

## **When He Takes Over**

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Compiled by Bal Natu

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**AVATAR MEHER BABA**

Compiled by Bal Natu

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Meher Nazar Books  
Ahmednagar

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Avatar Meher Baba Perpetual Public Charitable Trust  
King's Rd, Post Bag #31,  
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*Avatar Meher Baba Bibliography*  
(1927 to February 1978)  
*Our Constant Companion*  
*Showers of Grace*

To Avatar Meher Baba  
whose love inspires these stories  
and to all those who feel His love  
dawning in their hearts  
and share this love with others.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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Many loving hands and hearts have made this book possible. To mention a few, Frank Parker, Jacko Caraco, and Mark Keller helped me in transcribing tapes and preparing the drafts of some stories. My warm heartfelt thanks to them and to all.

Beloved Baba, in a way, took over and speeded up this project when my dear friend and colleague, Steve Klein, who has been helping me in editing the volumes of *Glimpses of the God-Man*, visited Ahmednagar in June 1987 for two months. Without his help, I would not have been able to complete this book so soon. He willingly agreed to take the manuscript to the States to prepare the final version for the printer. Steve's wife, Daphne, as in the past, proofread the entire contents and suggested important stylistic changes. I am greatly indebted to both of them for their timely and loving help.

My sincere and wholehearted thanks to Baba-lovers in the East and West who, in their love for Baba, permitted me to include in this book their personal stories from their life with Baba.

Loving thanks to Mantravedi Sri Ramamurthy who graciously allowed me to use Meher Baba's photograph for the front cover and to Patti Stalker for the cover design itself.

And lastly, but most importantly, I express my deep gratitude to Beloved Baba who gave me this opportunity to compile the stories of His matchless, timeless Love. My salutations to Him.

Bal Natu

## PREFACE

This is the season for sharing Avatar Meher Baba's love with others. One way of doing this is through these stories which have been compiled and printed not to convince anyone that Meher Baba is the Avatar, or to impress anyone with His "miracles," but simply to share His unconditional love, which is the greatest miracle of all.

For it is Baba's love, expressed in an infinite number of ways which, in a natural way, brings us closer to Him. Baba speaks intimately with each of us in the personal language of our own hearts. This diversity can be seen in these stories. As Baba once observed, "I draw My dear ones to Me in My own ways." Sometimes these ways seem joyful, sometimes painful, but they are never harmful. On the contrary, they are His gifts to help us remember Him more often.

Once, to a small group gathered about Him, Baba casually conveyed, "To resolve all problems, remember Me wholeheartedly." When we lovingly think of Baba more and more, our hearts open and are filled with His divine presence. We begin to feel then, that God is Love, and the Avatar is God in human form. This recognition helps us try to please the Avatar in our daily lives and the more we give in to Him, the more He "takes over." We find now, that He is not just with us, but also actively guiding and directing our lives.

May these stories give off a whiff of the fragrance of Meher Baba's ever-abiding presence!

In His love, when He takes over  
What a splendid surprise!  
What a glorious day when His love dawns  
In our hearts' skies!

Meherazad  
July 10, 1988

Bal Natu



WHEN HE TAKES OVER

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## A Brief Glimpse of God's Life on Earth as Meher Baba

Merwan Sheriar Irani was born of Zoroastrian parents on February 25, 1894 in Poona, India. One day in 1913, while on his way to college, Merwan was beckoned by a very old woman sitting under a neem tree. This was Hazrat Babajan, one of the five Perfect Masters of that time. After this first meeting, Merwan used to sit with her regularly and some time in January 1914, she blessed him with the experience of the infinitude of God-realization. Another Perfect Master, Upasni Maharaj, in 1921 established Merwan in His role and status as the Avatar of the Age.

Merwan, now endearingly called Meher Baba by His followers, began a life of intense activity. As part of His Avatic work, on July 10, 1925, He began observing silence. A few days earlier one of His disciples asked, "But if you keep silent, how will you teach us?" and Meher Baba answered, "I have come not to teach, but to awaken."

In spite of His silence, Meher Baba continued to serve the needs of humanity on a material as well as a spiritual level. He established schools, hospitals and personally cared for lepers, the mad, and the *masts* (those whose minds have become overpowered by their love for God).

Meher Baba traveled extensively throughout India and Pakistan; made thirteen trips to the West, and gave His personal touch to the hundreds of thousands who flocked to Him during public *darshan* programs.

Although Meher Baba observed silence, through the medium of an alphabet board (which He discarded in 1954) and through gestures, He dictated several books and many messages concerning each one's journey to God, God's Advent as Man, and His eternal relationship with humanity.

Meher Baba's silence was still unbroken (except in the hearts of those responsive to His inner call) when He laid aside His physical body at Meherazad on January 31, 1969. Meher Baba's body, which is entombed on Meherabad Hill,

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remains a focal point for those who would love and follow Him. It is always possible here to meet the Avatar on a personal level and establish or reconfirm an intimate relationship with Him which will help clarify the guidance He eternally gives as the inner voice of one's heart. The stories compiled in this book are a living testimony to Meher Baba's eternal status as the Awakener.

## Messages of Avatar Meher Baba

I belong to no religion. Every religion belongs to Me. My own personal religion is of My being the Ancient Infinite One and the religion I teach to all is of love for God.

This love can be practised by anyone, high, low, rich, poor, and every one of every caste and creed can love God.

\* \* \*

God is not to be lured, but is to be loved. God is not to be preached, but is to be lived. Only those who live the life of love, honesty and self-sacrifice, can know Me as the Ancient One.

I can say with Divine Authority that I experience eternally, consciously and continually, being one with you all, and one in you all. Any worship or obeisance done to any deity... to any saint, master, advanced soul or yogi, eventually comes to Me. By offering pure unadulterated love to anyone and to anything, you will be loving Me, as I am in everyone and everything and beyond everything.

\* \* \*

Age after age, when the wick of righteousness bums low, the Avatar comes yet once again to rekindle the torch of Love and Truth. Age after age, amidst the clamour of disruptions, wars, fear and chaos, rings the Avatar's Call: "Come all unto Me."

And in the midst of illusion, as the Voice behind all voices, it awakens humanity to bear witness to the manifestation of God amidst mankind.

The time is come. I repeat the Call, and bid all come unto Me.

\* \* \*

I am the Divine Beloved who loves you  
more than you can ever love yourself.

Don't worry; be happy  
Remember Me; I will help you.

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### "Don't You Trust Me?"

"I wake up at two o'clock in the middle of the night. My inner being is clear, calm, of shining energy. I know, Baba is the Truth. And He is the Truth in me. In this truth I can live a wonderful, creative life. And work for His work. For about two hours, I am in this pure happiness, freed from all the give and take of polarities." These are the words written by Walter Mertens, one of Meher Baba's earliest Swiss disciples after the first day of his stay at Meherabad in November 1938.

Walter met Meher Baba in 1933 and later he introduced his wife Hedi to Baba. Both loved Meher Baba very dearly. As a response to their love for Him, Baba, during His visits to Europe between 1934 and 1937 spent several weeks in the Mertens' lovely house in Zurich.

I had heard many good stories about Hedi's love for Baba. I had also heard she had a large archive of photographs of Meher Baba which she had taken in India and Switzerland. So, in 1980 while returning to the States after my pilgrimage to Meherabad, I decided to see Hedi in Switzerland, although I knew she was not in good health.

At that time she was living in a little town carved out of the hills above Lugano. From the city the bus took its time climbing up the winding road to her hillside country home. The buildings at the heart of town gradually opened up to small fields of wild flowers; Hedi lived just beyond one such field. Up until now, I had only known Hedi Mertens through her pictures - those beautiful photos taken in Zurich of her and her children sitting with Meher Baba. The time was 1934, during His eventful trip to Fallenfluh. Now, it was almost 50 years later as I made my way toward her little cottage. Feeling a bit shy, I stopped to pick wild flowers along the way so I'd have something to offer her (too late now to think of other gifts - the closest store for that was a long bus ride away).

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Hedi's house was at the end of a country lane. Flowers in hand, I knocked and entered to see Hedi seated in a hospital bed, looking very stately - her long white hair brushed off her face and falling to her shoulders. Though she had suffered a stroke and couldn't walk, she was alert and enthusiastic about visitors. She soon put me at ease with her gracious manner.

The house was brightly lit, thanks to a large picture window which offered a magnificent view of the valley and the hills across the way. Hedi told me that Baba had visited this area, and from the charge of the atmosphere, I was not surprised.

Hedi wanted to know all about Myrtle Beach, and was interested in the shells I'd brought (though none of them was "perfect!"). Then she began to tell her stories. One tale in particular struck me.

In 1938 Hedi had been invited by Baba to go and live in India with the other Western women. Hers was an unusual case because she had two small children whom she had to leave behind in Switzerland. After a few months in India, Hedi received a letter from her husband, Walter, saying that the children were very ill and that even the doctors were worried. As she read the letter, she sat on the edge of her bed and wept. Norina Matchabelli happened to come in and she found Hedi in her sorry state. "Hedi, darling, whatever is the matter?" she asked. Hedi showed her the letter and Norina, in no uncertain terms, said, "Hedi, you simply must take this to Baba. You must."

So Hedi, letter in hand, went off to find Baba. When she gave Him the news, Baba shook His head and looked up at her. He said, "Hedi, when you first came to India, I said to put your family in My hands. Don't you trust me?"

"I trust you, Baba," Hedi insisted.

"I can see the children now," Baba informed her with a smile on His face and jokingly continued, "They are sitting under a large umbrella out in the garden with their grandmother. She is reading to them. And one of the



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children has his finger up his nose!" Everyone had a good laugh, especially Hedi who was tremendously relieved. Soon afterwards, she received another letter from home. Walter assured her that the children were fine, and he enclosed a photograph for her. There were the children out in the garden with their grandmother - and all the details were exactly as Baba had described - one even had a finger up his nose!

M.L. Dugan

---

## "Three Babies"

Strange as it may seem, it was really through allowing myself to be at the Ritz bar in Paris that I eventually met Shri Meher Baba.

A dear friend of mine whom I had not seen for a long time, Quentin Tod, was returning to England from India via Paris (1933). He had something of great importance to tell me. He tried to get in touch with me but without success, forgetting that I was only known by my stage name in Paris. He was walking down the Avenue de L'Opera when he suddenly changed his mind and decided to take the Boulevard des Capucines. It was just at this time, having left the Ritz, that I started down the Rue Cambon and, at the corner of the Boulevard des Capucines, we met.

We met because I was meant to hear what he had to tell me, and he promised to come to dinner that night. Nonny Gayley and her daughter Rano were living with me at this time, so during dinner and the evening we were told all about Shri Meher Baba, the Perfect Master. My dear Master, Abdul Baba, had died. This was the third time I had heard about Shri Meher Baba. Quentin left a small

photograph with me and promised he would do what he could to arrange a meeting if Shri Meher Baba came again to Europe.

Time passed and I heard nothing more, but I received a letter from a woman who had previously sublet my apartment, asking if she might have it for the month of July. I stopped with a friend whilst trying to decide what I had better do during this month, when a letter came from Quentin telling me that Baba had arrived and was in Porto Fino, Italy, and that I was to come quickly. It all became very clear why my apartment had been rented, for it gave me the wherewithal to go quickly, otherwise I would have had to borrow.

I arrived in Porto Fino July 8th, 1933 and was met by Quentin and Margaret Craske who had found a room for me in the village. I shall always be deeply grateful to Quentin for he did not forget his promise, which had made him indirectly responsible for my great happiness.

Baba was in Rome but was returning to Porto Fino that night. Next morning, July 9th, Quentin came to fetch me. The house where Baba was staying was on a high hill overlooking the Mediterranean and surrounded by a beautiful park. The moment we entered the gate I began to cry and it became worse as we climbed the hill. I was thoroughly ashamed of this behavior, especially as I looked a sight and could not stop crying.

By the time we reached the house, I was in a dreadful state. Quentin brought me a glass of water, but nothing helped and then the door opened and Baba stood there... I cannot remember what I did, I know that I looked and looked. It probably was only for a moment, but it seemed to me as if I had been looking for ages, and then I put my hands over my face and cried more than ever.

I shall never forget the kind and gentle way in which Baba led me to a sofa and made me sit beside Him and patted my hand. Through my sobs I tried to tell Him how sorry I was that I could not stop crying. He spelled out on His

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board to Quentin, "Tell her it is just as it should be." I had a great fear that He might send me away, so I asked if I was to be sent away, but my Beloved Baba shook His head, "No." I was then told to come to the garden every morning from ten to twelve and every afternoon from four to six.

I carried out these instructions to the minute, aided by the church bells. For ten days I cried. I neither knew whether I ate or whether I slept, I only thought of the moment when I could return to the garden. Sometimes I did not see Baba. One time He led me to the wall and pointing to the sea far below, said on His board, "I am like the sea, drown yourself in Me and you will live forever."

After Italy I saw Baba every time He came to Europe and I was so happy when He made use of my apartment in Paris to see those that wished to see Him there. When my daughter went in to see Baba I said, "Baba, dear, this is my baby." My daughter immediately said, "Baba, she is much more of a baby than I am," and then Baba said on His board, "Baba also means baby, so we are three babies." He is always ready with such adorable things to say, and makes one feel so happy and at ease.

People meeting Baba for the first time always wonder what they ought to say and how they ought to act. This is all useless, for the minute one comes into the presence of Baba, the answer to what one should do or say is all there. Everything is there.

Ruano Bogislav

## "Keep Me With You, Always"

I was indeed very fortunate to have spent a large part of my childhood with Beloved Meher Baba and it was entirely due to my father, Savak Kotwal, that our family came in such close contact with Him.

My father was working as chief accountant in the Bank of India in Bombay, and after a while he thought there was more to life than just counting money and going home to his wife and children. It was a spiritual call as it were, from within, and he went searching for Truth. In his long search, he came across the five Perfect Masters before he eventually came to Meher Baba. At his first meeting with Baba, he knew for certain that his search had ended, and he had, at last, found the Master he was longing to meet.

He gradually began to lose interest in his job, his family and in the world. He only longed to be with Beloved Baba. At first Baba kept reminding him that his duty lay with his wife and children, but my father only craved to be with his Master. Eventually, Beloved Baba permitted my parents to leave Bombay to stay with Him. So with us - the three children - they went to Bangalore [Karnatak] and surrendered their lives to Him on the 15th of March, 1940. My sister Najoo was 11 years old, my little brother Adi was only 2 while I was 7.

