He indicated that this was the work in question, and he said that this was not the time for its editing and publication. "Perhaps sometime in the future," were his exact words.

4- It is unthinkable to me that both Mani and then Eruch would allow a work to sit for years without attention which from their own knowledge might conceivably be The

Book. Eruch's long hesitation about doing anything with the document found among Mani's papers is sure evidence to me that he knew there was no possibility that it could be the missing Book, nor even likely to be anything that Baba had forgotten about and which should be brought forth.

Now for the transcript itself:

PART ONE:

{The beginning of the interview with Meherwan Jessawala covered certain aspects of the editing of the *Discourses* that resulted in its Seventh Edition. We start the transcript now where the subject shifts to the finding and editing of the work that is being published by Sheriar Foundation as *Infinite Intelligence*.}

Don E. Stevens (DES): Now you are busy, I understand, you and Ward Parks... Meherwan Jessawala (MJ): Yeah.

DES: And somebody else I think from somewhere up north in India, working on the editing of that manuscript that was found, I think after Mani passed on. {Note: This is not correct, the manuscript was found in 1969, shortly after Baba passed away, as we will hear soon from Meherwan}

MJ: Now... the final editing has been done, it will be titled *Infinite Intelligence*... I have given the whole history of how these... this work fell into our hands.

DES: Would you give it again?

MJ: I'll give you... And it's there... It's all there now, we have made it absolutely transparent, the whole book, and the thing was that after Baba dropped his body, and the Mandali had gone to Guruprasad, for the Great Darshan that was to follow, and when they returned from all that and were settled in Meherazad, they had some time with them, Eruch was rummaging in the backside go-down where its now become a grain go-down {note: a "go-down" is an Indian term for a storage out-building}

DES: Uh-huh.

MJ: It was used for Baba's literature and all those things were stored there in cupboards and trunks.

DES: You say in Pune?

MJ: In Meherazad.

DES: In Meherazad?

MJ: That's correct. In the backside building...

LW: {to Don} Do you understand the context here?

DES: Yes, right.

MJ: This is in 1969.

DES: Yes, right.

MJ: Sometime in the...

DES: Just after the...

MJ: Darshan.

DES: Darshan, right.

MJ: So, he saw this pile of things... {loud noise} went through personally, and Bal Natu had come in the meantime. His usual vacation... So Eruch tells Bal, "Help me. See if there is anything which is very important in all this, and if you find some certain such things bring it to me." There were a lot of things like stacks of magazines and other things...

DES: Things mixed up...

MJ: So Bal was going through all this, and in that he happened to come across a bag which I recollect was *[in a bag, in]* a leather bag, and he opened the thing and just saw the thing, it was a handwritten manuscript, very neatly written. There was no beginning, no authorship, just somebody had done it in a very neat handwriting.

Laurent Weichberger (LW): Not Meher Baba's handwriting?

MJ: No, no, definitely not... So, that was there. And he found this to be very important. DES : Um-hmm.

MJ : So he collected all that and brought it over to Eruch. So Eruch said, "Alright," and he just cursorily glanced through it and then kept it because pilgrims had started coming and he was very busy. In the meantime, I came over, because every year, on Baba's birthday, I used to come here for a month. Baba had asked me to do that. So I kept up that practice. So it was, I think it was 1970, January or something that I would come. So I had come then. Or it may be 1971, I don't recollect. When I came one day Eruch he says, "Come in." So he took me into his cabin and said, "Meherwan, have a look at this.

These are things that we have found. Just have a look. Do you think it is that book that those people are beating our heads about?" Because...

DES: Um-hmm.

LW: The Missing Book.

MJ: The Missing Book. Because there was a [hue-and-cry] that, "What has happened?" and that, "the Mandali are sitting there and they don't want to bring this out," and there was quite a lot of hub-bub going on.

LW: Are you saying then that in 1971...

MJ : Probably in 1970 or 71...

LW: But at that date, Eruch did NOT know where that missing book was?

MJ: No.

LW: Hmm.

MJ: Nobody knows.

DES: May, well... I must put quickly in here so you know...

MJ: Yes

DES: ...exactly where I came into the picture, with Eruch, on this. I think it was the day after I arrived, in other words two days after Baba dropped the body. I arrived the first day after, and we had a little bit of quiet time, there were not too many people from the West. The people from India hadn't formed a line yet, so it was quiet, and I suddenly thought – Good heavens, now certainly it's time for The Book

to be brought out and edited and put into print. So I said this to Eruch, and he said, "Good Lord, Don, you're right. It is the time." And he said, "The book is in a safe deposit box in Bombay. And Elizabeth Patterson has the key to it." And said, "You'll be going back to America. As soon as you arrive will you telephone to Elizabeth Patterson and say, 'Elizabeth, will you arrange for the key to be brought over because we must get it out of the safe deposit box, in the bank, in Bombay.'" I telephoned Elizabeth Patterson as soon as I got there, I knew Elizabeth well, and Elizabeth said, "Don, it is not like that, I had the key, but Baba sent a message to me to give to the key to..." and she said, "I cannot remember who it was, but I gave the person designated by Baba the key, and they went to the safe deposit box and we closed out the box, so I don't know where the book is." And when I told this to Eruch, immediately, Eruch says, "Good Lord, now we've lost the book." This is the story, straight from Eruch.

MJ: [inaudible on tape]

DES: Okay, you tell the sequel now, we are putting the story together.

MJ: What happened is, that Eruch then... when this happened, that was in the Central Bank of India locker. They were able to locate the particulars of the locker...

DES: Yes.

MJ: And fortunately one of the Baba-lovers was a big officer in the bank.

DES: Um-hmm.

MJ: So, it was first trying to be located what happened to the locker. And he gave information that on such-and-such a day, our... whatever, that locker was operated, and the contents were removed, and the locker was closed and handed back to the bank.

DES : And he did not know who the person was who came?

MJ: I think they knew, because the name gets registered there... And it was Ramjoo. LW: Abdulla?

MJ: Ramjoo Abdulla.

MJ: So...

DES: Then what happened to Ramjoo?!

MJ: I will tell you that. So what happened is that Baba was in Bombay, and Baba was staying in Nariman's house, I think it was I don't know which year it was, sometime in the 60s I think, and Baba had come to Bombay for Nariman's birthday so-called celebration...

DES: Um-hmm.

MJ: He went to Bombay usually to contact Masts. So Baba was on one of those visits to Bombay, and whenever he went there he stayed in Nariman's house. So this is what Perviz Talati tells me.

DES: Um-hmm.

MJ: Perviz, by the way, is here so you can get the story directly from her, because she told us this.

DES: Yeah, we will try to do that.

MJ: Do you know Perviz Talati?

DES: I've met her.

MJ: She says that one day Ramjoo Abdulla came along. Whenever Ramjoo came to Bombay, he would

go and stay in their house in Bombay, he was very close to the family. From the time of Perviz's father, Nawal, in the days in Nasik, so they were very old friends, and Ramjoo, whenever he went to Bombay would stay at Dina Talati's (was the wife of Nawal, Nawal's wife).

DES: Um-hmm.

MJ: Anyway, so... she said that one of these occasions, Ramjoo came along to Bombay, and Ramjoo stayed in their house, as usual. Then one day he went out from there, and when he returned with a big sort of bundle. And he put it under his pillow.

DES: Baba had Eruch show me that several years before when we were in Eruch's shack, and Eruch went to a big wooden box and took it out. It wasn't a big bundle it was a rather small one, tied with string, so... {Don shows with his hands the size of the bundle that Baba showed him} maybe so long...

MJ: Yeah, yeah. So why didn't you grab it and just run away with it!

DES & LW: {loud laughter}

DES: Baba said, "The time is not now, perhaps in the future." That was the end of the story. I saw the bundle.

