

Saroja

KITTY L. DAVY

AUGUST 28, 1891 ~ DECEMBER 3, 1991



The following is a cable sent from India on December 3, 1991:

TO: JANE BARRY HAYNES
MEHER SPIRITUAL CENTER
MYRTLE BEACH, SC

WE SALUTE OUR MOST PRECIOUS KITTY
SAROJA THE OLDEST DISCIPLE OF THE
ANCIENT ONE. HER LOTUS PURE REFLECTION
OF BELOVED BABA'S LOVE WILL CONTINUE
TO SHINE AT HIS HOME IN THE WEST AND IN
THE HEARTS AND LIVES OF HIS MANY LOVERS
WHO ARE ENRICHED BY THE EXAMPLE OF
HER LIFE FOR HER BELOVED LORD AND
MASTER AVATAR MEHER BABA.

AVATAR MEHER BABA KI JAI
MANI AND ALL MEHERAZAD FAMILY

And so it was, after an intense year-long struggle with her health, our precious Kitty Saroja rejoined her Beloved Baba in the early morning hours of December 3rd.

The ongoing condition of Kitty's health and the events surrounding her hospitalizations became a "main current" in the Baba family grapevine over the past year. Hearts around the world were united in loving concern for her well-being.

Now, as we look back, we glimpse more and more of the divine drama Beloved Baba was playing out around His sweet disciple. As many will remember, when Kitty first went into Grand Strand General Hospital in January of '91, everyone, including the medical staff, was convinced that she would not survive the ordeal. There are many inspiring and touching stories from this month-long period that continue to emerge. Perhaps the most moving sight was the steady stream of Kitty's

1-706809

many friends from Myrtle Beach and around the country who came to bid farewell, each in their own way.

During this time messages full of hope and encouragement came from Mani. To everyone's amazement, Kitty pulled through and was able to celebrate Baba's birthday. It felt like the only person who was not amazed to hear that Kitty was back home was Mani, who throughout Kitty's long illness sent numerous love-messages from Kitty's Meherazad family. Each message was a wonderful lift not only to Kitty's spirits, but also the sometimes sagging spirits of those around her.

In March, Kitty was again hospitalized, this time for a shorter stay. But by Baba's grace and much to Kitty's relief, there were no more hospital visits after this one. She remained at Dilruba to the end, surrounded by many loving friends who joined together in caring for her over the next nine months.

The long-awaited event of the summer was, of course, Kitty's 100th birthday celebration. But before the great day in August, Baba gave a special treat in July - one that Kitty had been looking forward to since January - a lovely visit from her old ashram-mate, Katie Irani of Meherazad. Happily, Katie was able to spend two weeks at Baba's Home in the West, and shared delightful times with Kitty.

The great 100th celebration was great indeed. Over 400 of Kitty's friends were able to come together for the birthday celebration which took place over three days. And it was a joyous sight to see Kitty looking so radiant and happy. A particularly delightful moment came at the beginning of one birthday program when Kitty spontaneously waved a bouquet of roses in the air, acknowledging the rousing greeting from the large crowd gathered in the Meeting Place. There were other highlights as well: the beautiful cards and messages from Mani and all Meherabad and Meherazad family (including a drawing from Mohammed the Mast!), a special birthday song written by Mani, a play written by Ward Parks, and skits and songs - including a delightful birthday song from Jim Meyer in which he sang:

Avatar Meher Baba Ki Jai
Kitty Davy's a hundred today
Jai Baba, Jai Baba, Jai Baba, Jai
And she's looking much better than you or I!

During the Fall, Kitty's health gradually began to decline, taking a noticeable turn downward around Thanksgiving. Up until this time she was spending much of the day going about in her wheelchair, attending the Center programs frequently, and often going out to Latif's, her favorite spot for lunch. During the last days, however, she was confined completely to bed.