My sister and I were put into a first class boarding school in Hyderabad where we studied with the children of the Nizam (king) of Hyderabad. When we came home for our holidays we used to go to Beloved Baba, wherever He happened to be, and stay with the women *mandali*. As I look back, many beautiful memories of my childhood with Baba flood my mind. Even as a child I was so struck by His beauty. He was so very beautiful that I could never gaze into His eyes. It was too overwhelming for me.

Baba was always interested in our progress at school and we were told to try our best to be one of the top five in class.

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He would look at our reports and chide us if we didn't do well in certain subjects.

I was a mischievous child and used to lead the nuns in the convent a merry dance with my terrible behavior. My sister Najoo, who was a good girl, would write a long letter home to my mother about my naughty pranks. Mummy would go with the letter to Beloved Baba and read it out to Him. Instead of looking cross, He would smile mischievously and ask my mother as to what rank I stood in class and mother would say, "Well, she stood first, as usual," and Baba would tell her with a twinkle in His eyes, "What on earth are you complaining about then?"

My sister was a poor eater at school and, on her return to the ashram, she used to look quite delicate. Beloved Baba would look at her thoughtfully and then daily bring a spoonful of butter on a plate and feed her with His own hands during the holidays. Fasts were a common feature of ashram life but it was not so for the children, for we were given eggs (which were a rarity in the ashram) daily for breakfast. Baba cared for us so tenderly.

Once I suffered from severe tummyache for days on end and all the medicine I was given didn't help. Beloved Baba called me to Him and poured some medicine into a cup and stirred it with His finger. I was told to drink it, which I did to the last drop. He then washed the cup with His own hands; I was so upset to see Him do that, I made a gesture to take the cup, but He lovingly told me to go away. I never had that tummyache again after that.

When we traveled to school, either Pendu or Kaka Baria or my father would take us and bring us back for our holidays. When we children were with them, we traveled first class, but when they returned alone they had to travel third class.

Beloved Baba would play games with us when we were with Him. We played gilli-danda, an Indian game played with a long stick and short one pointed at both ends. Sometimes He also played cards with us. Once I saw Him

cheating at cards and told Him so. He looked at me with a twinkle in His eyes and said, "I am God and you tell me I am cheating?" So I innocently said, "Yes, I saw you hide a card behind you." He tweaked my cheek at that and laughed, and embraced me.

I was a very vain child and, as you know, pride comes before a fall. I did have a nasty tumble. Beloved Baba often used to look at me and gesture that I had a very pretty face. Other members of the women *mandali* would say the same thing. So I was proud of that, until the downfall, for I contracted small-pox. The scars it left on my face and body were very disfiguring. My face was like the surface of the moon with great big craters on it. I definitely looked ugly and I used to cry for hours on end and never dared look into the mirror.

One of the women *mandali* told Beloved Baba about the fact that I used to cry so much, for normally I was a very happy child. Our Beloved called me to Him. I stood before Him with my eyes on the ground holding back my tears. He asked me as to why I was so miserable, to which I replied that I was so ugly now with all those scars.

He took my face lovingly in His beautiful hands and said, "Is that all you are unhappy about?" Then He told me to apply calamine lotion on my face and body every day, which I did most religiously and soon, to my surprise, for you know that small-pox scars never disappear, my scars faded away. I have only two tiny dots near my eyes to remind me not to be vain ever again. Was it a little miracle performed by Beloved Baba? He says that He never performs miracles, but such things happen now and then.

On Meherabad Hill in the evenings sometimes all the ladies used to assemble in the dining shed and Beloved Baba would talk to them, sometimes on serious subjects. I was about 8 years old at the time and was more interested in the little zoo on the hill than all the serious goings-on. One day everybody assembled at Baba's request in the dining shed and I thought I would play hooky and would not be missed

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amongst all the grown-ups and other children too. So I decided to amuse myself at the zoo instead.

I was having a rollicking time with the monkey "Lucky" who belonged to Norina. I kept teasing it, and suddenly he got free from the cage and chased me. You can imagine, there was peace and quiet while Beloved Baba was talking seriously and the peace was disturbed by my ear-shattering screams. Everyone came out to see what was going on. Norina quickly grabbed her monkey which was about to take a good bite of my legs, as I had fallen and lay bruised and tearful on the floor.

I was petrified then, for I thought Beloved Baba would be very angry with me. Instead He called me gently to His side, saw my torn bleeding palms and asked Rano to get the first aid kit. Then very lovingly He cleaned my grazes and applied some medicine with His beautiful hands and then lovingly took my face in His hands and told me gently not to stray again and to sit down quietly near my mother. I was deeply moved, even at that age, by His gentle kind attitude towards me and His eyes so full of understanding and love.

When I last saw Beloved Baba at Meherazad in 1968, He told me, "I know you love me, but I want you to love me more and more.... Keep me with you, always, and repeat my name as often as you can. Don't worry, be happy, I will see to everything." And He has.

Hilla Talwar

"I Am That 'Mr. God' ..."

In the 1930s, before I knew of Meher Baba, I was totally devoted to politics and played an active part as a revolutionary; trying to free India, my motherland. The British, who were then ruling over India, twice put me in jail. Altogether I was imprisoned for over ten years because of my political activities.

The second time I was put in jail was in 1940. This time I did not have a trial and was simply incarcerated as a "state prisoner," with no term set to my imprisonment. After five years, I learned that some of the leaders of the revolutionary movement were being released. As these men were considered much more dangerous by the government than I, who was not a big leader, I began to expect that I too would be released soon.

But, instead of being set free, I was shifted to a deep underground cellar from which prisoners were not generally released, and I knew this was the end of the line for me. I thought of my lovely young wife, Subhadra, and my widowed mother whom I loved dearly, having to till our acres of farmland, waiting patiently and lovingly for me to come home - but I knew now that I would never see them again.

If I could only get out, I thought, I would even give up my revolutionary activities. I had really grown tired of being in jail and began to crave freedom. But I knew it was no use thinking in those terms for I would never get out and my loved ones would never even know what had happened to me.

I was very depressed. Then, one day, I suddenly sat up with a jerk, "God, only God, if He exists, can help me!" The thought just came to me that the only way out of jail was to ask God to help me. I had been brought up in a spiritual environment at home, but after joining the revolutionary party and spending a long time in politics, I had become an



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agnostic. But that night, when the other prisoners were asleep, I prepared myself to request God to release me.

I either didn't know, or by now had forgotten, how to address God so I simply said, "Mr. God, if there is any God, I request You, please get me released from this jail." But simultaneously with this request came, the thought to my mind that every punishment and pain is man's own earnings according to his deeds; if jail was my own earning, then why should God interfere? Yet right on the heels of this thought came another - that if I promised to accept any binding outside of jail, then this would serve the purpose. I felt I had found the solution.

So I began my request again, "Mr. God, please get me released from this jail and in exchange I promise to abide by and obey any binding whatsoever you impose upon me outside this jail." And while I was making this promise to God, I began to feel strongly that God was going to accept my bargain.

And then another thought entered my mind. How will I know if my bargain has been accepted by God? Even if I am released, what proof will I have that it was God's doing? So I added, "Please God, if You have accepted my promise and bargain, then get me released early in the morning, as soon as the prison gates are opened. If I am released any other time, the following day, tomorrow evening, or even a few hours after the gates open tomorrow morning, I will take it that my release was all by chance and not Your doing." Actually, it was an impossibility for me to be released as soon as the prison gates opened. For they opened at dawn, but the superintendent, who would have to sign my release papers, didn't arrive until at least ten in the morning.

Despite this, after so much conversation with God, I became so sure of my being released early in the morning that I started to pack my belongings in my two large trunks. I spent the whole night in praying, requesting, promising, bargaining and packing.

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As dawn approached I was getting extremely tired so when I heard the key being turned in the lock, my cell gate opened and a guard handed me a slip of paper on which was written, "Mr. Kumar, get yourself ready with your bag and baggage," I couldn't take it all in at once. I was still trying to simply understand what was happening when some prison officials came and took me to the superintendent's office.

I remember it was still dark and a lamp was burning in the office. The superintendent made me sign some papers for my release and traveling expenses. My trunks were given to two prisoners to carry and I was allowed to pass out of the main prison gates. My trunks were put down, the prisoners returned inside, and I was left there. I was free!

In the east, the sky was just lighting up. The superintendent left the prison after releasing me. I think I must have been the only prisoner to be released at such an odd hour because the office hours were from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. and the superintendent, ordinarily, never came on duty before ten. Yet here I was out of prison before 5 a.m.! To this day I do not know what led the authorities to order my release in that way and at that hour. At the time I was simply dazed. I got a ride into town and caught a train for Dehra Dun, U.P. I was home the next day.

Gradually I forgot everything and moved to my present home in the village of Meher Mafi which was then called Manjri Mafi. Five years later, towards the end of 1949, I saw a horse cart approaching my house one day. The people in it called on me and asked me if I could help them purchase some land. They wanted to purchase some land within a period of twenty-four hours. This was easy for me to arrange and, with my help, within two hours, they had bought the land.

They had come prepared; they had brought the money with them, which made me wonder if they were refugees from Pakistan or possibly even dacoits, as most people did not ordinarily carry so much cash on them. After the sale

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was completed, the two men looked at each other mysteriously. Then they asked me if I would arrange for meals to be given to a gentleman who was coming to live on the property they had just acquired. I said I could do that and, to my surprise, they insisted on giving me five hundred rupees for this in spite of my refusal.

Later I came to know that those men were followers of Meher Baba. They had been trying to buy land for Baba for over a month but had not been successful. That day they had received a long telegram from Baba specifically instructing them to obtain land about four miles from Dehra Dun in the direction of Hardwar but not on the main Hardwar Road itself. The telegram said that if they still couldn't acquire the required land within twenty-four hours then they were to drop the whole idea. So, taking Baba's name, carrying the purchase money with them, they followed the instructions in the telegram which brought them right to my doorstep!

Some days later, the gentleman they paid me to look after arrived. This was Kaikobad Dastur. Either I or someone in my family would take his food to him. One day as I was bringing him his tea, he showed me a photograph of Meher Baba and said, "He is the Avatar, God in human form, and you are fortunate to serve Him." And regarding himself, he said, "I am His slave."

I don't know what happened, but from that day I began to see Meher Baba in my dreams every night. Every night, until I actually met Baba in person, I saw Him in my dreams. Later, Baba Himself once asked me whether I had ever seen Him in my dreams. I replied, "Yes." Baba asked, "As I am?" I said, "No, Baba. I dreamt of You with a beard, looking very lean and thin as if you had been fasting." Many laughed at this and I thought I must have said something very foolish. But later on I came across a Baba button in which Baba had a beard and was very lean and thin as in my dreams. At once I purchased this and since then I have always kept that button with me.

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I met Meher Baba in His physical form for the first time on January 12, 1950, at Dehra Dun railway station. Someone asked me to wait outside and when I was called in, I saw Baba in the waiting room. I noticed that His fingers were on the edge of a large round table and His alphabet board was under His arm. A beautiful sight! He looked radiant and loving. He was smiling and I was simply enchanted by His radiance and beauty.

Some of the Baba lovers from Dehra Dun were standing in a corner and amongst them were those who had purchased the land with my help. On the opposite side of the table from Baba, Eruch was tying or untying a package. Vishnu was talking with Dr. Nilu. (All these names I came to know later.)

Baba unexpectedly gestured, asking whether there was any food. As no arrangement had been made for food I very humbly said, "Baba, may I bring it?" I felt as if everyone's attention was drawn towards me. Baba asked, "Can you bring the food within one hour?" I made some rapid calculations - I had my motorcycle parked outside and decided it was possible to bring food from my village, four miles away, within an hour. So I said, "Yes, Baba."

I rushed home. My wife hurriedly prepared a large vessel of rice with vegetables cooked in butter (pulao). I tied the vessel on the tank of my motorcycle and rushed back to the railway station. I managed it within an hour. As soon as I stepped into the waiting room, what I saw amazed me. Baba was standing with his fingers on the edge of the table, His alphabet board tucked under His arm. Eruch was tying or untying the same package and Vishnu was talking with Dr. Nilu just as before. It was as if I had only left the room for a second!

I placed the vessel of rice on the table. Baba smiled and asked Eruch to distribute plates to all those present. Baba, Himself, started serving large helpings of rice to each present. I began to get nervous as I had not brought enough rice for those on the station who had come to receive Baba.

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I had brought enough only for Baba and the *mandali*. On top of this, Baba had Eruch announce that all should have second helpings as the *mandali* might not get a chance to eat later on because they were settling into a new place and might not have time to prepare food.

After giving everyone there large helpings, Baba gestured that the rice should be taken to the women *mandali* who were in a separate ladies waiting room. Now I was really upset and I rushed forward and picked up the vessel, thinking it must already be empty by now. I was astonished to find that it was practically full; only a small corner was empty! I gave a sigh of relief and handed the vessel over to Dr. Goher.

Before leaving, Eruch mentioned that Baba had enjoyed the rice which my wife had prepared and asked whether I could supply food every day for about twenty people who would be staying on Rajpur Road in Dehra Dun. I said I could and I was specifically instructed that the food should be brought each day at 11 a.m. in the morning and 6 p.m. in the evening. Further, I was told that a separately cooked bowl of rice should be sent especially for Baba.

The following morning, along with a servant boy to help me carry the food, I set off on my motorcycle for Rajpur Road. I left home at around ten so that I would be there on time. But as I approached the "Survey of India Gate," where there is a clock tower, for no apparent reason my motorcycle stopped and, despite all my efforts, would not start again until the clock struck eleven. I was five minutes late. Baba asked me why I was late and I told him what had happened. He smiled and pardoned me. This strange event occurred each morning when I took Baba's food, but never in the evening.

Once it so happened that I was preparing to take the food for Baba in the evening when I saw Vishnu approaching my house in a horse carriage. He informed me that Baba wanted me to continue supervising the construction of a well and

that he, Vishnu, would take the food to Baba. I asked my wife to give the food to Vishnu and I went to see to the well.

When I returned home about seven that night, I found my wife very distressed. I asked her for the reason. She very hesitatingly said that she had sent all the food for the *mandali* but forgot to send the especially prepared bowl of rice meant for Baba. I became furious with her. She said, "Why don't you take it now?" But it was already very late so I decided it was better not to.