MJ: Oh, you did!

DES: Yes!

MJ: We were not even allowed to look at it.

DES: Well that was the size of that bundle and it's important.

MJ: Alright, well you are better know of it... anyway, so Ramjoo got this thing out and... He brought this bundle, and he had kept it under his pillow. It was evening time, and Perviz's mother [Dina] and Perviz herself they came and they were talking with Ramjoo. Then it was time to retire. So they said, "Ramjoo, why do you keep that bundle there under your pillow? It should be very uncomfortable. Why not put it on..." and he says, "No, no, it is better left here. I don't mind it, just leave it there." That's all he said to them. So they didn't pursue the matter. Next day a car came along, this is what she says, it was Nariman's car. And he... Ramjoo got in the car to go to see Baba. Baba was there, you follow?

DES: Yes. Um-hmmm.

MJ: For Nariman... {inaudible on tape}

DES: But all of this is before, though, it was taken out of the locked safe deposit box... LW: No.

DES: ...in Bombay.

LW: No Don...

MJ: Just listen!

DES: Yes, but you said Baba... he was there to visit Baba... Oh you mean to visit Baba's grave, or what?

LW: No, no, no...

MJ: No, no, this was when Baba was visiting Nariman's house...

DES: Yes.

MJ: Baba was at Nariman's place. And he had sent for Ramjoo.

DES: Yeah, but I've got to get one thing straight. I thought you were telling me that the banker's records said that it was Ramjoo Abdulla that took the package under Baba's instructions, out of the bank.

MJ: That's what we presume.

DES: Yes.

MJ: Because what follows I will tell you...

DES: Go ahead.

MJ: So this is what happened, Perviz tells me that, that night Ramjoo slept with that package under his pillow...

DES: under his pillow, next day goes in the car...

MJ: Next day, he takes that bundle along, Baba has sent a car for him, he goes and visits Baba. And, after he had met Baba he comes back and there is no bundle in his hand. DES: Hmmm.

MJ: But in... during that... later on, on that day, he tells Perviz and Dina Talati, "Do you know what that package was?" They said, "No." {then Ramjoo replies} "Well it was The Book," that's what he said.

DES: And he had delivered that to Baba...

MJ: And this is what happened, he said, "I have delivered it to Baba." {inaudible further comment from Meherwan}

LW: What year was that?

MJ: {Meherwan sort of inaudible, then} I don't remember...

LW: What year did Ramjoo pass away? MJ: He passed away in '66...

LW: Okay, so Don...

DES: Umm?

LW: Do you understand this?

DES: Yep.

LW : This is confusing...

DES: Yeah, no I've got it straight now...

MJ: This is while Baba was there...

DES: So Elizabeth Patterson herself in '69 did not even know that... {loud background noise} ...she did know, she did know, but I thought the implication was that it had been picked up and taken away...

MJ: Yes.

DES: ...very shortly before Baba dropped the body... so this was considerably before that the book disappeared...

MJ: Yes.

DES: And the last anyone knows it went to Baba's hands.

MJ: It went to Baba's hands, and when Baba must have taken it from Ramjoo there may not be anybody else present. And then what Baba did with the book...

DES: Nobody knows, there it disappears... Okay so all of this is three years earlier than I thought it was...

LW: At least, because Ramjoo passed away in '66 and it was probably even before that. DES: Yeah.
MJ: So, it might be connected to {inaudible}... then Baba must have kept it, or brought it here, we don't know, there was no lead after that as far as we know.
DES: I may have seen it in Eruch's shack after it was removed from the bank in Bombay. So I may have been one of the last persons...
MJ: Did you not confirm with Eruch again?
DES: No, no...
MJ: Why didn't you!?
DES: No, no, I simply said to Eruch, Elizabeth says that... well it is very confusing... MJ: {laughing}
Yeah that's what Baba did, he brought in a whole cloud of confusion amongst everybody and in that The Book has gone off...
LW: See, Baba is the Master Spy...
MJ: Yeah...
LW: He knows how to hide the most perfect secret.
MJ: Yeah, well, by confusing people...

{loud laughing among them all}
DES: There are some, what do they say "faux pistes" in French, false trails on this one... MJ: Anyway...
Flint Mednick (FM): The Barber is here, he broke his leg!
MJ: Who?
DES: He broke his leg?
FM: He broke his leg and is lying on the ground...
{discussion about what to do to help the barber}

PART TWO (November 2005)

Corrected by Don Stevens on November 10, 2005

Reviewed and approved by Meherwan Jessawala on November 14, 2005

This transcript has been reviewed, corrected and approved by both Meherwan and Don, and the article contains only minor edits to retain the conversational flow. In this article, we use {inaudible} when we cannot understand what is being said on the recording, and we also use the curly braces {to help describe the situation}, and three dots "...when there is a long pause, or an interruption in the flow of conversation. Any words inserted by the editors appear in [square brackets] to differentiate from what is directly transcribed. This article represents just over fourteen minutes of the interview itself.

This is part two of the article: The Book, An Interview with Meherwan Jessawala August 9, 2003 which was published in series in Neti Neti International Meher Baba Newsletter, April 2005, Issue Number 156, and also in Love Street Lamp Post Fall 2005.

{Meherwan, Don, and Laurent are sitting at Meherazad, and have just been interrupted because a Meherazad barber fell and broke his leg.}

Meherwan (MJ) {talking to Flint Mednick about what to do for the barber who broke his leg}: Send him to... {inaudible} ...to take him in the rickshaw...

Don E Stevens (DES): Well, life as per usual.

MJ: Anyway, so, I think it might corroborate if you recollect what year... DES: What year I saw...

MJ: ...you saw the bundle¹, what happened, and we don't know. [Note 1: For those who did not read the first article in this series, the phrase "the bundle" refers to Meher Baba's book (The Book) written by His own hand, which Meher Baba himself showed to Don Stevens at Meherazad in the 1950s, as we will soon hear from Don]

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DES: Well, I know approximately. Let me tell you that little bit of the story and how it happened. We had not been very far into the publishing and making public the first edition of *God Speaks* when Ivy Duce... so of course this is about '54 '55 something like that at the latest... Ivy Duce said to me on occasion, "Don, you get to see Baba very frequently now, and now you and I have finished a big job of editing *God Speaks*, so when you see Baba next time will you say, 'Baba, you were very pleased, we understand, with the editing work we did on *God Speaks*. Baba would you entrust to us the editing of Your Book², so it can now be brought out?" [Note 2: The phrase "Your Book" here means The Book written by Meher Baba in His own hand]

And, so, I have to confess, Meherwan, I was not enthusiastic... MJ: No.

DES: ... about carrying this message to Baba. But I was a good soldier, and she was the Boss of the Sufis and Baba had said, "...give her every help you can Don." And so I felt duty bound to bring this message from Ivy to Baba. And this was the only time... now this... I would say no later than '56 or '57.

MJ: Um-hmm.

DES: So, this was the only time when I arrived in India to visit Baba where I was brought to see him immediately, not in Mandali Hall, but sitting in Eruch's shack. And this surprised me, because always before I was always in Mandali Hall where I would meet Baba. So at any rate, after Baba puts his

questions, you know, sleeping, diet and so on and he's starts to talk about other things, and then I remember I must put Ivy's question early otherwise I'll forget it...

MJ: Yeah.

DES: ...because I wanted to forget it, frankly. So I put it to Baba, and Baba made no answer to me, and he gestured to Eruch. Eruch got up in [the] shack, walked to the opposite end of the room where there was a big wooden box with I think a lid that opened up on the top. He took out a package and put it in Baba's hands, and Baba said, "Don here is The Book."

MJ: He said that?