On Monday evening, December 2nd, a beautiful card for Kitty arrived from Mani. It was read immediately to Kitty by Jane twice. Mani had plucked a hibiscus flower from outside Kitty's old room in Meherazad and mounted it on the card saying: "Dear, dear, dear Kitty, there is a kiss in every petal of this flower from Mehera's garden being sent to you by your friend and fan in Beloved Baba's Love." It was placed on Kitty's pillow and was with her when she passed on.

A letter from Mani soon followed that explained how this came about:

For us, a very special touch has been through a little flower in Mehera's garden - a little hibiscus on a bush nearby where Kitty sat daily for her breakfast when at Meherazad.

On Saturday before we got any hint of Kitty's state of "withdrawal," I was by my cupboard on the verandah gazing at Baba's pictures in there. I turned for a moment, and my eyes fell on a single flower on the hibiscus bush - it looked very very bright and seemed vibrant with a message: 'send it to Kitty.' I argued that I had no time, I had to rush off to arrange flowers in Baba's Room before Arti, that I would do it some other time. The message pushed through strongly - 'do it now, send it quick.' - So I plucked it right then, affixed it on the right card, and was happy to see it shape up like a fan - which

inspired the words of greeting. How the flower got to dearest Kitty in perfect time is another story, a Baba-Mehera story for which my heart bows in thankfulness.

A special white cloth from Bal Natu had been delivered to Kitty by Jeff Wolverton on Sunday, December 1st. The cloth had lain both on the Samadhi and on Baba's bed in Meherazad. It was used to cover Kitty from Sunday until the end.

On the morning of December 3rd, Kitty's night nurse, Delilah, felt prompted to awaken Wendy Connor who was staying at Dilruba during this time. Although there was nothing to suggest that Kitty's time was imminent, her breathing pattern was becoming noticeably irregular. Wendy recited Baba's prayers while she stayed by Kitty's bedside.

At 4:00 a.m. Kitty began repeating Baba's name in alternating rhythm with Wendy. Wendy would say "Meher Baba" and Kitty would say "Abba." Exactly forty minutes later, the rhythm suddenly changed as Kitty began speeding up, rapidly repeating "Abba...Abba...Abba." At 4:41 she became silent and her eyes flew open as if in recognition. At 4:50 a.m. Baba gently took Kitty to Him.

At that time, Wendy said the three prayers, "O, Parvardigar," "The Prayer of Repentance," and "Beloved God." Jane arrived and along with Ellen Book (Kitty's devoted "Baba nurse" throughout her illness) they all said the three prayers together. Afterwards Dr. McKay, Kitty's personal physician, arrived and confirmed that Kitty had gone. He wrote in the nurse's log: "Kitty has passed. -Dr. McKay." The doctor had visited Kitty just the day before. He was very moved by the care Kitty was receiving at home, saying, "Everything that could be done is being done."

After the doctor left, Wendy and Ellen bathed and dressed Kitty in her pink silk dressing gown (one of her favorites) and Jane completed the preparations by placing a Baba locket around Kitty's neck. During this time, the Dilruba helpers (those who had cared for Kitty over the past nine months) and the Center workers were called, and all gathered at Dilruba.

Also during this time, Sheila Krynski telephoned India and got through right away, first talking with Bhau and later to Eruch. Eruch sent salutations to Kitty from the Mandali, saying that Kitty was "released and had won her race, She is the oldest one who has joined the Ancient One." Sheila delivered this message with a kiss to Kitty conveying the love greetings from the Mandali. At this point everyone came into Kitty's room and Marshall Hay led all in the prayers. Bob Brown then lead the Australian Arti and Jane Brown followed with the Gujerati Arti. There was 15 minutes of silence from 6:15 - 6:30 ending with three "AVATAR MEHER BABA, KI JAI's!"