That night I had a dream of Baba saying to me, "Don't worry, I have pardoned you." In the morning, when I got up, I did not give it any special importance, thinking that one sometimes dreams about whatever is on one's mind. But no sooner did I think this than I saw Keki Desai, a Baba lover, cycling speedily towards my house. I asked him why he had come so early in the morning. He told me that Baba had sent him to convey the following, "Don't worry, I have pardoned you." The very same words that I had heard Baba say in my dream!

When I took Baba's food that morning, as usual I was five minutes late. I started to explain about the omission of the rice bowl by my wife, but Baba stopped me by gesturing, "Don't worry, I have pardoned you." Spontaneously I exclaimed, "This is the third time I have heard this."

Baba then looked at me with a very stern expression and asked, "Did you hit your wife for the omission of the rice bowl?" I answered, "Yes, Baba. I was so furious that I hit her." Baba looked at me seriously and ordered, "Never hit your wife again." This instruction of Baba's I have never broken to this day.

In 1954, about eight years after my release from prison, Baba called me to Satara in Maharashtra to spend one week with Him. But once I arrived, Baba kept me there for almost one year. He further imposed upon me many restrictions and bindings such as to have no correspondence with

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anyone, never to step out of the premises unless I was to accompany Baba as His umbrella bearer, etc.

Several months passed like this and my clothes were almost in rags and I had grown a beard. One day it occurred to me that I had so many restrictions on me, it was as if I were in prison! I became a little upset; I had spent so many years in jail and now it seemed my life hadn't changed at all. But that very day Baba took me along with Him in His car while He went for *mast* work.

On the way, out of the blue, Baba asked me, "How long were you in prison?" Without thinking about why Baba was asking me such a strange question, I spontaneously replied, "More than ten years on two occasions; on the first occasion I was released after completing my sentence, but on the second occasion which was during the Second World War, I was put in prison for an indefinite period."

"How did you get released then?" Baba asked, and all of a sudden it all came back to me. I had completely forgotten my bargain with God, but now I remembered everything - my request, my bargain and my promise. I said, "I requested God to release me."

Baba gestured, "Only requested? Didn't you say something more to God?"

I looked up into Baba's eyes. He was smiling. I said, "Yes, Baba. I promised also."

"In what manner did you request God, and what was your promise to Him?"

I explained that I didn't know how to address God so I had begun my request by saying, "Mr. God, if there is any God, I request You, please get me released from this jail." And, in return for this, I had promised to abide by any binding whatsoever imposed upon me outside of jail.

All along Baba had been smiling: But now, suddenly He became very serious. He took my right hand and placed it upon His and made me repeat the promise three times. "Don't break this promise," He gestured. "I am God; I am

that 'Mr. God' to whom you made the promise. I have kept My side of the bargain; now keep yours."

Something like an electrical current passed through my body and I began to perspire till I was completely soaked. Baba then caressed me lovingly. Up to that time I had served Baba and loved Baba as a Great Soul, but now I knew with a conviction beyond question that I had found God, the Highest of the High.

Shatrughan Kumar

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### "Me in the Arms of God!"

It was in 1952 that my friend, Loretta, called me to tell me that a Master was coming to New York and asked if I would like to join her and Harold and Virginia Rudd to go and meet Him. My husband and I were living in Newark, New Jersey at the time and so I said, "Yes."

In the early fifties little was known about Masters but, having been a student of the Ancient Order of Rosicrucians, I had just learned how Masters were all-powerful and omniscient. Also, as the phrase goes, when the pupil is ready, a Master will appear and, since this invitation came unbidden, I thought I must be ready and was quite proud of myself.

However, when my friend called back that afternoon to tell me the Master had had an accident, I was greatly let down. "But we are going anyway," she said. After finishing that phone conversation, great doubts assailed my mind about this Master. A Master is supposed to be all-knowing and all-powerful. How could he allow himself to have an accident? So I called my friend back and told her I could not go, making some excuses. "All right," she said,



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"I will let you know how it was when we come back tomorrow."

Faithfully she called me the next day and was in a state of ecstasy. "Ann," she exclaimed, "I know Meher Baba is God. I know He is the Christ!" "How do you know that?" I questioned. "Because all I could do was fall down on my knees before Him and exclaim, 'Oh my God!'"

With that, a deep wave of feeling, even ecstasy, came over me and hit me like a bolt out of the blue, impressing me with the thought of having missed the opportunity of a lifetime. She consoled me saying, "I have brought some pamphlets and a book; I'll let you read them."

From then on I tried to read whatever came to me and once I was able to attend the showing of a film narrated by Darwin Shaw whose soulful description of the Master's work and his own experiences of meeting Him touched me deeply. The film was beautiful and Darwin spoke with sincerity and conviction in Baba's being the Christ.

In 1953, a circular was given out by Meher Baba expressing His wish that His lovers should wholeheartedly repeat softly (but audibly) from 4:00 a.m. to 5:00 a.m. on July 10th, one name of God without a break. Westerners were to say, "God Almighty," Hindus, "Parabrahma," Muslims, "Allah-Hu Akbar," Zoroastrians, "Yezdan," and so forth. It was very important to me that I carry out this, my first order from Baba, and I felt very good and elated that I had been able to do so.

Returning to bed, I was just about to pull up the covers when, to my astonishment, there stood Baba by my side. He did not speak but conveyed the thought, "I am pleased," and in an instant was gone. That clinched it for me. Surely Baba was what He said He was and I never again doubted Baba being God.

Now and then I would attend meetings in New York. But uppermost in my mind was the desire to apologize to Baba for what I had felt earlier about Him. It was a deep

urge and it would be the first thing I would do upon meeting Him, I thought.

Finally, in 1956 the chance came. Together with my husband and two friends we went to meet Baba at the Delmonica Hotel in New York on July 22nd. As we sat in the waiting room with the others a lady came in and announced, "The photographers are here to take pictures of Baba. Who wants to be photographed with Baba, raise your hands."

In an aside my husband whispered to me, "Don't you raise your hand." Well, unbelievably, no one raised a hand. What kind of people are they, I thought; they don't want to be photographed with Baba? At that moment the lady repeated her request and my hand went up. Behind me another hand went up and we were told, "You two come out."

As the door opened and I beheld Baba in a white coat sitting on a white divan, the thought came to me, "This august Being is the essence of purity." And, like my friend Loretta, I too fell right on my knees before Him. Forgotten was the speech of apology I had so carefully worked out; not a word would come to my lips.

Someone had told me, "You never know what you will do when you come before Baba." As it was, I felt Baba's hand touching my wrist gently and drawing me up. Before I knew it, I was face to face with the Compassionate Father and in His all-embracing arms. Baba held me so wholeheartedly for what seemed to me such a long time that I was in wonderment at what had happened to me and found myself in utter amazement as the thought came - "Is it possible, me in the arms of God?" At that instant, as if reading my thoughts, Baba's arms dropped and I felt His hands touching my shoulders. There I stood facing Him and feeling His gaze directed to my eyes; this also seemed to me to last for a long time.

A strong urge came to blink, but somehow I knew I must not. Hard as I resisted, finally I had to blink, much to

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my regret even to this day, for Baba immediately let go of my shoulders. It was John Bass, who was standing nearby, who broke the spell by saying, "Baba, this is Mrs. Forbes, she too contributed to *God Speaks*." Well, this released my tongue and I could say, "Baba, yes, I have the book but I don't understand it." With this Baba began to gesture and Eruch interpreted, "Baba tells you, you must read the book five times and then you will have it for all eternity." With this Baba gave me a grape.

Then He made a sign for the other person to come forth. Leonard Willowby was his name, a black man. Baba embraced him very heartily and I was impressed that it had some special significance for the black race as a whole. His *darshan* over, the photographers began to click. My instructions were to step backward fifteen feet and come forward to greet Baba. Baba reached out to shake my hand. Imagine my joy to have another touch of the God-Man; and I had the privilege to do this three times!

After finishing with the photographers, we both returned to the waiting-room where people, including my husband and friends, were eagerly awaiting their turn for *darshan*. Speaking for myself, I was in high spirits and my joy was truly unbounded when John Bass told me I could see Baba again. Now, my good husband had not read as much about Baba as I had and when our turn came, unlike myself being in awe before Baba's august Being, he greeted Baba more like a friend saying, "Baba, I am so glad you are here; my wife couldn't wait for you to come, for weeks she hasn't been talking about anything but BABA, BABA, BABA." And Baba smiled, shaking his hand vigorously, with His other hand patting my cheek benignly. My heart was in rapture and I felt in that instant that our marriage was blessed by God. One of our friends, who met Baba that day, was moved to tears and could not stop crying for a long time.

We had still another treat coming to us, for as we were about to leave, Dana Field told us, "Don't go yet, Baba is giving us a discourse." All went into the music room where

Don Stevens read a message as Baba sat near a grand piano, on top of which was a big bowl of peaches. After the message was read, Baba reached for the peaches and while holding one in His hand, His gaze directed at a particular person, He suddenly tossed the peach in the opposite direction. This game went on until the bowl of peaches was empty. Don Stevens, the lucky one, caught four and graciously shared two with me.

It was then announced that certain persons present were welcome to meet Baba upstairs in His room and it was then that I remembered I had left my hat in the waiting room. Foolish me, I brought a hat to meet the Avatar and as I shook hands with Baba it had sat on my head like lead as I went back and forth to meet Him. When I came out from meeting Baba I had flung it into the corner of the waiting room in my dismay. But even that silly hat did me some good service for as I picked it up I happened to look at the open door and I saw Baba, with a group of people, waiting for the elevator.

"Let's go," my husband urged. "No, no, wait," I said, as I pleaded, with closed eyes, from my heart, "Oh Baba, just one more look!" Baba was standing about thirty feet from me looking in the other direction when, slowly, to my utter joy, He turned His head and out of the corner of His right eye, gave me that last glance. I was in exultation.

Finding myself back out on the sidewalk, New York looked the same but I felt as tall as the buildings and as light as a feather, just gliding along, my feet hardly touching the ground. In the presence of the Highest of the High, my heart was filled with His Love and it stayed with me for three days. I felt like embracing everyone I met and telling them of God being with us. Slowly I came down to my old state, but not quite to my old self, for I had been blessed to meet GOD IN HUMAN FORM.

Ann Forbes

## He Not Only "Changes" Us, He "Charges" Us

One evening during 1944, a stranger called me on the telephone - would we like to attend a meeting at his home? Our address in Los Angeles had been given to him by a friend of ours. As this friend was a very interesting person, my husband and I assumed the meeting would be worthwhile and we gladly accepted. So it proved to be - a gathering of representatives in the domain of psychology, philosophy and the like. At the close of the meeting our host, Malcolm Schloss, led us to a photograph on the wall. "This is Meher Baba of India," he said.

Looking at the photograph, great waves of power emanated from the face on which I looked as palpably as if the sun had suddenly flashed on a cold winter day. "How wonderfully kind he looks," I managed to say, although silence would have been more in keeping with the waves of delight that were sweeping over me. "Yes, that is the attribute he emphasizes most, kindness and love for all mankind," said my friend.

"What else does he especially teach?" Lawrence White asked. "He has not come to teach but to awaken," our host replied. "He has kept silence since 1925." The thought came to me, how can he convey his message in silence? How could this possibly be? Then quickly I recalled Maeterlinck's essay on silence. That was my answer.

After that eventful evening, if anyone had tried to lessen my faith in Meher Baba, such attempts would have been futile. I had contacted him spiritually and the impact of that meeting would remain with me forever and ever. The next morning upon awakening, the same glory that had pervaded me the night before was still with me. All my faculties were enhanced and my physical well-being super alive.

One of the many gifts Meher Baba bestows on those who really love him enough to follow his discipline is that of developing in us rare intuitional attributes. He not only "changes" us, he also "charges" us with a spiritual voltage.

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Those receiving it become transmitters more or less and are able, even without words, to convey it to others.

However small or great our ability may be, this spiritual push that he gives starts us sometimes in a new breathtaking direction that awakens faculties that have remained dormant, such as inner cognition. Through Meher Baba we are enabled to make the leap from reason to intuition. Perhaps his Silence is the medium he uses to test our ability to receive it.

During the spring of 1956, we received the joyous news that Baba would visit the United States. The cities to be blessed by His Presence would be New York, Myrtle Beach, Washington, D.C., Los Angeles, Meher Mount near Ojai, and San Francisco. As soon as I heard the news, I made ready to join his party at Meher Center-on-the-Lakes at Myrtle Beach where he expected to remain for six days. With joyous expectancy I took flight across the continent at an age when I should long since have been lying in the grave. [She was 86 at the time.] I flew across the continent to meet the Avatar!

Although I had known Baba spiritually for more than ten years, through inner contact and through friends who knew him, yet when I actually met him personally it seemed similar to meeting a being from another sphere. He is the endearing Father, "nearer to us than breathing, closer than hands or feet." A spiritual guide, the Avatar!

Each morning and afternoon while at the Center, Baba gave short interviews of three minutes each to those who asked to meet him. The effects of his blessing were reflected on the faces of those leaving his presence. Some seemed ecstatically happy and some filled with wonder and awe. Our lives became enhanced in his Presence, especially during the walks we were privileged to take with him.

Among the messages from Baba given out for the general public through the press, were the following excerpts:

I have only one message to give and I repeat it age after

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age. My message to one and all is: "Love God."

One must love God with all sincerity to such an extent that one loses one's self completely in love.

And how does one love God? One can love God as He ought to be loved by trying one's utmost to make others feel happy even at the cost of one's own happiness.

[A timeless, matchless message indeed!]

Ruth White

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### The Only True Companion

I first had the blessed good fortune to meet Meher Baba in 1950, during the one day He stepped out of the New Life on October 16, in Mahabaleshwar. But the incident I would like to relate now, occurred seven years after that.

I was living in Poona and was an active member of the Poona bhajan group. Baba came to Poona that summer and was staying at the Ganeshkind Botanical Gardens. This was before Baba started staying regularly at Guru Prasad.

Baba decided that He wanted to have a meeting with the Poona bhajan group and He asked one of its members to draw up a list of those who were involved in this group so they could be invited to attend the meeting. But all of this was supposed to be strictly confidential. Once informed of the meeting, you were not supposed to let anyone else know about it. Still, somehow, we sensed that something was up. And while no one would openly talk about it, we used to drop hints to each other, make suggestive comments in our conversation and therefore I was waiting eagerly for someone to come and officially invite me to the meeting.