DES: Yes, right. And it was in Baba's hands, and he was showing it to me. And then he said, "Don, this is not the time for it, perhaps later." Gave it back to Eruch. Eruch put it back in the wooden box. So, all this was in the mid-50s somewhere.

MJ: Ahhh.

DES: So it was considerably before...

MJ {interrupts Don}: It could be that {inaudible word} in the '50s. And that Ramjoo must have handed it over to Baba.

DES: Well, but in the '50s, I have the impression from the telephone conversation with Elizabeth Patterson that it had been in the locked storage box considerably after I saw it in the 50s. I had that impression, but she did NOT say, "Last time I saw it was '56," or something... not at all.

MJ: It may have gone back to the locker.

DES: It could have gone back. I don't know what... MJ: We don't know.

DES: But my impression from the conversation with both Eruch and with Elizabeth, is that they had both known of the presence of The Book in, certainly within the last two- three years of Baba's dropping the body. So, their knowledge that it was still in existence and in the locked box in Bombay had to have been much later than when Baba showed it to me.

MJ: This is the story I got from Perviz.

DES: Yeah. I am delighted to know that it was Ramjoo who took it out of the locked box.

MJ: But it may not be the last, last ten feet. There might be a return to the locker and then again...

DES: Sure.

MJ: Who knows?

DES: Who knows. I don't know.

MJ: We don't know all this, that's lost in antiquity. DES: That's lost, yeah.

MJ: Principal thing is, it was put in Baba's hands. Then later on, when people asked Eruch, you see Eruch himself stayed in Guruprasad, once asked Baba, seeing his delicate condition of health, "Baba, what about The Book? What do you want to do? Where is it, and people will ask..." Baba says, "It is well looked after, don't worry."

DES: {chuckles to himself}

MJ: That's what Eruch tells us.

DES: Um-hmm.

MJ: So he may not be knowing what Baba did with the package after it was in Eruch's possession.

DES: Well, the last Eruch knew it was back in the lock-box in Bombay. It is absolutely clear from my conversation when we were both at Baba's entombment.

MJ: Oh! It went back.

DES: It had to have gone back, It had to. Eruch and Elizabeth were very clear that it had recently been in the lock-box.

MJ: I see. Ramjoo died before Baba. So, I don't know.

DES: Yeah.

MJ: It's all very confusing. Anyway, so this is a digression from what I was saying. DES: Please.

MJ: So, Eruch tells me, "Just look at this"³, do you think it is The Book?" [Note 3: The phrase "look at this" here means look at the manuscript written in an unknown scribe's hand, given by Eruch to Meherwan to read, now published by Sheriar Foundation as the book, *Infinite Intelligence*, after having been edited by Bhau, Meherwan, Ward, and others. For more information, read the book *Infinite Intelligence* which gives a comprehensive account of the editing process.]

MJ: Now, Eruch asks me this question, so he may not have seen...

DES {interrupts}: This recently"⁴ discovered manuscript [NOTE 4: It was not "recently discovered," as Meherwan explained that the manuscript was actually found in 1969 - Laurent]

MJ: Yeah.

Laurent Weichberger (LW): Don, do you see what he's saying? Eruch asked him, "Do you think it's The Book?" Maybe Eruch never saw the actual pages of The Book.

DES: Oh! I'm sure Eruch didn't. It was not open.

MJ: Yeah. It was not allowed to be seen by anybody.

DES: And Eruch never told me anything about seeing The Book.

MJ: No, he didn't.

DES: Baba didn't volunteer to have Eruch untie the package!

MJ: That's right.

DES: I can tell you that to me, obviously, the package consisted, first of all of probably two school notebook-size things, maybe so thick... {Don makes a size measurement with his hand}

MJ: Ahhh.

DES: On this there were piled, obviously in this package, because the packing paper followed the contours of what was inside on top of what was approximately the thickness of two school sized notebooks was a thicker but a much smaller-dimensional block. And I said to myself – well, Baba probably started with the big books and he ran out of paper and was using smaller ones. And I made, just because my mind works this way, I made a quick...

MJ: Were there loose sheets...

DES: The package was not...

MJ: ...on the top?

DES: The package was not...

MJ: No, on the top, did you follow the contours on the top?

DES: No, the smaller top part was almost all the same size.

MJ: All the same.

DES: And I thought to myself – these are block note books, block note paper, that Baba then used -- no indication that they were spiral bound or anything like that, but let me tell you, because this is the most important point that unconsciously I gathered. These were all written in long hand...

MJ: Yeah.

DES: So I made a quick calculation into my mind, because I was so busy writing things under Baba's direction... pages, and how many pages, was important constantly, so I just made a calculation and said – well, that's in Baba's long hand, written as long hand, if it were then typed off, because I did so much typing off into computers by that time, what was in there certainly could not be more than two hundred pages of printed material. So it was a relatively short work. So when, for instance, I think the thing that interested me greatly when Bhau said, "Baba gave me notes which are included in *The Nothing and The Everything*, and it constitutes 10% of The Book." Ten percent of two hundred pages is twenty pages. So twenty pages, just as a rough estimation, of I think it's about four hundred pages⁵ in *The Nothing and The Everything*, is a very small quantity.

[NOTE 5: It is important to realize, however many pages are there, that the format of *The Nothing and The Everything* is highly unusual in that there is much less text per page than a regular book, it is more like poetic formatting. –LW]

So I asked Bhau, “Can you identify what is... what the passages are in your book?” I didn’t say, “Bhau, it’s a pretty small portion and we should know which is Baba and which is Bhau.” So, I said, “Can you identify which is the material in the printed book that came from notes from Baba?” And he said, “No, because the notes were stolen, and I have no way to look.”

MJ: Yeah. Unfortunate.

DES: So, what those twenty pages mixed into the four hundred and where they are, we will never know. So here’s another thing lost.

MJ: Baba had given him points...

DES: Um-hmm.

MJ: And then he elaborated it, in his book [*The Nothing and The Everything*].

DES: In, well...

MJ: In his book. But they were just points that Baba gave.

DES: They were points that Baba gave him.

MJ: And he tells Baba, “Baba, I don’t know what all this is...” and Baba says, “Don’t interrupt.”

DES: “You will understand.”

MJ: Yeah. “... just take down those points, you will understand later.”

DES: Yeah, and those written points, under dictation from Baba, he says were then stolen.

MJ: That’s right.

DES: And he dictated them, uh, rather wrote his *The Nothing and The Everything* including from memory Baba’s points. But he does not remember anything about where those points were included.

MJ: Why does Baba do this to us?

DES: To keep us on our toes, scratching our head. MJ: Yeah, he won’t let it be pinpointed.

DES: Yeah.

MJ: Anyway, so, what happened is that Eruch gives me this and he said, “Do you think this is The Book?” And I tell Eruch, “How should I know? I have no idea what The Book was, and how could I say?” And he says, “Okay.”

LW: {laughs out loud}

DES {to Laurent}: Don't go into hysterics little bear. {to Meherwan}: He gets so amused by how Baba handles things sometimes.

MJ: Yeah. So, he says, "Go through it, and see what you think about it." And he left me with those books⁶. There were two notebooks of foolscap size...

{Note 6: The phrase "those books" means the manuscript of *Infinite Intelligence* before it was typed and edited. –LW}

DES: Yeah.

MJ: Ruled. You know you used to get... DES: Yes.

MJ: And in very fine handwriting somebody had written those... it was a transcription, obviously, of something very profound. And I just turned over the pages, head or tail of what it was. And after cursorily going through it, then Eruch comes back after some time and says, "Well? What do you think?" I say, "Eruch, I really have no idea. I don't know what The Book was about, how could I say that this is The Book, or something?" He said, "Alright, just let it be. Put the thing back in that..."