The message from Mani and Meherazad Family sent by cable was received by telephone directly from India and was read aloud to all present in Kitty's room. Then there was almost a full hour for people to sit quietly in the room and bid their dear friend a silent farewell. The funeral directors arrived and at 7:30 Dennis McCabe, Jeff and Marshall transferred Kitty to the stretcher and escorted her to the hearse in the compound. As Kitty came out the front door onto the porch, again all exclaimed "AVATAR MEHER BABA, KI JAI" three times. Many followed her to the hearse and there was a moment of silence just before she was placed inside. The door closed and all waved, repeating "AVATAR MEHER BABA, KI JAI" as the hearse drove away - many giving the familiar heartwarming Meherazad wave.

Kitty was taken to Bullard and McKenzie Funeral Home in Myrtle Beach where a small group of sixteen were gathered to be with her before the cremation. Dozens of pink and wine-red roses had been placed on Kitty by Laurie Blum, her mother and the Lucks inspired by the thought that Mehera would have wanted flowers for Kitty. The prayers were said and Janet Luck sang "Begin the Beguine." Each person there placed a rose on Kitty and bid a final farewell. A Baba card was also placed on her, all said "AVATAR MEHER BABA, KI JAI" and at 1:00 p.m. everyone departed.

The same day, the following message was sent to Mani and Meherazad Family from Myrtle Beach:

Beloved Baba's sweet Saroja gently slipped into her darling Baba's arms, 4:50 morning, December 3rd. After repeating His Name for 40 minutes, her eyes opened for a moment, then closed, as she joined Baba. Kitty's life of selfless love, of enthusiastic dedicated service will stand as a shining example for lovers of God for all time. We will miss her sweet and loving presence which brought Baba's joy and harmony to all who knew her. Yet we rejoice in her long awaited union with her Lord and Master Avatar Meher Baba. Our love to all Meherazad Family.

-Meher Center Family

Later, word came from India that there had been an exquisite Arti at Meherabad that same evening, just five hours after Kitty went to Baba. Before Arti seven garlands of roses were placed on Baba's Samadhi. Andy Lesnik and Jim Meyer, from Myrtle Beach, placing the first one, followed by others. Jim and Ted Judson then sang many of Kitty's favorite songs.

The memorial service in Myrtle Beach for Kitty was arranged with the help of Evelina Graham, the dear friend and housekeeper of Elizabeth and Kitty for many years, to be held at Sandy Grove Missionary Baptist Church. This was especially touching as the church is one that Elizabeth Patterson helped to establish many years ago, and one that the Baba community in Myrtle Beach has long been connected with through various projects.

The church was overflowing, with extra chairs set up in all the aisles. Nearly 500 people attended but there were enough seats for all. The following is a copy of the church program. The readings and musical selections were chosen by Kitty long ago.



"Love Alone"

PROG

Decemb

Samuel Barber's "Adagio For Strings"

R. Vaughan William's "Fantasia On A Theme of Thomas Tallis"

J.S. Bach's "Jesu, Joy of Man's Desiring"
played by Ambika Sharan, Flute

THE MASTER'S PRAYER
Led by Darwin Shaw

THE AUSTRALIAN ARTI
Sung by Gary Edelman

WELCOME
By Charles Haynes

PRECIOUS LORD
Sung by Evelina Graham and her daughter Rose

"I FOUND A WHITE DOVE"
Sung by Cathy Riley, Dana Ferry & Janet Luck

"I WILL NEVER LEAVE YOU"
Sung by Bob & Jane Brown

ne Prevails”

GRAM

er 7, 1991

John Milton’s “ON HIS BLINDNESS”

Read by Lois Breger

CABLE FROM THE MEHERAZAD FAMILY

Read by Sheila Krynski

AVATAR MEHER BABA’S WORDS

Read by Marshall Hay

“ALL THE WAY”

Sung by Buz Connor

“THE WAY OF PERFECTION”

Reflections by Charles Haynes

EXCERPT FROM “CONSCIOUSNESS” TALK BY KITTY DAVY

Read by Wendy Connor

“BEGIN THE BEGUINE”

Sung by Rick Flinn & Perry Flinn

Following the service, several hundred people from the Baba community gathered at Dilruba to continue the celebration. A feeling of loving companionship and harmony filled the whole Dilruba house and compound. Many remarked that the atmosphere was reminiscent of a wedding.