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As it turned out, one person was assigned the job of letting the Poona bhajan members know about the meeting and as he was seeing so many of us in turn, it became obvious that he was the one bearing the invitations. I saw him several times, but he didn't say anything to me about any meeting.

As time passed, I began to become quite anxious. I had discovered that the meeting was to be held that afternoon and I waited with much hope and anticipation until the last moment for my invitation to arrive. To my surprise, no one ever showed up to inform me about the meeting. As I was quite active in the group, there had never been any doubt in my mind as to my being invited. It was a painful shock for me and I felt deeply hurt at this omission.

My emotions were in such turmoil that I decided to take off on my bicycle and cycle away to some lonely place where I could be by myself. I told my mother that I was going out and left the house.

At first I just cycled aimlessly but eventually I came to the Sangam Bridge at the juncture of the Mula and Mutha Rivers. The afternoon was hot, but not nearly as torrid as the emotions raging within me. I got down from my cycle and sat under a tree for an hour or so and then cycled home, hot, dejected and tired.

To my surprise, before I could even enter the house, my mother started shouting at me, scolding me for not telling her exactly where I was going when I left. She said, "Baba sent a car here to take you to the Botanical Gardens. Now rush there immediately."

I was stunned at this news. I cursed myself now for ever having left the house, but it was too late now to worry about that. I jumped on my cycle and began to pedal as fast as I could, wishing all the while that I could go even faster. When I reached the gardens and the house where Baba was staying, I just threw my cycle down and ran forward.



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As I entered the room, Baba looked at me so lovingly that I couldn't contain my emotions and I burst out into tears.

"Why didn't you come for the meeting?" Baba gestured. "I was not called," I replied. Baba looked very surprised to hear this, and then He gestured for me to come and sit near Him.

I went forward and sat facing Baba, with my back to all the others who were there. Baba looked at Eruch and gestured, "Why was his name left off the list?" Eruch said, "Baba, I did not prepare the list." And Eruch then informed Baba of who had done it. When I heard the name I was taken aback. The person responsible was none other than my classmate and very close friend. I couldn't believe he could have left me out intentionally and was sure it must have been some sort of mistake. But Baba turned to me and gestured,

"You say that you are close friends. But what kind of friendship is this? You were together in school, in college and both of you have come to me and love me, but still he forgot to include your name. Your own friend!"

Baba continued to tease me in this vein for some time. But then He turned serious and looking straight into my eyes He declared, "Always remember one thing. All your relations in the world - your father, mother, brothers, sisters, and friends - are only your companions for the time being. They remain with you for a certain period but I am the only companion who is with you from the very beginning and will remain with you till the very end."

After the meeting, I was told by the others that as soon as the meeting had begun, Baba had asked about me and then sent the car to bring me. My friend may have forgotten me but Baba had not. And, in later life, I experienced many disappointments - people I trusted and felt close to, let me down time and time again. But not only has Baba never abandoned me; He is the only companion I have ever had

whose love for me is unfailing and unconditional.

Pratap Ahir

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### Unfailing Response of the Omnipresent One

I was only three when my parents died. My elder brother took on the responsibility of taking care of the family. We lived at Barwasagar, near Jhansi in U.P. I was very upset at the loss of my parents but as I grew up I consoled myself with the thought that God is the Father of all and that He is omnipresent.

Despite this faith in God, I thought that religion was an obstacle in reaching Him. How nice it would be, I used to think as I got older, if somewhere there were a place where people of all religions could gather as one.

In 1949 my elder brother died. Our family's finances were now limited and I sometimes wondered how I would be able to finish my schooling. My elder sister now moved back into the house to take care of the family, but life was not always easy. There was a small hill behind our house and I used to go there from time to time to sit and reflect and I would feel closer to God and be comforted.

As I grew up, I came into contact with a Baba lover named Narayan Das Khare. He gave me some Baba literature and suggested I accompany him to a *darshan* program Baba was giving in 1954. But for some personal reasons I could not go with him.

Two years later, our financial difficulties worsened and one day I got into an argument with my sister over money. I wanted her to give me some amount, but she refused. I lost my temper and blurted out, "If you don't give it to me, I will take an axe and chop off your head!" My sister didn't pay

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any attention to this outlandish threat and seemed unaffected by it. She knew that I was hot tempered. But a little while later, after my anger had cooled, it suddenly struck me what a horrible thing I had said to my sister.

How could I have threatened to take her life? I was appalled at my behavior. I couldn't sleep that night because my remorse and repentance were so great. Finally, around midnight, I got up and left the house. I went to the small hill where I used to go to feel closer to God.

My emotions were in a turmoil and I couldn't control them. I started to plead to God to remove me from the world. "Just see how over a mundane matter like money, I have sunk so low that I threatened to kill my sister. Please Lord, forgive me and help me from now on just to long for You." I was completely distraught. I wasn't thinking about what I was saying; it just came out spontaneously.

I was in such a state that sometimes I was singing, sometimes I was weeping and sometimes I was talking out loud to the Lord, beseeching Him to come to me. I knew that the Lord manifested to His lovers when they called out to Him wholeheartedly and I implored Him to come to me, to give me some sign of His presence. For three hours I kept it up, but the Lord didn't seem to hear my pleas; or so it seemed at the time.

Even so, I found my emotions calming somewhat, and although I was still disappointed that God had not answered my call, I began to be in a more ordinary state of mind and I realized that my family would be worrying about me; wondering where I had gone and what had happened to me, so I went home.

A week or so later I had to go to Jhansi. As I was cycling home and approaching the Betwa River, a car passed me. The Betwa was very wide at this point and there was a ferry which used to take people across. The ferry didn't have any set time, but would go whenever people needed it. Knowing that it would leave soon, now that a car had arrived, I pedaled furiously so as to catch the ferry myself.

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When I arrived, the car had not been put on board yet. The ferry people knew me and they called out to me to put my bike on first. So I did. Then the passengers from the car got down and the driver slowly drove the car onto the ferry. I was standing with my bike just in front of the car. As the passengers from the car came aboard, I was struck by one of them in particular. I had never seen anyone who looked so divine, so majestic, so radiant! I just stared at him. "He must be from some royal family," I thought to myself.

The passengers got back into the car and the whole time we spent on the ferry, which was about an hour as the river was quite wide and the ferry was very slow, I just stood there and stared at this man sitting in the car. I found that I felt a certain calmness inside myself, just from looking at him. When we reached the other shore, I got down with my bike and drove home.

Time passed and I didn't think much about this incident again. In 1958 my friend told me that Meher Baba was giving *darshan* again and that He had said that even if one was on his deathbed, he should not miss this opportunity to come. My friend persuaded me to go with him.

We arrived at Meherabad in the evening. There was a large *pandal* set up behind the main building of Lower Meherabad and tents had been erected to accommodate those who had come. We were not allowed to go up the hill, but I was wandering around Lower Meherabad when I came upon the Rahuri cabin. I was struck by the symbols of the different religions which adorned its walls near the door. This was what I had dreamt about as a youth, a place where all religions were brought together as one. I felt very happy about this and it made me feel that I had come to the right place.

The next morning I was sitting on a bench on the verandah of Meherabad Hall when Baba's car pulled up. All of a sudden that emotion, that upsurge of genuine longing

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for God which I had felt two years earlier on the hill behind my house, came back. I found myself weeping.

I stood up and saw that people were starting to get ready to form queues to have Baba's *darshan*. I decided I had to be the first so I rushed to the head of the line and I actually got to the front. I would be the first to have Baba's *darshan*! Or so I thought, but Baba then gestured that the men would have to wait and the women would have *darshan* first. So I stood there, at the front of the line, and watched the women come forward to pay their respects to Baba.

As I stood and watched, I noticed that some, after having Baba's *darshan*, started weeping uncontrollably. One even fell down in a faint and a few started loudly calling out Baba's name as if hysterical. I was amazed at this. Baba must be enjoying this display of emotion, I thought, but what am I going to do then? I am not the type to display my feelings in such a manner.

As I was thinking this, a government official went to the front of the queue and got in front of me. I wasn't too upset because I thought, well, maybe he has had Baba's *darshan* before and will show me what to do. Eventually Baba signalled that it was the men's turn to come forward. Baba gestured to one of His *mandali* who was standing next to Him and then He pointed to me with a look of recognition on His face.

How I went forward to Baba, whether I bowed or not, what Baba did, how I walked away; it is all a blank to me. To this day I have no memory of it at all. From the moment Baba pointed at me, I have no recollection of anything at all until I was walking away from the *darshan* queue with tears streaming down my face. I reached up to wipe the tears away and noticed for the first time that I was holding an orange and a garland in my hands. I hadn't even realized it until then.

I had never been keen on offering garlands or the like because it had always been my feeling that the only thing one could offer to God or to the God-Man was one's self. But

because my dear friend, Khare, had prevailed upon me, I had taken the orange and the garland to offer Baba. But I had obviously forgotten to offer Him either. I decided to get back in line so I could give these two gifts to Baba. As I stood in line for the second time and slowly approached Baba, it suddenly struck me that I had seen Him before.

I couldn't think where I might have seen Baba before, but eventually it came to me that He must have been the One whose countenance had made such an impression on me on the ferry. Later I asked some others where Baba had been at that time in November 1956 and discovered that He had driven to Chattarpur with four of His men *mandali* to contact a *mast* name Shavir Baba. Baba's route would have taken Him to the ferry on the Betwa and this coincided with the same time that I had been there.

I was convinced that indeed it must have been Baba I had seen on the ferry two years earlier. And then it struck me - I had been crying and longing and pleading to God to give me His *darshan* and I had thought my call had gone unanswered. Yet within only a few days, unbeknownst to me, not only had God given me the rare privilege of glimpsing His human form, but He had given me *darshan* for over an hour! How compassionate is the Avatar! He truly does answer the prayers of those who wholeheartedly call out to Him.

This made a deep impression in my heart and left me with the conviction that Meher Baba in indeed Omnipresent God in human form.

Ram Sahai Yadav

## "God And I Are One"

Meher Baba first gracefully came into the life of my mother, though in a very subtle way. My mother was a captain of a Girls Guide group. In 1936 she attended its All-India Camp at Calcutta. On opening day, not wanting to be late for the flag hoisting ceremony, she hemmed up her sari with a small pin so that she could walk faster. The pin scratched her, however, and the scratch became infected. So much so that after a day or two she felt that her body was getting stiff. Soon it got worse and she was rushed to the hospital. It was severe tetanus. She lay there in a coma, unconscious for four days. The doctors gave up all hope.

In the hospital ward, during her coma, she had a dream which she later remembered and cherished all her life. In that dream she entered a very magnificent hall and saw a most elegant person sitting on a high silver throne. There was a pleasant light surrounding him. Soon she found herself engrossed in the very melodious music that was being played there. How long this continued she didn't remember. But the next thing she recalled was a soft voice saying, "Mrs. Patel, wake up, your husband and brother have come to see you." She opened her eyes and was happy to see them, but she also felt sad that she had to leave the beautiful hall, the sweet music and, above all, the divine presence of the holy one sitting on the throne.

Later, when she got well, she narrated her dream to her brother, Minoo Kharas. Impressed, Minoo said to her, "I am not suggesting that you believe in Meher Baba, but I wish that with an open mind you should once avail yourself of his *darshan*." She didn't respond immediately to this suggestion, but as a result of his gentle yet lovingly persistent persuasion over the years, she agreed finally to meet Meher Baba. So, in 1948, twelve years after her dream, she accompanied Minoo to see Baba.

As soon as she entered the room and saw Meher Baba, she touched Baba's lotus feet and spontaneously exclaimed,

"Baba! Baba! It was You on the silver throne! During my coma I saw You in my dream. Now I see You here in person." Those around Baba did not understand what she was talking about, but Baba nodded knowingly. Baba's All-knowingness is not limited by time. In that brief meeting she got drenched in Baba's love and since then Baba was life and breath to her.

My mother wrote me, (by this time I was married and not living at home) briefly about her meeting with Baba. Previously, in my teens, I had browsed through a copy of Meher Baba's biography in Gujarathi. I must say that I had great regard and respect for Him, but that was all from the intellectual level. I was not drawn to Baba through love or devotion. Instead I had greater interest in reading books published by the Theosophical Society and even longed to see J. Krishnamurthi. But somehow, whenever I visited Bombay, I was told that he had just left, either for the States or some other place in India. I used to feel depressed because of missing my opportunity to meet with Krishnamurthi and wondered whether I would ever meet someone who would guide my life spiritually.

In 1952 my mother and brother, Hoshang, left Karachi, Pakistan for good to settle in England. The thought of not seeing them for years to come saddened me a lot. We were a close knit family. A decade later in May 1962, Hoshang wrote me, "I intend to visit India with the intention of seeing Meher Baba in Poona, if permission is granted. I will be in Karachi for some days and you can meet me there." I felt overjoyed to read the contents. I left Quetta, where I stayed with my husband, to be in Karachi to receive my brother. I was really thrilled to see him.

During most of our conversations Hoshang would invariably bring in Meher Baba and aver his faith in Him as God. I said to him, "Hoshang, you are talking so much about Baba, yet in spite of listening to you, I personally have many many questions in my mind." He replied, "You talk of so many saints and masters but I tell you, don't miss the



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chance to see Baba." He then informed me that in November, 1962 a large gathering of Baba lovers was to be held in Poona and that would be a good opportunity for me to meet Baba. I wondered at Hoshang's faith in and love for Baba; especially as he had never met Him. However I could feel that Hoshang's heart was aflame with Baba's love and with an intense yearning to see Him. He had come to Karachi just because he thought it would be easier to communicate with Him from there than from London. With great hope, he sent a cable to Baba asking permission to see Him, anticipating a favorable reply.

At that time, Baba was staying at Guru Prasad in Poona and He sent a cable that Hoshang shouldn't visit Him at present. When my brother read those words he looked shocked and remained silent for a minute. Then he softly said, "Baba, Thy will be done!"

It seems that Baba, the All-knowing One, was touched with this spirit of resignation to His will, for an hour later another cable came stating that my brother was now allowed to come, provided he arrived in Poona within 24 hours. Hoshang's joy knew no bounds.

Immediately he went straight to the airport. He had no previous booking, but he was able to get a seat on the first plane leaving for Bombay. After landing in Bombay, he rushed to the railway station and saw a train that was about to depart for Poona. There was no time to purchase a ticket, but he boarded the train anyway. At the next stop he called the conductor and happily paid him the railway fare and the additional penalty for not having purchased a ticket at the station.