DES: Eruch was busy.

MJ: He was terribly busy. So, he kept that little leather bag, and then I just left. Later on what happened was that Rhoda Dubash came from Karachi and settled down here along with Adi Dubash. And she would come to the Trust Office and pester Eruch quite a bit, "Give me some work, Eruch, give me some work. I want to do office work."

DES: "I want to serve Baba."

MJ: Yeah. So Eruch would not know what to give her. The Trust hadn't started functioning very well, there wasn't much. Suddenly he got a bright idea -- to get her off my chest -- he brought out those books, that he had shown me, and he tells her: "Do one thing now, Rhoda, take these books, these are hand written pages, type them out in fair. And make three copies of them, and do that."

DES: Um-hmm. And so she didn't pester him for two years again. MJ: That's right.

LW {to Meherwan}: Do you remember the writing? Was it hand written in English, or Gujarati, or Hindi, or all of them?

MJ: I'll show you that, I have it. LW: Oh!

MJ: So, anyway, so then he gives her those books and then he says, “I’ll give you Bal Natsu, to assist. And {a few inaudible words} in doing this, but you do it quietly. We don’t want this to be, sort of -- tom-tommed -- about.”

DES: Sure.

MJ: So they sat in the room which is now at the backside of the Trust Office, the Happy Library, or something. And in that room they both sat for a couple of years I think. And Bal would give her the book, and she would start typing. And he would help her to type it out.

PART THREE (February 2006)

The Book or Not The Book, wherein our interview concludes as we move from the first typing, as overseen by Eruch, of the original scribe’s handwritten work to the evolution of the edited manuscript, which became a book called *Infinite Intelligence*.

This transcript has been created and edited by Lizzy Hoke and Laurent to retain the conversational flow. In this article, we use {inaudible} when we cannot understand what is being said on the recording, and we also use the curly braces {to help describe the situation}, and three dots “...” when there is a long pause, or an interruption in the flow of conversation. Words inserted by the editors appear in [square brackets] to distinguish them from what is directly transcribed.

{We resume the interview with Meherwan as he is explaining that Rhoda Dubash has been given the work by Eruch to carefully type up a handwritten manuscript, the origin of which no one seems to know. This manuscript is not in Meher Baba’s handwriting. However, Eruch feels it is worthy of being typed up as it seems to be dictated by Beloved Meher Baba to someone, at some time, all of which is not clear. Rhoda is the typist chosen by Eruch, and she became the first editor of the work.}

Meherwan Jessawala (MJ): [Rhoda Dubash] did a little correction here and there because there were spelling mistakes and other things, such corrections she did. But the problem was that there’s lots of Gujarati in it...

Don E. Stevens (DES): Mmm.

MJ: Handwritten Gujarati, so there was no Gujarati...

DES: ...keys

MJ: ...keys on the typewriter, so she left blanks, and then very meticulously filled them up in Gujarati... so we have the full record of all that in her typed up version. This... went on for a couple of years and Eruch had respite from Rhoda, and this job got completed. After the whole typing was done

Eruch asked her to get it bound, so she got three sets bound... of those books. And, then Eruch kept them here. Later on, then I started to come, so Eruch says, “Now you have months vacation, go through this now. The thing that I showed you, remember?” I said “Yeah.” He said, “These are now fair... they are fairly typed out, so try to do something and see if there is anything new in it.” So I went through all these things, and did some preliminary sort of editing. And I tell him, “Eruch I’ve done this, what do I do?” He says, “Do you find anything new?” I said, “The whole thing is quite new, should I read it out to you?” So I began to read, I started the first few sentences, and he said, “Enough, enough, we’ll see about it later.” So...

DES: Eruch is still busy.

MJ: Very busy, he was getting more and more busy, with... There were no holidays then, seven days a week, twelve hours a day they were attending...

DES: Dear Eruch.

MJ: ... So it was lying there. So, then it just remained, I went back, then, later on I came and settled down here. I’m a little confused about timing. I mean... I’ve done it after I settled down, editing...

LW: But Eruch was still...

MJ: Yes... still editing one of Rhoda’s things. So... I keep telling him... “Eruch I’ve done that editing, do you think we should bring it out?” He says, “Anything new in it?” I said, “It’s quite a different thing and there are certain things which are a little controversial.” He said, “Okay, okay we’ll see to it later.” So he kept putting it off, and kept putting it off, and then one day finally very recently in the 90s, [I said] “Eruch, It’s time we did something about this while you people are around, that we should get this out because some of them would be able to give their opinion on it.” So he said, “If it’s not very controversial, then do it.” And I said, “Ward is around here.” Ward is a professor of English.

DES: Superb.

MJ: So then he said, “Okay, go ahead.” So I asked the publication committee. We had formed [the Avatar Meher Baba Trust] publication committee at that time. [So we told them], “We have this, are you happy with this?” So they said, “Okay... we don’t mind.” So we got the go ahead and then Ward and I started to edit. In the meantime Bhau had gone to the West. So I wrote to Bhau a letter saying that... “we are doing this work and when you come [back] over I would like to show it to you.” So... we hadn’t even started much, and in the meantime Bhau returned. So when he came he said, “What was that you were referring to?” So I brought out those books, and he said, “I’ll take this to my office and see.” He took those books¹, he took them to his place. And a week later he comes and says, “Meherwan, this is a miracle! This is a hundred percent of the book that Baba wrote. Because it’s all the points, which are full in here, and what I had² was only ten percent. This is The Book.” And I didn’t

know anything. And this is what we have with us. So he then says, “Alright...” [1. Note: the phrase “those books” means the original handwritten manuscript which became the new book just published by Sheriar Foundation entitled, *Infinite Intelligence*] [2. Note: the quote from Bhau speaking about the points, and that what he had was only ten percent is a reference to points that Meher Baba dictated to Bhau in the late 1960s for a book entitled *The Nothing and The Everything*, which Bhau did write and publish based on those points from Baba.]

LW: Bhau said it.

MJ: Yeah. So for a year he stopped all correspondence to the... There was one year when he wouldn’t correspond...

DS: I remembered that, but I didn’t know what the reason was.

MJ: He was collected in his office... and with Ward and he working together they just raced through the whole manuscript, and Ward was pulling his hair, he says, “Oh, you can not do this.” He said, “I’m telling you...” First edit, they dropped the whole thing... and after that he handed over the whole thing to me...

DS: Oh.

MJ: And [Bhau said to me]m “Now you go through this.” And I said, “Bhau this needs to be properly edited.” So he said, “Alright.” So he gave me Ward to assist me. Then Ward and myself sat and broke our heads for, I don’t know, three or four years, trying to put that into presentable language.

DES: Was there any more discussion, between yourselves, as to whether it was or was not The Book?

MJ: This is, ah... {Loud noise and voice in background.} So Eruch... what, where was I?

DES: Um, you and, I think...

MJ: Yeah... and Bhau was very... I had finished the whole thing in four or five months, and this is now seven years, [And Bhau asked me], “What are you doing with it?” And I said. “Bhau... it needs proper sentence structure.” The whole book, sometimes has no paragraphs, a sentence would carry on for a whole page.

DES: Sounds like Eruch. MJ: It does?

DES: When I was editing “God Speaks” and Eruch’s sentence structure, sometimes it would be a whole long paragraph.

MJ: He is long sometimes. The worst part was there were brackets... in those sentences. And after those brackets there were other brackets (which included those brackets) and the word was right on the

top, and after the whole thing the sentence ended right at the bottom. And if it were left for the public to read this, they would miss the sentence ending...

DES: Sure, and go to sleep, yeah.

MJ: And there were no paragraphing, no corrections, no... it was just raw text...

DES: Raw material.