On December 8th, a family gathering was held at the Meeting Place on the Center to share remembrances of Kitty. The program included a slide presentation, a new video about Kitty prepared especially for the occasion by Sheila, music and an intimate sharing of wonderful stories. Jane expressed the feeling of the moment so beautifully: "Each one of us here, and thousands more across the world, sing the same heart-song of thankfulness for Kitty's example of discipleship."

In a letter written shortly after Kitty's passing, Meheru writes: "Baba's gift to all of you - not so much to her - was that Baba took her slowly - preparing you all for the event. And your gift to Kitty will always be to think of Beloved Baba and of pleasing Him."

It seems fitting to close with one of Kitty's favorite quotes of Baba's:

I am ever conscious that I am in you but you are never conscious that I am in you. Daily I support you and share your consciousness; now I want you to uphold Me so that one day you may share in My Consciousness.

The Way of Perfection

*Reflections on Avatar Meher Baba's message of love in the
life and work of Kitty Davy.*

*Given by Charles Haynes at the service for Kitty on
December 7, 1991.*

As was often the case, Elizabeth said it best. Sitting in the midst of the wonderful confusion of a day at Dilruba, watching Kitty rush through the living room on yet another urgent mission, Elizabeth could be heard to remark: "All I can say is, there is only *one* Kitty!"

What made Kitty unique? Just say "Kitty" at any gathering of Meher Baba's family, in many parts of the world, and the smiles break out, the stories begin, as everyone eagerly shares Kitty's advice, Kitty's words of wisdom... or the latest "Kittyism."

Through it all, of course, Kitty remained oblivious to just how special, how truly great she was. That was no doubt because in the depths of her being she knew that it was *not* she who was special or great; it was, is, and always will be the Divine Beloved and He alone. In the words of Kitty's very favorite lines from scripture:

I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not
I, but Christ liveth in me.

"Yet not I, but Christ liveth in me." For us, gathered here on this occasion, and for all who join with us around the world, this means that today we celebrate not Kitty, but the living Christ. "Without Him," Eruch reminds us, "we are worthless. With Him we are priceless." The life of Kitty Davy was and always will be a beautiful, joyous, priceless message of love from the Beloved - the Divine Beloved who lives and dwells in every heart.

What is the message of love in the one hundred years of Kitty's life? Meher Baba gives the answer:

The dawn on love facilitates the death of selfishness.
Being is dying by loving.

To become perfect in His love is to die to self and to live in God. This way of perfection is not easy, but it is the life required of all who would leave all and follow Him. It is, as Saint Teresa of Avila reminds us, the only life worth living. In her words:

Be determined sisters that you came here to die for
Christ, not to live comfortably for Christ.

The specialness that was Kitty was born of her surrender to Meher Baba, thus becoming, without even knowing it, a living example of the way of perfection. Perhaps that is why dearest Mani could write to Kitty earlier this year, while looking at a picture of Kitty with Baba in Venice:

Seeing Baba and you in this picture made my heart
say: this a picture of God's perfect love for a perfect
disciple.

Through Kitty, Baba made us begin to realize that the death of the false self might not be so painful after all! One could even be cheerful about it! As Elizabeth aptly put it: "Baba is the only one I know who makes perfection desirable."