Getting down at Poona, he went directly to Guru Prasad, arriving there within the 24 hour period Baba had set. To his surprise, without any delay, he was ushered in to Baba, who was having lunch. Hoshang put down the heavy bag he was carrying, lovingly looked at Baba's radiant face and announced simply, "Baba, I have come!"

Baba smiled His divine smile and gave him some food to eat. He polished off the food completely and then said to Baba, "I wish I could even eat the plate because it has been blessed with your touch!" Baba gestured, "Be practical, Hoshang."

The next morning, after a good night's rest, bath and a shave, Hoshang was called in to see Baba. During the interview, after some informal conversation, Baba asked about his plans to return to England. Hoshang replied, "I fly straight to London from Bombay." Baba gestured, "No, go back to Karachi and then on to London." Hoshang willingly said, "Yes, Baba."

This simple and casual instruction given to Hoshang was of profound significance to me. I knew of Hoshang's return plans and was feeling dejected that I wouldn't meet him again for years. In a mood of desperation, I looked at one of Baba's pictures in my uncle's (Minoo Kharas) room and pleaded, "Baba, you say you are God and you are Love. If so, will you bring my brother back to me before he goes to England?"

I just said these words and burst into tears. So you can imagine my feelings when, to my surprise, Hoshang suddenly appeared in Karachi two days later. I hugged him and tears started rolling down my cheeks. After this event, I inwardly implored Baba, saying, "Please forgive me. I never dreamt that you would grant my prayer." This was the beginning of my conviction that only real love counts and that Baba is true Love.

From then on, my longing to see Meher Baba began to blossom in my heart. Baba also lovingly responded to it. Within five months my brother came again to Karachi on his way to Poona to attend the East-West Gathering. My mother also accompanied him. As previously arranged, I came from Quetta to Karachi. It was a great delight to see my mother after a period of ten years. We had some wonderful moments. Prior to their arrival I had decided to participate in

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the love feast at Guru Prasad, so we traveled together to Bombay and then proceeded to Poona.

I still had so many questions plaguing my mind and I was looking forward to an interview with Baba. But by the time we reached the big closed gate of Guru Prasad, we saw thousands of Baba lovers waiting outside. We thought there would be a stampede. At last the gate was opened and we were carried along inside with the crowd. In that rush and hurry we somehow managed to walk slowly through that long wide driveway. By the time we got to the awning erected at the back side of Guru Prasad, we could only get seats way in the back, far away from Baba's sofa chair on the dais.

I had once seen a film called the "King of Kings." I liked it immensely because I loved Jesus Christ very much from my school days. A day prior to Baba's *darshan* I had a brain wave. I thought, "Baba says he is the Avatar so he could appear to me either like Jesus or like Zoroaster whose picture I used to worship every day at my residence." And sure enough, when I tried to look at Baba, I saw Him as Jesus and also as Zoroaster. I was greatly delighted and said to my brother, "Hoshang, Baba in His lovely coat and blue eyes looks beautiful, like Jesus." I also added, "With His golden hair Baba also looks like Lord Zoroaster." I repeated these words almost as questions to Hoshang, seeking confirmation. After a while Hoshang turned to me and quietly answered, "Look, look properly. Baba has neither blue eyes nor golden hair." And he concluded, "Baba is Baba; He is matchless; Baba is God Almighty."

Hearing this, I came to my senses and softly said to myself under my breath, "Baba, help me to see you as Meher Baba." And with this hearty earnest prayer, all other ideas vanished and I beheld Him as He was seen by others - Baba the most Beautiful, Baba the most Divine!

After all were comfortably seated, Baba began giving a general discourse to all His lovers who had gathered there. As Baba had stopped using the board, this was conveyed

through His lovely gestures which were interpreted by Eruch. And what a surprise, all the questions I had formulated were answered one after the other. How did He know that?!

On the first day Baba also graciously allowed all His lovers to take His *darshan*. Men and women were instructed to form separate lines; both queues were long. But this gave time for everyone to think of Baba and to feast their eyes on His beautiful face. As I got closer to Baba's seat His love flooded my heart and soul. And when it was my turn to have His *darshan* I cried bitterly. I tried to be quiet and didn't want anyone else to see me crying but I couldn't help it. Looking at Him, I said softly, "Please forgive me, Baba, for all that I was thinking, imagining and wanting to know of You. Now, everything is clear to me." Baba looked at me with His wonderful soothing eyes and gestured and my mind and heart intuitively felt Baba wished to convey to me, "God and I are One." There was no need for any more discourse to convince me of His divinity, His Godhood. And ever since that blessed day, with His grace, I have accepted Meher Baba as God in human form. One more thing I may add here is that I am not at all after miracles. However, I can not refrain sharing that from the moment I came into the love orbit of Meher Baba, He has really guided me and protected me countless times, in so many miraculous ways. Each such event is a story of His love; boundless is His love; unconfined is His concern for me and for all.

Dogdo Kaikobad

## She Welcomed Death With A Smile

My older brother and I were the only children in our family. My mother wanted a girl and would often pray wholeheartedly to God to bless her with a daughter. After some years, in 1951, my sister, Govindamma was born. She was a sweet, bright child who was loved by all of us.

In 1957, I was nineteen and no longer living with my parents. I had moved to Vijayawada where I was working for the Indian Railways. It was then that I first heard the name of Meher Baba. Four years later, I had the blessed fortune to have His divine *darshan* at Guru Prasad in Poona. At this *sahas*, Baba's love touched my heart so deeply that it helped me accept Him as the Avatar.

After that, whenever I would visit my parents at their home, I would tell them about Meher Baba and recount some of the experiences of those who had come into the orbit of His love. Owing to their orthodox leanings, my parents did not show much interest. But Govindamma, my little sister who was only ten, would listen with rapt attention. Soon she had complete trust and faith in Baba as God, which was His gift to her. She would pray to Baba silently and would tell her classmates about Him. Whenever any of her friends got hurt, she would advise them to repeat Baba's name as a panacea.

In 1964, she was thirteen, in standard VII. On the 13th of May she started feeling feverish. My father took her to the village doctor. He examined her and diagnosed that she had been bitten by a rabid dog. He suggested she be taken to the civil hospital in the nearby town. He even kindly offered the use of his car to transport her.

Before leaving for the hospital, however, my family went home to pack a few things. My sister seemed calm and composed. She put on a new dress and then, before leaving, stood in front of a photo of Meher Baba which was hanging on the wall. As the photo was too high for her to reach, she asked our father to lift her up so she could touch

Baba's feet with her hands. She was pleased when she had done so and then turned to our mother and said, "I have taken my Baba's *darshan*, now bow down to your Lord Krishna before we start for the hospital."

As soon as the doctor had indicated that my sister's condition was critical, my parents had cabled me to come immediately. As they got into the car to go to the hospital, my sister announced that Baba was with her and that I would be coming to see her as well.

After being admitted in the hospital, she remained calm and my parents noticed that she was softly repeating Baba's name the whole time. When the doctors came to give her an injection, she told him, "Doctor, you want to give me an injection, but you are not giving it to me, you are giving it to Baba." My parents and the doctor were very surprised at this and further astonished when she added, "Take Baba's *prasad* to feel His universal presence." The doctor gave her the injection but left the room wondering about such a small child saying such things.

Govindamma rested quietly on her bed, but her condition did not improve. It seems the rabies was too far advanced for the injection to be able to help. Near midnight she asked our mother to put her feet on the bed. When she did so, Govindamma lovingly bowed to our mother's feet. (Traditionally, in India, the mother is regarded as the first guru.) She then told her not to worry.

Just after midnight, she looked up at the ceiling and cried out, "Who are you?" Then, her face broke into a big smile. "Baba!" she cried aloud and breathed her last.

By the time I arrived, my sister had already expired. But when I heard this moving account from my parents who were grieving for the loss of their daughter, my own sorrow was partially diminished. For although I had not made it in time, it was clear to me that Baba had kept my sister company in her last moments.

My sister had never seen Meher Baba in His physical body, but this did not prevent her from coming to trust in

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Him completely as God and loving Him wholeheartedly as the Lord.

Meher Baba, as the Avatar, is omnipresent and responds whenever one remembers Him or calls out to Him wholeheartedly. My sister was indeed very fortunate!

M. Satyanarayana

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## God's Love Is Beyond All Understanding

It was in early 1964 that I met Oswald Hall through a mutual friend in the Melbourne area of Australia where we both lived. We spoke for several hours about spiritual matters, which interested me greatly at that stage. Even though Oswald had been a Baba lover for many years, he never spoke of Meher Baba at that time.

Some months later I moved, and my new quarters turned out to be within a couple of miles of Oswald's house. I remembered him and, as he had given me his phone number at our first meeting, I rang him up. Oswald invited me over to his house. On arrival, I discovered that he was a painter. In his living room there were many paintings of Meher Baba, although at the time I didn't know whose portraits they were. In fact, Baba had visited his home in 1956. Once again we spoke on spiritual subjects for hours but, to my recollection, he never mentioned Baba's name. Even though I was curious about the paintings I never asked him who Baba was.

At a very late hour, as I was about to leave, I asked him to recommend a book for me to read. He gave me *The Perfect Master* by Charles Purdom. I went home, elated after a lovely evening of talking about many different things, and began reading the book. By the time I had read a few

pages I had accepted that Meher Baba was a Perfect Master. As I read further into the book I knew that he was my Master, and as I read still further I knew that my life was his.

Naturally, I contacted Oswald Hall as soon as possible and then the story of Baba unfolded - His Avatarhood, His Silence, everything. As far as I was concerned Baba was what He said He was and I was His - I had only needed the veil to be drawn aside. I took to Baba like a duck to water. It was the most perfectly natural thing for me to do - ever. From that point on I fervently devoured all the books by and about Baba, drenching myself in His message of love. Oswald then introduced me to the Baba lovers in Melbourne. I heard the personal stories of their meeting Baba and I felt their loving regard for Him.

One day, several months later, in mid 1964, I was with Oswald and I had the sudden realization that I would be in India the following year. It was a clear knowing which lasted a second and passed. I mentioned this to Oswald and then forgot about it.

Soon after, the word came from Baba that He was going to hold a *darshan* program for Westerners in May 1965 and for Easterners the following December. With great jubilation we all prepared ourselves for the great event. Word then came from Baba that He was going to reverse the times set for darshan - it was now to be May for the Easterners and December for the Westerners. We accepted this as Baba's will and most began thinking in terms of going to India in December 1965.

But for me, I still felt the urge to go to India sooner. I felt a pull to go to India before the *darshan* program and then return again in December. All through 1964 I continued to feel that I should definitely go to India early in 1965, even though Baba had said May was for Easterners only. The financial aspect of whether or not I could afford to return again in December didn't occur to me at all. All I knew was that I should go and have no expectation, whatsoever, of



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seeing Baba. So my wife, Helen, and I decided to make a pilgrimage of it; we would go to India, bow down to the Avatar at the *samadhis* of His five Perfect Masters and, in obedience to Baba, not expect to see Him at all.

We set sail for India on my birthday, February 5, 1965 and arrived on the shores of India on Baba's birthday, February 25, 1965. Our journey was now ahead of us, for we planned to stay for several months in the land of the God-Man's physical birth. But before we disembarked, a letter from Francis Brabazon was delivered to me. It said that Baba had instructed Helen and me to attend the Easterners' *darshan*, from May 1-6. The impossible had happened, yet somehow it all seemed perfectly normal.

Baba also told us not to visit any "saints" or their ashrams while traveling through India. Nor were we supposed to even visit the *samadhis* of the five Perfect Masters, although we were allowed, if we so wished, to see Sai Baba's at Shirdi and Babajan's in Poona. As we had no intention of visiting any "saints," this order didn't seem to affect our travel plans very much. But we were to begin to get an idea of the significance of Baba's order when we were in Delhi and decided to spend some time in the Hardwar Rishikesh area, an area renowned as the home for many *sadhus* and saints and spiritual seekers.

As soon as we decided to go, everything went wrong. Helen became ill, bus tickets were lost, we couldn't find the bus stations we wanted - in short, everything turned into a mess. But as soon as we gave up the idea, all of our difficulties vanished.

In fact, during all of our travels throughout India, what became clear was that our "pilgrimage" was centered on those places associated with past advents of the Avatar: Brindaban, Bodhgaya, Haratbal, etc. At each of these places I was able to bow down to Baba in a previous form, leading up to that moment of bowing down to Avatar Meher Baba in His present compassionate human form, on the 1st of May

1965, at the opening of the Avatar Meher Baba Poona Centre.

Our first glimpse of Baba was at eight o'clock that morning. His chair was carried onto the stage at the Poona Centre. Time stood still: here at last was the Divine form I had longed to see, yet had never expected to. Baba was before my very eyes, yet my eyes could not contain Him - His beauty and the love immediately generated by His beautiful Presence overwhelmed me. I was drenched in the wonder of His glory.

The next thing I knew was that somebody (I don't know who) was saying, "Peter, Baba wants you. Come now." We moved to the front of the crowd to bow down at the God-Man's feet. I remember nothing of this first bowing; it was as if my mind had disappeared or been put to sleep. All that remained were Baba's feet and their touch under my hands and lips. This same sensation continued throughout that day and the five that followed at Guru Prasad.

Even though the morning program each day was from eight until noon, the feeling I had was that only a few minutes had passed. Yet on returning to our hotel room, I felt thoroughly exhausted and emotionally drained and would automatically fall asleep for an hour or so.

Although I was generally able to see Baba twice each day and to bow before His Divinity and have the Beloved's *darshan*, one moment and one incident from those six days stand out in my mind as being the most significant and beautiful of my life - indeed of all lives.

One afternoon Sarosh, one of Baba's *mandali* took me to the room where Baba used to be with His *mandali* and close ones. We walked in and quietly sat down to the right and behind Baba. Eruch motioned to Baba that I was there and Baba gestured for me to sit in front of Him. In addition to the *mandali*, at that time there were some Baba lovers from various parts of India also. ·

The hour or so spent there was simply a basking in the Beloved's presence. Hardly anything was said by anybody –

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- just a few words here and there with Baba looking, just looking, and occasionally lifting His fingers gently off the side of His chair and letting them fall gently down again. I could do nothing but gaze and gaze at His beauty - here before me in an intimate atmosphere was the One all creation longed for and I was there - a moment in time that the gods envy.

Apart from asking me when I was returning home, Baba asked me nothing. I had nothing to ask Him, the whole time with Baba I did not have a single question - there was nothing to ask. .