MJ: That was the style of Baba. So, we were doing all this. In the meantime one day Janet was very inquisitive and said, "What are you both doing?"

Laurent Weichberger (LW): Janet Judson?

MJ: That's right, so I said we are doing this old discourses of some work Baba from the 30s, 20s it seems. So she said, "Oh, you know, in Mani's records there are, there is a... there are some handwritten pages by Baba, are you interested to see them?" And I said, "I don't know, just show me." So she brought a Xerox of that. And... it was very much connected to what we were doing. So I said, "Yes, yes, I would like to have this," so she said, "Okay, have it."

LW: Same material now as "*In God's Hand*"?

MJ: No.

LW: The book "*In God's Hand*"... The same thing? MJ: That's right, "*In God's Hand*."

LW: Same material.

MJ: Same material. That was...

DES: That's what Janet brought.

MJ: Yeah. So then I said, "Where is the original of this, what authority is this?" Then she gave me the original pages. Then what we find is, that, in the last portion of this that we were editing, these pages had been included in that.

LW: Oh, so they were written afterward.

MJ: Huh?

LW: The books must have been written after those handwritten pages.

DES: Yeah.

MJ: Yeah, so some sentences were basically repeated, some are edited, in a very starkly contrasting thing. And... so it was all there in the last part of the book, which was series fifteen. There are fifteen series to that book. So in the last series, this portion of Baba's text, it was 39 pages of Baba's handwriting, was incorporated. So that...

DES: The two handwritings are different, the big manuscript is one type of handwriting, Baba's thirty-nine [39] pages are definitely Baba's.

MJ: There's a sheet written by hand, which says... it's in God's Hand...

LW: I've seen it.

MJ: So it says that these are handwritten pages of Baba, sometime in the twenties. So by having that there we got authorship of these two books. It has no beginning, and it just suddenly ends.

DES: Yep.

MJ: So that's the history of this manuscript. We don't know the origin, we don't know where it was, when it was...

LW: Inside the text, I think you've gone through the whole text already...

MJ: Yeah.

LW: Does the word "Meher Baba" appear anywhere inside the text?

MJ: Never. No, no. Except in one place where the personal pronoun is there – I – or something.

LW: Ah.

MJ: Otherwise it's this sort of narration in third person or something.

LW: But no "Meher"... no "Baba."

MJ: Oh, no, no no. No authorship. No title, no end, no beginning, no date. LW: Eternal.

MJ: Yes.

DES: Very, very good story and complete. I'm glad to know that.

MJ: So now this book has been finally edited, we did about three or four editings, and the translations were no end to our headaches, because the nuances, presented in the English language, with all the Gujarati idioms, was extremely difficult. So we tried to make the best possible thing. And... we have been very transparent about... sort of... what do we call, editing that we have done... the text.

LW: Quick question if I can, Don.

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MJ: Yes, go ahead.

LW: When you and Ward did your four years of editing...

MJ: Yeah.

LW: Did you start with the one that had been typed up by [Roshan] with Bal Natu or did you start with the version that had already been edited by Bhau Kalchuri?

MJ: Both, we had both... editions with us, at the side, and we had the original thing. LW: Ok, so you had both.

MJ: Both. Just to get the sort of work... it was a great help to us, because it had unraveled many of those things. And Ward, in his own way, had simplified it a bit. It was much easier... to have them both together. But we were constantly, the main text was on the side, editing, and the text was there. But, mind you... when I was doing this, and the original handwritten was not being accessed, we thought there might be some errors by Rhoda, who knows. So the original handwritten was given to Eric, to scan them in his computer.

LW: Nadel.

MJ: Yes, Eric Nadel. So they were scanned, and we had scans of the original, from which we did the direct editing.

DES: Where is the discussion on, "is this the book, or is this not the book?"

MJ: The only clue we have is that Baba used to tell us off and on in Mandali Hall, in Guruprasad, or here, is what I'm giving here is only ten percent of the points. So what Bhau says is quite... So, we don't know whether this is the book, if this is exactly what has happened, it's for you all to make the inference, whatever it is. And we've made all this transparent and clear, in our sort of long essay that was done by Ward. All the details of how the manuscript came about.

DES: This I can certainly say, I made a great point to read carefully the thirty-some odd pages that are written in Baba's handwriting, but it is certainly very apparent to me that Baba's style at that time in his life is very different from the style...

MJ: That's right.

DES: ...in the 50s and 60s. This I know from my own experience with Baba.

MJ: He was moving at the time.

DES: So, if this was Baba's Book, if this is The Book, then it is a vastly different style than *God Speaks*.

MJ: It's a different angle of the same book. It's the same style of repetition. Page after page of repetition. So much so that -- black is black is black. It becomes so redundant and so repetitive that it was difficult for us to repeat it like that. So Ward tried to polish it as much as he could, while showing it the same words that Baba used. To drive home the point, or, you know.

DES: It is almost certainly that because of the fact that what you saw in Baba's handwriting is repeated in the long manuscript, certainly the long manuscript is by Baba.

LW: Of course it is. The... of that text, no person except who knows the thing could do it.

DES: I just have to say my own judgment, for, way deep down inside when I ran through the 30-some odd pages, I said, this can not be The Book which is missing. But that's my own personal viewpoint.

LW: Can I ask one question?

DES: Oh, Please do.

LW: If Baba had repeated the same words over and over throughout the text...

MJ: Not throughout the text, sentences would follow.

LW: No, but you're saying there was repetition.

MJ: Yeah.

LW: I know Baba uses repetition because you can see it in *God Speaks* and other places.

MJ: And in many chapters, it would keep, yeah...

LW: And, if Baba had chosen to use words that were repeating like that, why would anybody allow Ward to change those words? If Baba had chosen those words, why not use them?

MJ: We didn't change the words, we just presented it in a sort of presentable manner. That thing that we have done is, that this whole text that has been handwritten will go on the internet.

LW: Oh good.

MJ: So, people who weren't satisfied with the editing can very well access it. DES: Say, "To hell with those editors"

MJ: Yeah, they can piss on our graveyards. [Laughter] If we have any graveyards. Because who the hell are we to edit what Baba's...

DES: Baba asked Ivy and me to do *God Speaks*. I must say that the first two three months after it came out there were a few rather unappreciative...

MJ: Oh, we expect a lot of these ones when this comes out. It's gone to [Sheriar]... DES: Oh, so it's that far now.

MJ: Yeah, there is still some work to be done, we are still at it, so that's how it is.

DES: Well, I must say, you've certainly given quite an earful here. I appreciate it Meherwan. These are important things and to get the record of how it came about. This is going to be terribly important in the future.

MJ: It's quite a startlingly different angle.

LW: I can't wait. I love controversy.

MJ: And it's all very highly intellectual. It's all the thinking in the mind. DES: Baba's mind is certainly the best one I ever ran into in my life.

MJ: Top mind.

DES: Top mind. Top, top.

LW: His was stopped.

MJ: The stopped mind. That's what we are confronting. With our extra, fast moving mind, we are suddenly confronted by this great wall of stopped mind. And then get totally...

DES: Get busy with it.

MJ: ...get totally finished off.

DES: Mmm, yes. Yes, yes. Did you want to take us to those handwritten pages? MJ: Sure.

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DES: Good.

MJ: What's the time?

DES {to Meherwan}: Well, it's 12:30 and I'm worried about your lunch time.

{Meherwan took Don and Laurent to Eruch's shack, next to Mandali Hall at Meherazad. He had with him a plastic box which contained the handwritten manuscript, in some unknown scribe's handwriting, which they had edited into book form and is now available as the book, *Infinite Intelligence* (Myrtle Beach: Sheriar Foundation, 2005). We start the transcript again as we stand together in Eruch's room opening the box.}

LW: Wait, is this the box that you found this material in?