Watching Kitty (or running to keep up with her) we learned that the way of perfection is indeed the death of selfishness and the beginning of true service. From the first time she saw Meher Baba in 1931, Kitty was destined to be a true servant of love. That now familiar encounter, just one day after her first meeting, set the pattern for all that was to come. As Kitty described the moment:

Baba spelled out on His board, "Is there anything you want?" Without time to think or consider, I said, "Yes Baba, only two things have I always desired: an increased capacity to love and increased opportunities for service." I added as an after-thought, "And, yes, spontaneous goodness." Baba

said only, "You will have all in a few days. He shook hands again. I do not remember ever having given a thought to what I did want up to that moment.

All was given... and given. "When Baba gives," Elizabeth often said, "He gives with both hands." The opportunities to serve were many - and Kitty took them all. Moreover, as many who worked with Kitty will attest, if you didn't move quickly enough, Kitty might take your opportunity as well! Kitty may have been fond of the line from Milton, "They also serve who stand and wait," but she was never known to stand still or wait for anyone or anything when something needed to be done for Baba.

Each day with Kitty was a new life - a new opportunity to serve. And if there might be, even for a brief moment, nothing to do, Kitty would find someone who needed something, or some task that needed doing. At the close of each day, Kitty had lived a full life - all for Him - all for others... or, in the words of Baba's she loved so much, "for the One in the many." She had ample time for everyone and everything because she had so little need to have time for herself. She was there for everyone, she belonged to everyone, because Kitty was there for Him alone - she belonged only to her Beloved.

If one word could ever capture the dynamic of Kitty's service, it would have to be her favorite word "enthusiasm." Wendy recalls the day some time ago when a letter arrived in Kitty's office containing a definition of enthusiasm - 'to be alive with the spirit of God' - 'to be infused with the divine spirit.' Kitty was delighted and called Wendy in to tell her about this most wonderful word. Watching Kitty's enjoyment of the moment, Wendy realized that Kitty had no idea that Kitty herself was the living definition of enthusiasm.

And what enthusiasm! Whatever opportunity Baba gave Kitty, she seized it. She left her home in England for India, and then later, India for Myrtle Beach. It was not always easy, especially when coming to America she had to be physically apart from the Beloved. But she kept before her Baba's words:

By being where I want you to be, you are nearer to me than if you were with me physically.

Wherever she was - Meherabad, Meherazad, Meher Center - whatever she was doing - working in the kitchen, caring for the animals, cleaning the cabins, nursing Norina, helping Elizabeth, finding someone a job or a home - Kitty served the Avatar wholeheartedly and enthusiastically for sixty amazing years.

Through the example of Kitty's life, Meher Baba beckons each of us forward in the way of perfection. He demonstrates that it is possible to be "alive with the spirit of God" in all that we do. This path, as Francis Brabazon has said, is the path of "self-forgetfulness and beloved-alone-remembrance." This is the path that ends only when we are not and God alone is. Ultimately, Baba tells us, that is what it means to become perfect in His love.

When Meher Baba placed Kitty at Meher Spiritual Center forty years ago, He told her: "I will send for you one day." That day has come. But this does not mean that our time with Kitty has ended; it has only just begun. For where is Kitty now but where He is? And He is here; He is with us now..and always.

Can't you just imagine Kitty now - close in Beloved Baba's embrace? Isn't that His beloved Mehera at His side smiling warmly and lovingly? Nearby are old friends Elizabeth, Norina - of Elinorkit - and there are Rano and Margaret awaiting their turn to greet Kitty. All are together - joined as one with Him - each a perfect example of His perfect love. Look! They are beckoning to us, calling us to our true destiny - to join their company and be united with Him forever.



©1992 Meher Spiritual Center, Inc.

Compiled and written by
Buz and Wendy Connor, and Sheila Krynski
with special acknowledgement to
Ellen Book and Lois Breger

Photograph of Kitty in the 1970s on the inside front cover
courtesy of Chris Riger

Photograph of Meher Baba and Kitty in Venice, 1932
courtesy of Lawrence Reiter

Photograph of Kitty at Meher Spiritual Center, 1952
courtesy of Wendy Connor

Printed in the USA by Sheriar Press