Now it was time to leave and people were bowing at Baba's feet before departing. When my turn came for Beloved Baba's *darshan*, I knelt before Him and tears, like I have never known before or since, bathed His feet. A river of tears - the burning scalding tears of my life and lives of ignorance - welled up in my eyes and overflowed. It was as if all the filth and degradation and muck of a million lifetimes streamed over those holy feet and I was powerless to stop it. I felt rooted there for an eternity.

My head slowly came up and my whole being was quivering with His name. My lips were repeating in rapid succession, almost involuntarily, "Baba, Baba, Baba." As I knelt before Him, Baba's eyes seemed to come across vast distances - across all my lives and before, and His eyes met mine with the most unutterably sweet compassionate gaze. He then extended His hand gently, placing His fingers below each of my cheek bones and drawing His hand down to the chin in one slow continuous motion until His fingers and thumb joined as He drew His hand away.

In that moment of touch, I experienced all the shame and pain of my lives of ignorance and separation from my Beloved Lord, who was now before me as Meher Baba. Yet that single action of Baba's I see as the most infinitely kind and loving action I have ever known. The love experienced in that simple act is indescribable. It was as if God, for one moment, had stepped down entirely to my level and said, "I

know all, I know all about you. I love you. I accept all that you are. Don't worry, my love is always with you - you are mine."

I know without doubt that that one moment of Baba's hand upon my face is still continuing. It was enough to take me across all time with Him into eternity - this is not mere fanciful conjecture, but fact.

In retrospect and on reflection, I realized that the moments I spent with Baba showed me what it meant to be innocent, to be without guile, to simply be and accept what one was because Baba knew all - what I was, what I had been. There was no need for pretense, no need to put up a bold front, to fool the world - Baba knew and accepted me as I was. This is truly the love of God beyond all understanding.

Peter Rowan

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### My First Marvelous *Darshan*

In 1963 I was studying in the 9th grade. One day, in a public library, I was browsing through a Telugu magazine ("Avatar Meher"). In it I happened to read an article on "The Planes of Consciousness" by Meher Baba. This subject was explained with the help of a chart. I was just fourteen, yet the theme and the chart struck me profoundly. I do not know how, but this awakened in me a deep response that Meher Baba is Lord Rama come again. So, from then on, instead of repeating the name of "Rama, Rama," I substituted "Meher-Rama."

Three years later, in 1966, when I was in the 11th grade studying at Nizamabad, A.P., I suddenly felt that I should go in some forest and practice *tapasya* (penance). However,

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on second thought, I felt I was duty bound to my parents to continue my education. At this time I started visiting the Avatar Meher Baba Centre at Nizamabad and took great interest in listening to *bhajans*. I also read some more books on Meher Baba and the one that impressed me most was *Sobs And Throbs* by Ramjoo Abdulla. The experiences of Ahmed Mahmood, in his adventure to reach Meherabad to see Baba, touched me most especially. The thought of visiting the forest continued to haunt me and I felt that I should be in the company of a guru to have the Lord's *darshan*.

One morning in December 1967, I was given a sum of Rs. 22/- to be paid to the college towards my tuition. But instead of proceeding towards the college, I left my house, without any luggage or extra clothes, for the railway station. Soon I reached Manmad and, with whatever money remained, I purchased a ticket for Bombay. Reaching Bombay I planned to go to Ahmedabad (Gujarat) for I thought that Meherabad was near that city. I had not read much of Baba's life, so I did not know much about His activities.

For want of money I continued traveling without a ticket and at Surat the conductor entered my compartment to check my ticket. I hid myself in the toilet but he knocked on the door and compelled me to come out. Finding me ticketless, he slapped me and ordered me to get off the train. However, as soon as he was out of sight, I reboarded the train and somehow managed to reach Ahmedabad. There I started showing Meher Baba's picture to people and asking them where Meherabad was. They seemed to know nothing about it. This surprised me, so I decided to go to Poona where I was sure people would know the location of Meherabad as it was Baba's birthplace. Again with ticketless traveling and slaps as *prasad* from the ticket conductor, I managed to reach Poona.

In this city I located the Avatar Meher Baba Poona Centre but, being a holiday, it was closed. I inquired of the

gardener and he informed me that Meherabad was near Ahmednagar. I suddenly realized how I had confused Ahmedabad with Ahmednagar. Right away I went to the station and inquired about the distance to Ahmednagar. I was told that it was over 100 kms and so I decided to walk the distance. I recalled that Ahmed Mahmood walked all the distance and I also wanted to be honest like him and to no longer deceive the railway. By this time I was totally penniless and starving. At the station I met a boy my age who offered to provide me with food in exchange for my clothes. I gave him my sandals and he only gave me a cup of tea.

I spent the night in the Poona railway station and in the morning began walking to Ahmednagar along the railway tracks. At one of the stations I begged for food and one railway employee was kind enough to offer me some bread which was my first meal since Ahmedabad. I spent the night at another station and continued walking till sunset. That night, just like Ahmed Mahmood I slept very soundly up in a tree hugging onto a large branch.

The following night, rather early morning, I reached Ahmednagar railway station. During my journey on foot, I was inquiring with the villagers about Arangaon so I knew that on my way to the station I had passed by Meherabad Hill. At sunrise, I found that my feet were badly swollen from walking all the distance from Poona to 'Nagar barefooted. But it was amazing that I did not feel any pain or weakness. With great enthusiasm I was ready to walk to Meherabad and my heart leapt with joy. I thought, "Soon I will see Meher Baba, my Lord."

After crossing a distance of about four miles I started to climb the holy Meherabad Hill. As I reached the top I stopped near a fence. It was all quiet around as though no one was staying there. I also read a sign, "No Admission Without Permission." "Where have I come?" I thought. I was at my wits end. I didn't know what to do.

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When I was about to leave, a woman named Mansari appeared on the scene. She opened the gate and asked me where I had come from and what was the reason of my visit. After hearing my reply she said, "Who do you take Meher Baba to be?" My immediate reply was, "Meher Baba is God." She looked happy to hear this and beckoned me to come inside. She took me to Baba's *gadi* (lounge chair) and then led me to the *Samadhi*, Baba's future resting place. She also told me that Baba was in seclusion in Meherazad and asked me to see Adi K. Irani in Ahmednagar.

I had not read Baba's life in detail. I did not know where Meherazad was. I was totally ignorant about Baba's orders of that period and the way He wished His dear ones to lead their lives. In my case His name had awakened love for Him in me and most of the time I only used to repeat His sweet name.

Mansari offered me food but I declined it with a thought that she must have cooked it just for herself. But I was really hungry and so I went to Arangaon and begged for my food. In my unwashed clothes and worn out appearance I looked like a real beggar and Baba inspired some villagers to give me millet bread and cooked vegetables. It was a treat to me.

By sunset I reached Ahmednagar. I tried to locate the Avatar Meher Baba Centre, but somehow none of the people I asked could properly guide me. Discouraged and frustrated, I sat down by the road and wept bitterly remembering Baba. Just then someone gave me the right directions. As I reached the centre, Adi K. Irani, Meher Baba's secretary, was about to go out in his car. He instructed me to sit down and wait for him.

Upon his return, he called me into his room and asked me who I was and why I had come. After patiently listening to me and learning that I was a student and did not have my parents' permission to come, he expressed his displeasure about this and said, "Well, you have indeed caused a lot of trouble to your parents. They must be frantically searching

for you. Again, you should know that Baba is not giving *darshan*.. You should come here only after a circular has been issued to that effect."

I told him I had not come just for *darshan* but to stay with Baba permanently. Adi looked a bit serious and added, "Where will you stay and who will give you food?" I did not answer, although I wanted to say, "The One who gives you food will also give me food!" But I did not dare say it and so kept quiet.

Adi immediately wanted to phone my family. The two other people in the room requested him not to do that. So he called me to a table where there was a picture of Meher Baba and said, "Stand before Baba and take an oath that when coming to Him you will first obtain permission from your parents." I took the oath seriously. Now, finding out that I had not properly eaten for days and did not have any money, he directed Laxman, his attendant, to take me to a hotel to eat. He was also gracious enough to provide me with a bed and blanket for the night. He also assured me that he would give me enough money for the journey home. I only nodded and did not say anything.

The next morning I went with Laxman to the bus station and began my journey home. By the time I arrived, a whole week had gone by. My parents and relatives were overjoyed to see me. They asked me the details about my trip and told me about the difficulties they had trying to find me. Knowing my inclination for penance in a secluded place, they had searched for me in the surrounding hills and villages. They even consulted the astrologers for directions. As a last resort they were about to place an announcement about my disappearance in the newspaper. It was just at this time that I showed up. I found out that my mother in particular had been crying for hours. She did not take her meals properly and had gone very weak. But now she was happy that I had come back.

Eventually, I joined the college, continued my studies and also returned the money I owed Adi. By return mail I



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received a letter from Adi on a letterhead with an emblem of Meher Baba. He encouraged me to love Baba more and more and also to be of help to my parents. It had a great effect on me and so I framed it and I wrote back to Adi and assured him that I would do as he had written.

In the final year of my studies (1969), I heard the news that Meher Baba had dropped His physical form on the 31st of January. I didn't believe that such a thing could happen, so I contacted other Baba lovers to confirm the news. It was true. I was eager to go to Meherabad but had no money. I asked my mother's permission and my uncle who was staying in Nizamabad gave me the money to go for Baba's *darshan*.

I reached Meherabad on the afternoon of the 7th of February, 1969 and the interment of Baba's divine body was over. I entered the Samadhi as the *dhoon*, "Sat-Chit-Ananda," was being chanted by some of His lovers who stood around the crypt. I helped a small group who were emptying iron pans filled with soil on the crypt in which lay Baba's physical body. I did not see Baba physically but that did not seem essential. It was a very profound experience. His "formless form" had suffused that tiny room. I felt as if I were in Heaven, overpowered with a blissful feeling of His Love. That was my first *darshan*. And what a marvelous *darshan*!

Meher Baba is ever present in His *Samadhi* on Meherabad Hill to bless His dear ones, old and new, with His unique *darshan*. To each one a glimpse of this *darshan*, enveloped in love, compassion, wonder, and humor too, is His special gift.

K. Venkateshwara

## Beloved Baba, My God, My "Big Daddy"

I was eleven years old when my whole family came to live with Meher Baba at Bangalore in 1940. My sister, Hilla, was seven at the time. Baba promised my mother, Nergiz, that from then on, He would take care of all our needs, and so it was. He not only sent me and my sister to one of the finest schools in Hyderabad for our education, but whenever we returned during our vacation, Baba was always most loving with us.

As my father, Savak Kotwal, stayed with the men *mandali*, I did not see him that much after we came to Baba. And Baba's love was so all encompassing that I began to refer to Him as my "Big Daddy." I did not love my father less, but it was only natural that I would look to Baba, secure in the knowledge that His loving concern would always be there for me.

One day, during one of my vacations, I happened to mention to Baba that I called Him my "Big Daddy" and Baba looked surprised, as though I had said something wrong. Then, looking very serious, He conveyed to me, "I am your God first, and then your 'Big Daddy.'" Thereafter, although I continued to think of Baba as my "Big Daddy," I always remembered that He was also and foremost my God.

Years passed by and in July 1954 my family and I, (except for my father who stayed with Baba) moved back to Bombay. Yet Baba's love and concern for me remained unchanged. I will give just a few examples of Baba's sweet loving care.

In November 1962, my mother and I were very excited to be able to attend the East-West Gathering in Poona. Although we left our hotel well before the scheduled time for the *darshan* program, by the time we reached Guru Prasad, we found that many others had already arrived. The first six or seven rows of chairs were completely occupied.

Disappointedly, my mother and I sat in the next row and then waited anxiously for Beloved Baba to appear on the

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dais. Before long, amidst cheers of "Avatar Meher Baba Ki Jai," Baba, looking divinely radiant, entered and took His seat. The fresh pink roses in the garland that was delightfully dangling around His neck could not compete with the glow emanating from Baba's complexion and beautiful face. Our hearts were filled with joy and our eyes overflowed with tears as we beheld Him, our Lord and Father in one.

After the first rapturous moments, I began to feel a little upset that we were so far from the dais. I grumbled to my mother that it was very sad that we hadn't been able to get a seat in one of the front rows because, although we could see Baba sitting on the elevated dais, there was no way He could see us amidst that huge crowd of five thousand.

My mother chided me, saying, "Baba is God; He knows everyone's heart and He sees us all." This answer did not satisfy me, however, and I continued to be disgruntled at having to sit so far from Baba, at least twenty-five feet away.

As I sat there, I saw Beloved Baba take a thin multicolored thread garland. He gracefully wound it around His long shapely fingers and made it into a ball. Then He suddenly looked at us and before I could think about what was happening, He tossed the garland and it fell like a shot right into my lap. How Baba could manage to toss such a light object so far, and with such accuracy I still do not understand, but at the time this aspect didn't even occur to me. I was too stunned at what had happened to think about it much. Then Baba waved endearingly at us, as if to say, "I know what you are feeling."

Such was Baba's solicitude for an insignificant person like me who often failed to understand His Godhood! That garland remains, even to this day, my most precious possession, a reminder of Baba's omniscient divinity and His loving compassion.

This reminds me of a similar incident which occurred six years later. In the late '60s, Baba was in seclusion most of

the time, but on December 22-23, 1968, Baba made a rare exception and consented to have a small gathering of His dear ones at Meherazad to celebrate Mehera's birthday as well as Dara and Amrit's wedding.

At that time, my mother Nergiz was in England with my sister and, in her place, Baba invited me to attend this gathering. I felt blessed and extremely fortunate to have this chance. I say this because Baba Himself conveyed to us while we were there, "You do not know how fortunate you all are to be here today, and to have Me seated before you like this." Little did any of us then realize that this would be the last time we would ever see Baba in His human form as in just under forty days, He laid aside His physical body.

Beloved Baba sat on a chair on the porch of His house and we sat in the garden, feasting our eyes on Him. At one point in the program, Baba allowed the women to have His *darshan*. We were instructed not to touch Baba, but as we filed before Him, we were allowed to place a garland at His feet if we so wished. Afterwards, the men were given their chance. As their *darshan* line moved along slowly, I noted that when it was Jimmy Mistry's turn, Baba held out His hand to him and Jimmy kissed it.

Seeing this, I began thinking how fortunate Jimmy was and how unworthy I must be that Baba did not offer me an opportunity to touch His divine form.