DES: No, and then I would say, Meherwan, that the base of the package could have been no longer than that, no wider than that, and no taller than that.

MJ: It must be... because B said that he used to give sheets to Baba, and supply the ink, when Baba was writing the papers...

LW: In the table room.

MJ: That's right.

LW: At Meherabad.

MJ: That's right.

DES: So, what should we do, spread it out on Eruch's bed a moment?

MJ: This is the original thing. I'd like to open this because this has ...

LW: Is this about the size of what you think it may have been wrapped up in...? DES: Oh no, it was considerably smaller, both width-wise and length-wise.

MJ: That might be Baba's original handwriting, but this isn't. You see, this is how the book begins... This is the first page of the book... This is the handwriting. And, these are diagrams and everything. It just begins "series one..." and goes on like this. And these pages are numbered serially. And very neat handwriting, there are marginal notes. And so on, it goes on.

DES: Very neatly done.

MJ: Yes, it goes on page after page after page.

DES: Almost no corrections.

MJ: Yeah. So this is the original...

DES: I'd love to see that, thank you so much Meherwan.

MJ: This is the second part of... the page number continues here, up to, I think 211, 212 pages handwritten. Page numbers handwritten. Then about sixty pages are blank in this book. Nothing.

LW: At the back.

MJ: In the middle.

LW and DES: In the middle?

DES: Interesting.

MJ: We thought that was the end of the text. Then we saw at the end there was still some more writing. There were 44 more pages following after those blanks. And in those 44 pages is...

LW: ...The thirty-seven from *In God's Hand*.

MJ: Thirty nine pages of *In God's Hand*. And the same person who has written this has also written this, it is the same letters. But this has become so fragile that to open this... DES: Oh don't, don't try...

MJ: ...the same thing. But the size of the letters to start with are the big... but the same stripes... seem to continue.

DES: Oh, that's wonderful. Very much appreciate it.

LW: And so the book from Sheriar may be next year?

MJ: They want to bring it out this year.

LW: Oh good.

MJ: But it's up to the... it's going to take some time and it may not come out by the end of the year.

DES: It's a lot of work...

MJ: Reading and editing. {Then, pointing to Don}: He knows how difficult...

DES: So does Little Bear, he's been through it recently. Little Bear's been through this business, the proofreading, working with the publisher.

LW: I did my first book for Baba... Just published.

MJ: Oh I see, that's great.

DES: He's the editor of the new, enlarged version of *God in A Pill?* [Now called *A Mirage Will Never Quench Your Thirst* (Myrtle Beach: Sheriar Foundation, 2003)].

MJ: Ah hah, that's great.

DES: Well thanks Meherwan, really appreciate it. So maybe we go sit on a bench, have a little bit of lunch...

** *

This concludes the interview with Meherwan Jessawala.

Thank you, Meherwan. Thank you, Beloved Avatar Meher Baba.



October 7th 1954,

Smiling, Baba invoked the following prayer:

“O Sai Baba, Upasni Maharaj, Babajan, Tajuddin Baba and Narayan Maharaj! To You, the Five in One and the One in Five Divine Beings representing the Absolute One, I bow in homage. Due to you Five Men-God I am what I am – the Ancient Everlasting One!

May the Beloved God, with Whom you 5 are One and for Whom you are working universally, give me in your names, the strength, power and wisdom to fulfill all I have taken this form for, and see that all I have declared at the last Meherabad meeting comes to pass. I now give up using the board, it being my gesture before God for breaking my silence soon.”

As Found in the "Circle News" newsletter Oct. 14, 2019

His first wife, Joyce Barison, sent us this short obituary. Long-time Baba lover David Barison passed away at 7:00 PM Sunday, Oct. 13, at PruittHealth Nursing Center in Conway, SC.

Jai Baba. I was honored and humbled to be asked to write David's obituary. I love David very much. Even though I got married two more times, I am and remain Joyce Barison.

David Barison was born November 18, 1943 in Jersey City, N.J. However, he was more a New Yorker than a Jersey Citier. Intelligent and creative as he was, school was not his forte or an area where he excelled. He was a musician and an artist. Classical guitar became his love and his outlet for his creativity. He played extremely well. In the beginning, painting took a back seat to music, but after he developed a kind of tendinitis in his hand, painting became the frontrunner.

The most important day in David's life was in January of 1968 when he became a Baba Lover. He was living in a tenement in the East Village in N.Y. with me. Mike Miller, who David met in the army, found out about Baba from Ed and Irwin Luck. Mike Miller told Michael Cherlin, who David also met in the army, and Michael Cherlin told David. That morning in January David had never heard of Baba and that same night, he became a Baba Lover and his life was changed forever.

David went to Darshan in 1969 and visited India many times after that. He lived in Chapel Hill, Myrtle Beach, Ashville and a few other places. David was married three times in his life, yet ended up alone. In some ways his life was like the life of a starving artist. He made a haphazard living selling beautiful Baba paintings and paintings of the Baba Center in Myrtle Beach. He spent a great deal of his life looking at Baba's face while painting what he saw.

Baba was a steady force throughout David's life, but he also had a cynical side to his nature which some found arrogant or abrasive. This part of his nature was softened by a great sense of humor and wit. David was loved by many.