When the *darshan* was over, Baba announced that He wanted to be entertained and asked, "Who will sing for me?" I immediately put my hand up and Baba called me up to the porch to sing.

I stood before Baba, closed my eyes and sang the song, "The one who is sitting before me now is my very God." On finishing, I opened my eyes and was overjoyed to see that my Beloved God and "Big Daddy" was holding out His hand for me to kiss! I was greatly elated. I took His holy hand, kissed it very gently and pressed it to my eyes and with heartfelt gratitude said, "Thank You, Baba." With these words, I left the porch.

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This was my last meeting with my God and "Big Daddy." Yet it seems to me to capture the essence of my relationship with Him. Baba always knew my innermost desires and His love sweetly fulfilled them. Truly He is, and will always remain, both my God and my "Big Daddy."

Najoo Kotwal

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## The Picture That Never Came Down

Meher Baba, my beautiful Beloved, had taken me in His loving fold much before my very practical, no-nonsense nature could accept the blessedness of this bounty. For in 1962, when He graced me with my first physical meeting with Him, He remarked to my sister Freny that I was already His. This was in answer to her statement that I loved Baba very much.

This exchange occurred between the Beloved and my sister while my rebellious mind exclaimed to itself, "How dare she say that! Who says I love Him very much?" Yet I, the unemotional, no-nonsense person, found myself unreasonably crying my heart out at His very touch. Not wanting to make a spectacle of myself in front of a crowd, I buried my face deeper in Freny's shoulder. Little did I know then that, in the Beloved's presence, each lover's eyes and heart are set on Him alone.

That was in June 1962 and although the All-compassionate Beloved accorded me a number of endearing, intimate meetings with Him between then and 1965, my unfeeling heart still yearned for 100% conviction in His Godhood. My mind, by then, said, "He must be what He says He is," but my heart wished to feel equally convinced.

Adding to my confusion were the constant rebukes from my elder brother. His love for me made him feel it was his moral duty to sidetrack me from the "blasphemous" path I had chosen. Zoroastrians do not, as a rule, believe in the personal aspect of God, and he truly felt that I was forfeiting my soul's salvation by believing in Baba.

Time passed in our household where I was the only believer in Meher Baba. Frank discussions often ended in fiery arguments, while consoling words led to angry chastisements. It seemed that the Beloved wished us, my brother and me - who loved each other so - to reach a peak of discord before He commenced to unfold His mighty compassion!

One fateful dinner time in 1968, my brother entreated me to give my soul another chance! He asked me to remove the Beloved's picture from the wall, store all my Baba literature out of sight, go to no more Baba meetings, resume wearing the customary *sadra-kusti* which I had discarded and begin attending all the traditional Zoroastrian prayers, ceremonies and such. In short, I was to become an orthodox Zoroastrian for six months, completely forgetting about Baba, at which point my brother was sure that it would be a case of "out of sight, out of mind."

I bargained with him that I would do all he asked except for taking Baba's picture down from the wall. I had taken to heart the advice given me by Freny and dear Arnavaz that I should think well before putting up a picture of Baba in my room, for once up, I should never take it down. But my brother was relentless, and though it troubled my heart to take the beautiful picture down, I finally gave in and agreed to all his conditions.

After all, I thought, this was an opportunity my Beloved was giving me to test my faith - would my lukewarm love suddenly be kindled into an undying flame, would my uncertainty of His Godhood be dispelled to be replaced by doubtless, heartfelt conviction? As long as He chose to reside in my heart, what need had I for all the external

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trimmings (except for that one beloved picture!)? Didn't "absence make the heart grow fonder" too? So, despite the turmoil within me and, anticipating sleepless nights, with a heavy heart I promised to start the "masquerade" from the next morning.

However, the Infinitely Compassionate One had other plans. Round about 11 o'clock that very night the telephone rang. As I was still awake, I got up to answer it. It was a dear old Baba lover who apologized for disturbing the sleeping household at that late hour, but he dared to call because he thought I would want to hear without any delay Beloved Baba's cable that he had just received and been instructed to convey to all in Karachi. And lo and behold! What was the message of the cable?

LOVE MAKES THE FORMLESS AND INFINITE  
BECOME ENFORMED AND FINITE  
AS THE GOD-MAN AMONG MEN.

LOVE ME MORE AND MORE BECAUSE  
FOR THE SAKE OF LOVE  
I HAVE COME AMONG YOU.

—MEHER BABA

My heart knew then that He knew my heart, for who else but the All-knowing God could have such perfect timing! Not even one sleepless night! With tranquility of heart, I fell at His Feet for the saving grace He had bestowed upon me - I would never, ever take down His picture now!

Needless to say, the next morning I only showed a copy of the telegram to my brother and apologized for retracting my promise of the previous night. But such is the Beloved's grace that my brother accepted this turnabout without further question! Since then he has been relieved of all the fears he had for my soul. He knows I am in "Secure Hands" and we remain as close and loving as always.

Eternal Beloved Avatar Meher Baba ki jai!

Zarine T. Mavalvala

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### The "Godness" - the Love of Jesus, of Baba

When I was a little girl, I was very devoted to Jesus. I used to pray every day and tell Jesus that I wanted to see His face. I would go to all the churches and chapels. I was very religious and I would ask Jesus to show me His face. Mine was almost a desperate search. Somehow, I always got the sense that He was there, but I never did see His face.

Later on, when I went to college, I became very disappointed with religion. I thought that everything was hypocrisy. I saw what the churches were doing and what they were teaching, and saw that what they were saying and doing was absolutely contradictory. I was a very humanitarian type of person and I always felt that the churches weren't really being charitable and doing God's work. So I decided, well, everything is false.

I had some very good professors at college who were extremely atheistic and they totally convinced me that there was no purpose to life; everything just happens at random, life doesn't make any sense, it's all nonsense and there is nothing beyond death. I accepted this; I became an atheist.

Even so, the quest to find the meaning of life, and Jesus, preoccupied my mind. I remember when I was a little girl, I used to see people going to church and would think to myself, "They're going to a Catholic church, and others are going to a Protestant church, and the Buddhists are going to a Buddhist church, the Japanese are going here and the Africans are going there. And they are all convinced that



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their own God is the right God. So there must be something in that conviction, in that dedication, and yet they all worship a different God!" That used to drive me crazy. I used to ask my mother, "Is there one God, or are there many Gods?" And she used to tell me not to worry about it.

But I would. I would sit under a tree and brood over these questions for hours on end. My family used to call me, "The Brooder."

Even when I became an atheist in college, I would continue to brood over these questions. I went to the local priest and asked him, "Why was God happy when He saw Jesus suffer?"

He said, "It says in the Bible, 'I am pleased, my Son.'"

I said, "What kind of father would be happy to see his son suffer like that?"

The priest said, "Well, if you don't know, I can't tell you."

I found this incredible. So I went to some Rabbis. I would go to anyone I thought might have an answer. But no one was able to satisfy my quest for Truth and I became so frustrated I finally just threw the whole thing over. I wasn't going to be bothered anymore by any of it.

I started teaching in New York City. And, as God would have it, I had to teach in the slums. First in Bedford Styvesant and then in Harlem. While teaching, I saw intense suffering. I don't know if anyone who has never been to the ghettos can have any idea of what it is like. It is so incredible. The kids come from parents who are abused, beaten, raped. They drink and are on drugs.

My family was not exactly wealthy, but they are fairly well off. I would go home and see my relatives and the children would be dressed in beautiful clothes; there was plenty of good food, the best of everything. Then I would go teach in Harlem and I would see these totally abused human beings. Some of them would plead with me to take them home with me. It was such a contrast!

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I almost stopped trying to teach them anything. I would just spend the class time talking to these children about their problems. Every time I looked into their eyes I would see that there was something there that responded to love; there was something in all those children which was real, even though they were so messed up. As I was an atheist at the time, I used to wonder about this, wonder what it could be I sensed within the children.

I remember one day I felt very depressed. Nothing seemed to make any sense to me. I went home and asked my husband, "Don't you wonder what the meaning of life is? I have to find out what it is even if it's the last thing I do!"

My husband said, "Don't worry about it. Just do your job." But my depression was too great. I said, "I can't! I can't! I have to find out!"

One evening I was standing on our balcony. I was thinking, "Everything in the universe has order; the snow comes at a certain time; the flowers bloom at a certain time; there's a time for day and a time for night; everything is very scientifically ordered. There are laws that govern everything. But when it comes to humanity, there is just chaos, total chaos! There's injustice, and unfairness; some people have plenty to eat while others have no food; everything is so imbalanced. It's unbelievable. There should be some law that is applicable to humanity."

I remember staring at the sky - I was almost mad. I said, "I have to find out. If there is anything out there, anything that can give me an answer, it better tell me now because I can't wait any longer." I gave God an ultimatum. I declared, "God, you creep, if you exist, let me know. Otherwise, I'm going to dump you!" I was serious, I meant it; it came from the bottom of my heart.

What happened next is incredible. I heard a voice, an actual voice which said, "Yes, you will know." That's all. I went inside and the voice added, "Within two weeks you will know something."

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So I waited for two weeks to pass. I didn't know how I would come to know something but I felt that what I had been told was true. It felt like the Truth to me. So I waited for whatever was to happen to happen. One day, about two weeks later, I happened to go into a bookstore. I was interested in finding out if life continued after death, in discovering exactly what "life" was. And I came across a book which dealt with E.S.P., with life after death, with so many subjects. And it gave instructions on how to proceed to discover these things for yourself. I began to do some of the things suggested in the book and actually made contact with some "spirits." This frightened me to death and I stopped my experimentation immediately, but at least it convinced me that something did indeed exist beyond what was visible to our eyes.

And then the voice came to me again and asked, "What about Jesus?" I knew I had to continue with my search. I went back to that bookstore and it was almost as if this one particular book, a psychedelic looking one, came jumping out at me. It was, *How To Choose A Guru*. I don't know why I bought it.

I opened the book and started reading it. When I saw Meher Baba's name, something happened. I had never heard about Meher Baba before, but just seeing His name for the first time produced this change. It was incredible. It was like a wave of energy came towards me and engulfed me, my whole being. I thought, "Meher Baba, what is that?" I was totally engulfed in this energy... this love or peace... I can't explain what it was... a Radiance. I thought, "Who is this Meher Baba?!"

I wrote the publisher, "Who is this Meher Baba? I have to find out." They wrote back right away and sent me some pamphlets from Meher Baba Information in California. This must have been around 1970 or so.

I opened the letter in my parking lot and I looked at Baba's picture which they had sent. I remember it was as if the whole world stood still. I was mesmerized, staring at

Baba's picture and it was as if the parking lot, all my surrounding just vanished. I was in the midst of a great stillness, just looking at this picture. I can't explain it, but tears started rolling down my cheeks and I still didn't even know who Meher Baba was! I read the little pamphlets but it wasn't enough so I ordered the *Discourses*.

When they came, I was so hungry that I stayed up night after night reading them as if they were honey. As I read, I felt as if my whole consciousness was changing. I have trouble talking about it because in two weeks I became a totally different person. I was so changed that my husband said, "What is wrong with you? What is happening to you?" The change really was incredible. I mean I used to drink, I used to get depressed, to worry a lot. And now I was walking around in a daze, repeating, "Meher Baba, my God!" I would cry and cry, sitting and thinking about Baba day and night. It changed my life. Within weeks I was happy and dancing, drunk with joy.

But at that time I didn't know any other Baba people. For a long time, in fact, I didn't know anything about other people who were dedicated to Baba but I felt Baba's presence almost continuously.

One day I saw a little advertisement that a Baba film was going to be shown at the Barbizon Plaza. I decided to go. On the bus I felt very happy thinking, "I'm finally going to meet some people who love Meher Baba." And the meeting really was beautiful. It was then that I found out about Myrtle Beach. I decided then and there that I had to go and so I started making plans.

When I went, it was like coming home. I felt as though Baba were embracing me. I remember going to the Lagoon Cabin for the first time. I became totally intoxicated. I came out and looked around - again His light and peace and Love surrounded me, engulfed me, embraced me.

I looked around the Center and I didn't see the trees anymore. I have to say this honestly, I saw nothing except Baba everywhere. If I saw a person, I would see Baba first,

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and then I would see the person. I would look at a tree and I would see Baba in the tree and only then would I see the tree afterwards. I was so drunk and overwhelmed.

This lasted for a long time. I remember being in the supermarket and seeing Baba everywhere. I distinctly remember the cashier. I looked at her face and I saw Baba's face and I smiled. She didn't know why I was smiling at her but she smiled back. I was smiling at everyone I saw and they must have wondered why I was smiling at them.

My husband said, "Bella, are you ever going to be normal again?" I said, "Oh my God, I hope not!"

But gradually Baba starts bringing up old conflicts. The first time I went to Myrtle Beach I started having a conflict about Jesus. I knew that Baba had said He was Jesus, and I was a real lover of Jesus but, given my background, I had trouble reconciling the two. I didn't want to have any conflict about it; it just happened automatically.

The whole time at the Center I kept thinking, "Who is Jesus and who is Baba?" When I went home, I remember it was the next day, I prayed and prayed, "God, You have to let me see the truth. I love Baba so much; I owe Him my entire life, everything; every breath. And yet, I have this conflict between Baba and Jesus and I have to resolve it. Please help me."

The next morning, before I woke up, I had a dream - and yet it wasn't a dream. I suddenly felt myself in a different country. I sensed that it was the Holy Land and I thought it must be Jerusalem. I was on a mountain, a little below the peak, and on the top stood Jesus. It was the most incredible vision I had ever had of Jesus. He was so stunningly beautiful. He had white garments on and His eyes were like the Ocean of Love - they were so deep and so loving and so beautiful. I exclaimed, "O, Jesus, you've come! you've come. You're going to give me the answer. I'm so happy!"

Jesus didn't say a word. He just looked at me with those fathomless, loving eyes; He was all Love and Peace and Beauty and I waited expectantly for the answer as He

stood there in absolute silence. Then He said, "God is One," and directed me to go back to the valley.

When I woke, the whole conflict was gone, as if it had been erased from my consciousness. This was because I had felt the "Godness" - the Love of Jesus, and the Love of Baba. This experience resolved my conflict. The form was different, but the "Godness" was One.

I still go through conflicts but I feel now that it's a blessing. Every time Baba gives me a conflict, I feel that He is helping me clear out the rubbish. I used to curse my conflicts, but now I'm really happy.