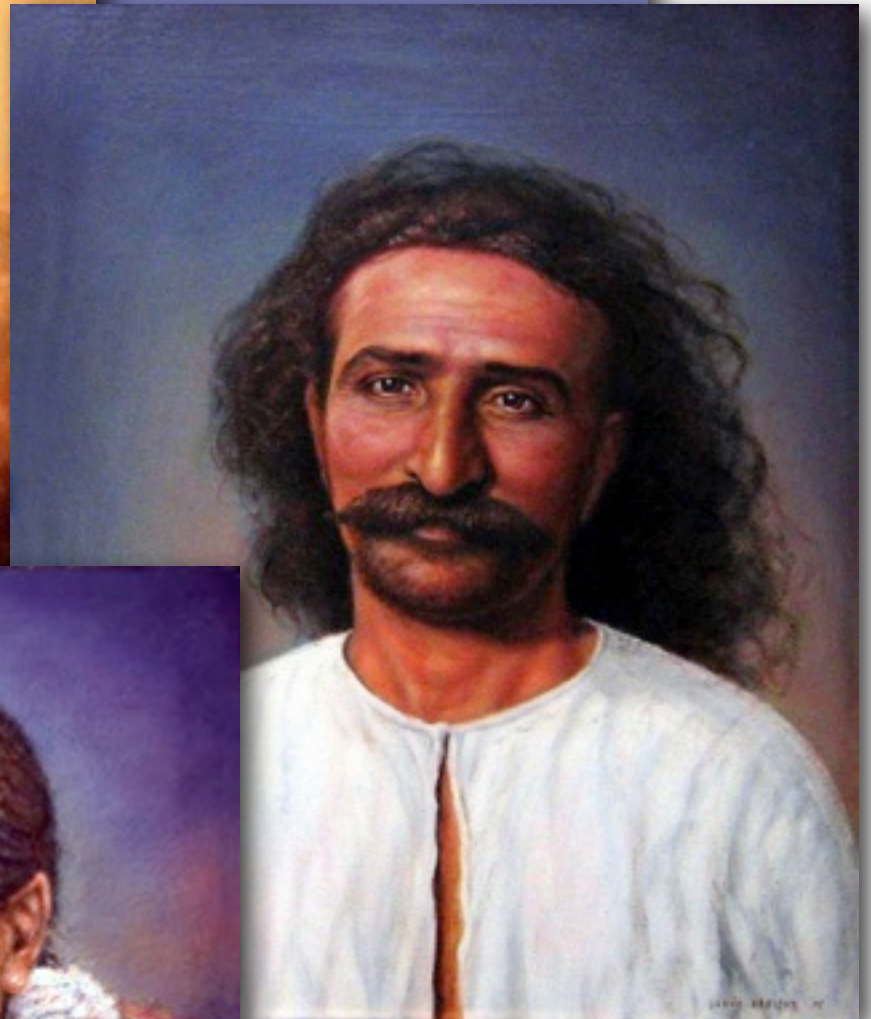
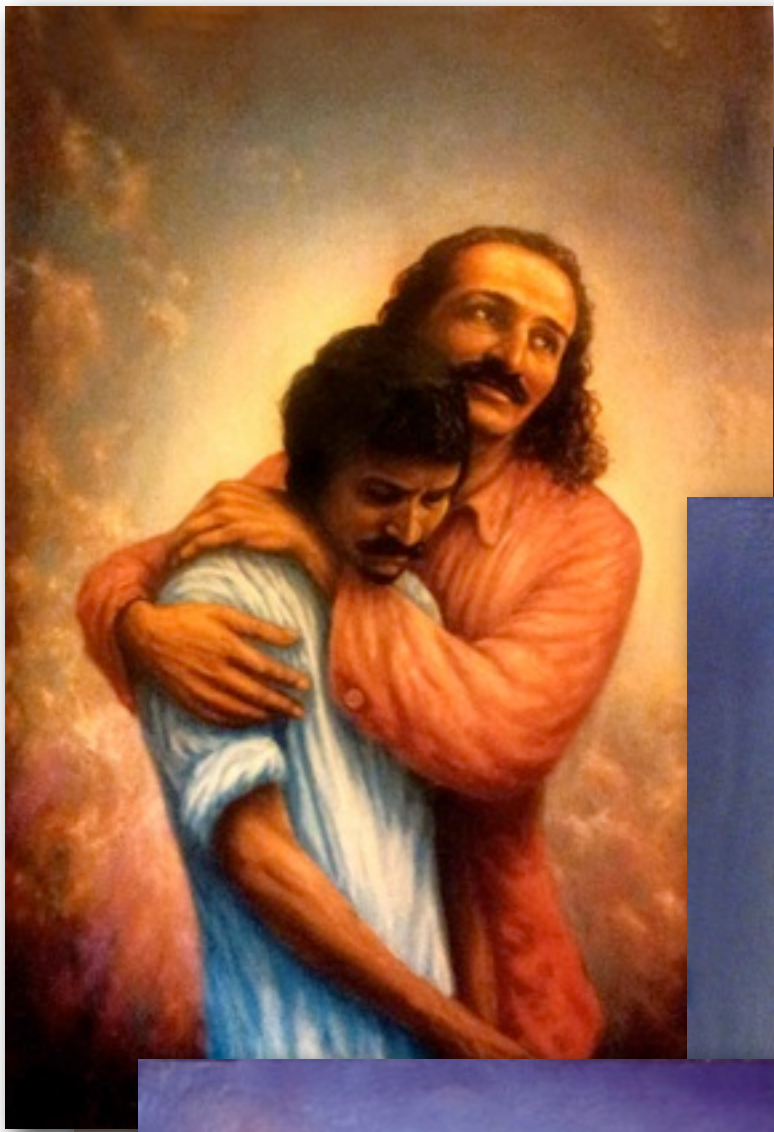
As David got older and became ill, his nature softened even more. He became childlike and accepting and very lovable. At the very end of his life he reconnected in a special way with me, the one who he found out about Baba with. David had many true friends who gathered around him as he prepared to die. Looking at the totality of David's life, it was wonderful and he came to a wonderful end.



David Barison, 2019, photo by Chris Ott

There are other terrific photos of David and his artwork at Meher Baba Travels.
<https://www.meherbabatravels.com/arts/david-barison/>

David
Barison
Art





Christmas at the Meher Spiritual Center, chorus of Baba lovers with Patrick O'Neil on Cello, and his mother Ann O'Neil on piano. Cathy Riley conducting.

I am awake.

**Please respect my privacy
during this difficult
time.**

Surrender with Meher Baba

A book excerpt
By Laurent Weichberger

“Understanding has no meaning.
Love has meaning. Obedience has more meaning.
Holding of my daaman has most meaning.”
~ Meher Baba

The opening quote from Meher Baba, seems to be a great way to introduce the subject of surrender for those who many not have spent a lot of time with this word, other than maybe in the traditional sense of flying the white flag, with your hands up in the air. Surrender, from a spiritual point of view, is much different than a military surrender and admission of defeat.

Let's see where Baba takes us, and what this all means. Baba said, “Understanding has no meaning.” For example, one may understand that using drugs is harmful, physically, mentally and spiritually, and yet still continue to use the drugs. So, what is the value of the understanding? He continued that, “Love has meaning.” When you begin to love someone, or something (like a plant, or a cat) other than yourself, it is meaningful progress in the right direction. Apparently this loving leads to something greater, but what?

Baba states, “Obedience has more meaning.” So, in our analogy and in the spiritual realm, Baba is speaking of obeying God, or one's personal Spiritual Master. Such obedience came from the love bond established between the Master and disciple, and in Baba's view is greater than love itself. In our story, perhaps we can say obeying the Master's guidance, not to use drugs, is vastly superior to understanding the need to stop. So, through love one may gather the strength to obey.

Lastly, we see Baba gave us the somewhat cryptic statement, “Holding of my daaman has most meaning.” I say cryptic, because many not familiar with Baba will not know what he means, and even those in the Meher Baba community may struggle to interpret this in light of it being more important than obeying Baba. So what does it mean? To put it plainly, it means surrender. Why do I say that? Because elsewhere Baba explained holding on to his damaan as meaning -- like a child who holds fast to the hem of the skirt of mother in the marketplace, so as not to be lost or wander off, so, hold fast to Baba and don't be distracted by the illusions of the world, the Maya all around, tempting, enticing, entrapping. Also, while

holding to the hem of the mother's garment, we cannot use our hands to get into other troubles.

I remember once when I was praying, I asked myself, when I pray, why do I fold my hands in front of my chest (in the typical Western prayer style)? Naturally, because that is what I saw all of my life, but I wanted to go deeper. My intuition said that when I pray in that way, I am showing Baba (or God), look I am here with you, focused on you, not doing, just being with you. The hands are symbolic of doing in the world, and of work. If I stop working, and stop doing, I can be. As God said to King David of the Jews, “Be still, and know that I am God.”

And how do we hold fast to Meher Baba's damaan, how do we surrender to this extent? That is the subject of this book.

In the Spring of 1986, when I was seventeen years old, and not long after recovering from the deep shock of my father's suicide, I started down the path of loving Avatar Meher Baba. At that time, I had just seen Baba's photo for the first time, it was on the inside of the 1964 printing of the Universal Message, that was given out at the World's Fair in New York

This was shared with me by Michael Mathias, with Patty and Doug Stalker in Manhattan. So it was maybe a few months after this introduction to Baba, by them, that I was encouraged to visit the Meher Spiritual Center in Myrtle Beach. I was told to write to the center, and request a retreat there. In response to my request, David Silverman wrote back to me, and in his loving letter he included a “Baba card” which is a little card-board card, like a baseball card (without the stats), showing Baba, and some words. I read the little card with interest, and admired the photo of Meher Baba on it, and still clearly remember this quote from him:

“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.”

I was standing in the upstairs of my Manhattan apartment, in my room, and as I held the card, after reading Baba's words, I said to Baba out loud, “Okay Baba, I am making you my Real Father.” Little did I know, but that was actually a giant turning point in my life, and perhaps my first real surrender on the spiritual path back to Him.

Jack Becker &
Laurent Weichberger
Discuss

Surrender with Meher Baba (November 2019)

During November 4 - 6, 2019, after reading the excerpt Laurent (hereafter "LW") sent him from the upcoming book, Surrender with Meher Baba, Jack (hereafter "JB") discussed these sublime subjects.

JB: After reading it again just now, I think I'd enjoy more about what "meaning" is; if Baba has some thoughts on this or if you have something to say about it. Meaning is such a valuable thing to us Humans and this feels like a strong place to grapple with it a bit.

LW: You mean when he said, "Understanding has no meaning"?

JB: "Yes; and that love has some meaning and that obedience has more meaning and that holding his daaman has most meaning. Meaning to God? Meaning to one's self? Meaning as in the meaning of one's life? Or meaning of all life? Meaning as in purpose? Or significance?"

"Also I've been wondering, if we are God dreaming, what does it mean for God to be awake? Does he go through cycles between dreaming and being awake?"

LW: That is a whole lot of meaning there buddy. Let's take it bit by bit and see what happens...

1. The quote from Baba again, bears re-reading, and then I can launch into my personal ideas about what that itself means :)

"Understanding has no meaning.
Love has meaning. Obedience has more meaning. Holding of my daaman has most meaning."
~ Meher Baba

2. The dictionary has many definitions for meaning, but the one that is most relevant here is this one: "significant quality" (Endnote see: <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/meaning>)

3. If we use the significant quality part of the definition we can see that Baba is trying to help us understand what is important in the spiritual life. In other words, not everything you think is important is actually important, and most likely things you think are unimportant are really quite important. Baba talks about this in his discourses on Maya, if you haven't read them, that is really important to read: <https://discoursesbymeherbaba.org/v3-137.php>

So, from the point of view of Baba, naturally since he said it, "understanding" is not that important. Because it is passive, not active, and there is no love in understanding. Understanding put into action, can produce Love. Love put into action can lead to obedience, and obedience leads ultimately to surrender, which in Baba's language is holding to the hem of his garment. Like the child holding on to the mother in the marketplace. Some may think that is not important. But from Baba's standpoint it is the most important thing to surrender. So, meaning and significance and importance are to me what this is about.

Now you also ask: "Meaning to God? Meaning to one's self? Meaning as in the meaning of one's life? Or meaning of all life? Meaning as in purpose? Or significance?"

Yes, we took care of the significance part. Purpose is a good one. What is the purpose of life? According to Baba it is to become fully consciously aware of your own inherent divinity as one with God. He calls that God-realization or Self-realization, so in the context of that purpose of life, those things are relatively significant. Understanding that purpose is ok, but that is not the key. When you have love as a result of that understanding, you are on your way to self-realization. When you have obedience you are closer to that goal, and when you surrender your finite false ego (little s self) you realize your Infinite Real Ego (big S Self) and that Self-Realization is timeless, eternal and everlasting. Remember, I know nothing about this, it is all what I have gained from being with Baba since 1986. My understanding, which has no meaning, of what Baba has shared with us. Luckily for me, he has inspired me with love in my heart...

So, meaning to God. Yes. Check.

Meaning to one's self. I think that becomes up to the individual. I have long shared that the reason God has given us free will is so that we can love Him. If there was no free will, we couldn't really love. If we had no choice, where is the love? It is because we can do and say anything, that love is significant.

The meaning of one's life is also up to the person. For one it may be to make the most money. For another it may be fame. For a third the best sex. For another, to make wine. For another to have a moving truck rental company (yes I met someone whose goal was to do that, and he succeeded). It is up to each person.

The meaning of all life, it is not for me to say. But I know for certain that Baba stated it clearly in God Speaks and elsewhere that the meaning of life is to arrive at self-knowledge of your own eternal Godhood, consciously, and that for this the whole Creation has come into being. I would love to have your thoughts and feelings on the above. Love and peace my brother.

JB: Okay, understanding has no meaning and since this conversation has already made me feel love and helped me to obey and surrender (although I have another question), interpreting further is just to help in the process.

LW: If you feel love, and more inclined to obey and surrender that is a big deal, and I am thrilled to hear this.

JB: Meaning is like something's value and the value of things can be falsified.

[KM: I will send the image that should go here. Please insert the image: AllThatFailingMeans.png]

LW: Right, like something can be made of gold, and people fight a war over that thing, when it is just a golden object. What's the point of that? It has some natural value, but its value was twisted, and blown out of proportion. Or, there is a Spiritual Master, offering guidance and love, and that great master is being ignored, and unappreciated. Whoops! What happened there? Ignorance. I had a dream recently that Failing is really just not knowing. I just posted the meme I made about my dream, here above.

JB: Being Self-aware of our inherent divinity has the most value, therefore the most meaning.

LW: Yes.

JB: Holding on to Baba like the child holding mother in the market place is Knowing that we are God as we move through the journey of our lives.

LW: I think holding on to Baba helps bring us closer, step by step, to Self-knowledge. In God Speaks, Baba quotes a Sufi poet as saying, for years I held on to the hem of your garment, until that day I realized God, and I saw it was my own garment I was holding. That shift from holding on to Baba, to becoming Baba, that is the Self-realization. This is what I have received from Baba on this, I have no direct understanding, only what Baba has given to me, as His gift.

JB: This feels clear to me; I remind myself of this and to surrender whenever I think of it, but I still catch myself automatically giving false value to things.

LW: You and me both brother, I am in the same boat with you. I remind myself to remember Baba, and to surrender, and my ego still gets in the way. Writing about surrender with Meher Baba helps me to surrender.

JB: What does it look like to improve at obedience and surrender?

LW: I think it looks like Meher Baba's glorious disciples, Eruch Jessawala, Mani (his sweet sister), and Mehera his beloved. If you haven't read about them, it is wise to do so. I can share time book titles with you.

JB: I feel the need to reiterate the following question: "... If we are God dreaming, what does it mean for God to be awake? Does he go through cycles between dreaming and being awake?"

LW: I was aware that I had dodged that question, but apparently not for very long. LOL.

According to Meher Baba in God Speaks, the infinite unconscious original state of God in the Beyond Be-



Jack Becker

yond existed before the Creation was created, and he says that is the sound sleep of God. When God has the original urge, or whim, to know Himself, that urge created movement in the consciousness of God, and that original movement spontaneously and immediately created the Creation which emerged through a point Baba named the Om Point. Then God enters that Creation as a soul to gain experience of Himself, and that journey of God in His own Creation is the Dream. The soul who awakens to the Self knowledge of inherent divinity within is God awake. Any cycles you mention, and Baba also calls them cycles, are cycles in the Creation, and they are the experiences of all souls journeying between the OmPoint and the Creation, and then back consciously to the OmPoint again to realize their own true identity as God. Did you read God Speaks already? If not, the time may be ripe for you to read it. If you have, it is all in there, maybe re-read it?

JB: It would be nice to have some kind of compass that can tell you what to value. I suppose that's my soul, when I'm able to shut out the noise and let Baba guide me from within right? What has most value is moving along one's journey toward Self-awareness that we are God and all is love, but most day to day things are about that which has little inherent value. Yet we abide because we're on a journey. So I remind myself that I am finding what I can do within the scope of my regular life to be a beacon of God and hold peace and love in my heart and give it out to everyone and everything; not worry when little things go wrong, but see those as opportunities to surrender.

LW: The Avatar is the Compass to tell you what to value. Intuition is the Avatar within you speaking to you - guiding you. Love to you my brother.

JB: Love and peace, Jack.



Meher Baba said to Bill LePage, during the Three Incredible Weeks sahavas in India:

“Fear means no love, and love means no fear.”

(Bill told us this October 2001 during the Meherana sahavas - Laurent)