B.S.

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### "More Than Yesterday, Less Than Tomorrow"

It was my husband, Jay, who first brought me Meher Baba's name and news of Him. Jay was an enthusiast of Eastern paths to God and one day, in 1972 or so, he said to me, "...and there was a man in India named Meher Baba who died recently. He said He was the Avatar and all you have to do is love Him." Then Jay talked about Baba's silence and his own doubts, but what I heard was that someone named Meher Baba asked to be loved, and I said at once, "Yes, I always will. Meher Baba, whoever you are, you can rely on my love."

Long afterwards, Jay showed me a Baba card with "Don't Worry, Be Happy" on it. I took those words for friendly advice. His face charmed me thoroughly - I wondered why He even had to ask to be loved, being irresistibly charming. Doesn't He have the most alluring merriment and solemnity about Him?

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I never hesitated to love Baba in my own way but I never had the slightest notion as to who He was whom I loved. One day I found out.

In the winter of 1979, Jay and our daughter Annika and I moved from California to Atlanta, Georgia. This uprooting began a series of troubles: briefly, sickness and loneliness for all of us, and hopeless discouragement for Jay in his work.

I tried to get in touch with the Baba group in Atlanta, but they had moved and I couldn't find them. If my search had not been half-hearted, I might have succeeded earlier and spared everyone the suffering that followed as I felt so lonely and depressed.

Finally, Jay got another job, which relieved pressure on us all. When he went for an interview, the person he was to see took him by one of the conference rooms in the office. There a young woman was arranging slides of her trip to India.

Jay said, "Where were you?" "Oh, a place near Bombay." "Where exactly?"

"Closer to Poona."

Jay asked, "Well, is that anywhere near Meherabad and Meherazad?"

She set down her slides and asked, "Who are you?" Her name was Anne Giles and she was a Baba person. Someone had asked her the week before to show slides of India during lunchtime. She had been uncertain what reaction her colleagues would have to pictures of the *mandali* and Baba's tomb, rather than the Taj Mahal, so she was very surprised to find someone who already knew about them.

She invited us to the next Atlanta Baba meeting and it was there I discovered the One I loved. In a box on a chair was a soft white garment, a *sadra*. In a flash I saw that God had worn that shirt. I couldn't take my eyes from it - and the conviction that it belonged to God overwhelmed me. I knew it with more certainty than anything in life. But I hadn't

anticipated it; I thought I had come to a Baba meeting that night to find friends and, in truth, I found the Friend in all the world.

In the *Gospels* I have always admired the woman who pleased Christ with her faith, believing the mere touch of His sleeve would mend her. And there was the entire shirt! How compassionate and noble is God, who creates and upholds the universe and walks with us in a light cotton *sadra*. This is my Beloved.

I sat in the back of the room wiping away tears and foolishly trying to look as though nothing were out of the ordinary. Oh, that *sadra* was radiance itself!

The French say about love, "Plus qu'hier, moins que demain" (more than yesterday, less than tomorrow). Looking back, it always amazes me that there was a time, even yesterday, when I loved Baba less than now - and I look forward with delight to loving and pleasing Him more. It is the greatest good fortune to love Meher Baba.

Barbara O'Donnell

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### "Act of God"

At the time of my trip to India in September 1978, I had nearly five years seniority at the Lockheed shipyards in Seattle which entitled me to a three week vacation. I planned my trip so that my last day in Ahmednagar coincided with the *dhuni* - which is lit on the 12th of each month. I was then going to take a bus to Poona that night where I would spend two days before catching a flight from Bombay which would get me back to Seattle on a Sunday so I could be back at work the next day.



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Now for the *dhuni* I wished to be well attired. If I dressed in my habitual rags, I might not feel I had anything to renounce, so I put on a white prom jacket I had bought second-hand in the States, and suitable pants, etc. I put my passport and airline ticket in a little bag so as not to mar the cut of my jacket. The *dhuni* was lit, the sandalwood chips burned, songs sung, JAI BABA! Then I returned to "Meher Colony" to pick up my suitcase and went to the bus station.

There a coolie boy asked me for my suitcase. I thought he would take it up to the roof of the bus but he carried it inside and put it under my seat. Then he started saying, "Rupee! Rupee!...." I gave him a rupee but then he started, "Ticket! Ticket!..." Somehow he convinced me that I had to buy a ticket at the office instead of on the bus and I got down and went with him in search of the ticket office. After walking around for a few minutes in a futile search for such an office, I got back on the bus - but my little bag with my airplane ticket and passport was gone.

Various adventures ensued but it was finally arranged for me to pick up a replacement ticket at the Air India office in Poona, and to get a new passport at the American Consulate in Bombay. Adi sent a telegram for me to Lockheed informing them that I would be unavoidably delayed about one week. The end result of all this was that after sleeping for eighteen hours in Seattle, I showed up for work only one day later than estimated. I had my steel-toed boots on, my whistle and my employee badge but... there was no time card in the rack with my name on it

I went into the Personnel Office and asked where my card was. The clerk looked, couldn't find it, found my file and announced, "You quit."

"I didn't quit."

"You never called in. You quit."

"I called in by telegram. I didn't quit."

"Voluntary termination," he said.

"I never volunteered," I said.

The clerk passed me on to the head of Personnel who said if I could okay it with the supervisor he would okay it. The supervisor told me that he'd take me back if it was okay with personnel, but wanted to know why, if I had sent a telegram, they never received it. And so it went, I shuttled back and forth between the supervisor and personnel until they finally edged me out the door.

I went out and collected evidence to prove that I had been unavoidably delayed - police report from Ahmednagar, receipt from travel agent showing request for new ticket, etc. The telegram showed up four days later. It had been sent to Lockheed's branch in Houston, Texas even though it had been correctly addressed to Seattle. But by this time no one at Lockheed cared. The foreman and I didn't get along, a big lay-off was due, and they were glad that I was gone. So I went to the unemployment office.

First there was an orientation session. "There's a new law," the man at the office explained. "Fill out this form and when it comes to reason for leaving job, check one of the following:

- 1) reduction in work force (lay off)
- 2) quit Reason \_\_\_\_\_
- 3) fired

The law used to be that if you were fired or quit, then, after a waiting period, you would start receiving payments. Now, under the new law, if you were fired or you quit, it would take an 'Act of God' for you to get paid unemployment money."

I put down that I had quit and for reason I wrote down, "Act of God."

When the man saw my form he couldn't believe that I was serious, but someone must have, because I was granted unemployment.

Now that I was no longer working I had plenty of free time. Ten years earlier I had gone to graduate school in mathematics and received a master's degree from Columbia University but I had dropped out of the Ph.D. program. So

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I went to the math department of the local university, University of Washington, on the off chance that I might be able to enter the doctoral program there.

A professor told me that if I took their final examination in algebra and did well, they would give me a part-time teaching job and enroll me in graduate school. Since I was getting money from unemployment I was free to study for the exam. It went well enough for me to enroll, along with a teaching job.

So, by state approved "Act of God," I was back in a doctoral program, and when I received my Ph.D. my very first job as a professor in 1985 was back in India to teach in TIFR, Bombay.

Before joining my duties I journeyed to Ahmednagar where I had lost my ticket and passport. Of course, I went to Meherabad. This visit, in a way, revealed to me that the happenings that led to my losing the ticket and passport are an indication that Meher Baba's *Samadhi* at Meherabad is my final destination.

Austin Pearlman

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## "I Am Here, I Am All Things"

The first time I heard the name Meher Baba was January 31, 1969, the day that Baba dropped his physical body. I was in college at the time and, unbeknownst to me, my two roommates were Baba lovers. Apparently they had not felt moved to share Baba with me. Then, on this day, they came up to me with stricken looks on their faces and said to me, "Did you know that Meher Baba has dropped the body?" I was concerned, but only because of the looks on their faces.

Who was Meher Baba? And what did it mean, "dropped the body?"

Well, from that moment there was put up on the wall a big poster with the benevolent face of Meher Baba and the unexpected guidance, "Don't Worry - Be Happy." In those hot and heavy "protest" days in Madison, Wisconsin, one of the most politically active universities in the country, this statement was a radical departure from what was the accepted radical norm. I was an art student at the time, interested more in spiritual paths and things, but surely there was more to do than this, "Don't worry, be happy" school of spirituality.

I read a few of the teachings of Baba that my roommates gave me, and I clearly remember thinking at the time that there was no doubt in my mind that he must be truly a great Teacher. But I guess I had to fulfill something else because for seven years after that I devoted myself to a different teacher and his teaching. At one point I had moved from Wisconsin to Chicago, Illinois to be closer to a group involved with this other teaching (Gurdjieff's) which included learning what was termed "movements" - sacred dances gleaned from ancient esoteric brotherhoods from Europe and the East.

But, in the meantime, I had become friends with other Baba lovers and one, in particular, was always talking about Meher Baba to me. Meher Baba this, and Meher Baba that. I must admit that although a non-Baba lover, I had great exposure to Baba because this friend (and she was my best friend) lived and breathed Meher Baba. At this time Baba impressed me as being very kind and loving, and I knew he accepted me even when Gurdjieff (had he been alive) would have frowned upon my moments of not "remembering myself" and not "observing" myself.

Then one day my friend called me up and told me of a dream that she had had the night before - that there was a woman on the airplane with her on the trip to India and that

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she thought it was me. Impulsively, I considered going with her.

Not long after that I had my own dream - that I was walking around on a gently rolling countryside which I identified to myself in the dream as "Baba's Park." As I was walking around in this "park," I said to myself, "If this is a park, where are the amusements?" Then, like a gentle voice descending from the heavens, there was an answer. I knew it to be Baba answering me - as from a great omniscient presence: "What do you need amusements for? I am here. I am all things." Well, I realized, by golly, that was right!

I had several months to raise the money for the trip. Being a single parent I was struggling financially, but I sold some possessions and was all set to go - on what I regarded as "an adventure." I termed it "a lark." But things weren't to be so simple. Two weeks before we were scheduled to depart, I received an invitation from the teacher under whom I had been studying the sacred dances. A few others and myself were invited to go to the main center in New York City where these dances were being studied for a two week "intensive." In other words, here was a sort of culmination to something I had been passionately devoted to for seven years; Indeed it would be equivalent in that path to what going to Baba's Tomb in India is for a Baba lover.

But there was a thought lurking in my heart that helped me make a decision, though an agonizing decision it was! It was this. "What if he, Meher Baba, really is God!... and He has given me an opportunity to make a pilgrimage for the benefit of my soul for all time?! I'D BETTER GO!" So I did go. In fact, the whole time I was agonizing over the decision I knew in my heart that going to India to Baba's Tomb was what I really wanted. But I wasn't able to accept at first what was in my heart.

When I first arrived at Meherabad I realized that the countryside around the Tomb was one and the same landscape as Baba's "Park" in my dream. I was very impressed with the spirit of love and heartfulness that

seemed to be the climate around the *mandali* and the Meher Pilgrim Centre in general. Earlier, in Chicago, with the sacred dances, I had been striving for "perfection" and had had a "disciplined" approach. But at Meherabad and Meherazad there was a wholeheartedness and unselfconsciousness that had a power which seemed, somehow, better, higher, than "perfection!" When this person or that person played an instrument or sang a song dedicated to Baba, there was just a giving from the heart. This impressed me very much. And it was something that I could experience right now, without years of striving.

Though I somewhat felt the extraordinary atmosphere, I was longing to feel God's presence, or feel close to God inside myself. I would go to the *Samadhi* every day and pray to God (who at that time for me maybe was Baba or maybe wasn't Baba), "Look, God, I came all the way to India, I sold my possessions, I missed out on going to New York for my spiritual path, I left my 2½ year old daughter with my horrified parents... at least let me feel your Presence a little bit... or something that will make this trip seem worthwhile!"

Then a turning point came for me. It was at the *Dhuni*. I had been considering what to throw in for a couple of weeks. Having been shy and self-conscious all my life, kind of constricted in my interrelating, I had decided on throwing into the *Dhuni* what I referred to (to myself) in a catch-all phrase as "my constriction," including my asthma. The day of the *Dhuni* came and I walked over to the outdoor stone dais upon which it was held.

Just as I arrived there and was about to step up on to it, time literally stopped for me and I had a sort of clear glimpse, or deep insight, about myself. It was as if God was telling me something very important about myself. But it was such a subtle and intangible awareness, and so deep and non-verbal, that all of a sudden the whole thing escaped me and was gone. I was totally distraught and almost in a panic because I knew that it was one of the most important

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moments of self-knowledge that I had ever experienced. Here I was, knowing that I had just had a great revelation for my spiritual growth but I couldn't, even in this very next moment, recall what it was! I was determined to not lose it. In that timeless moment, frozen in midair, suspended in mid-breath, I prayed to Baba to let me just be able to put it into thoughts as a way to remember it for myself later. ·

Then, hallelujah! it came to me. Words do not do it justice, but here's how I would describe it in words: In order for me on the one hand, to get rid of "my constriction" and in order for me, on the other hand, to feel God's presence, as I had been praying for, then there was something which I had to get rid of - and this was, in fact, what I should throw into the *Dhuni*. I had to get rid of that deep feeling of not being lovable and not being known and loved by God - this was the big problem at the source of all my problems. This was my essential problem.

So, I knew that I had had an experience that had gone deeper than all the deep experiences I had had previously with my "spiritual path." I knew that I had had an experience that, though perhaps sounding general, was actually for me very personal and significant. Though perhaps on the surface it seems not very remarkable or colorful, it was, somehow, essential and quintessential.

When I got back to the U.S.A. I could not go back to my home in Chicago for 7½ weeks - because of inner conflict. I stayed in Pittsburgh with my folks, putting off the day when I would have to return to my life and the structure that was in it before India. I never had intended, and still did not intend to quit my former spiritual path and the sacred dances with the teacher. But something had changed. Baba was residing too powerfully inside me and there just wasn't room for the other... I never intended to not go back to my path and the dances and the teacher but, finally, after a year and a half I realized I was not going back.

During that time I had two dreams which helped me to work out this change in my life. In the first dream my

former teacher, the student of Gurdjieff, came walking past me. My heart reached out to him in love and respect. But then... Baba came by! Walking vigorously in His white *sadra*, looking at me and smiling mischievously behind an innocent challenge in His eyes which asked, "Well, which of the two of us is the sweetest?" I had to admit to myself that it was Baba.

In the second dream the setting was a school with a teacher and children. In order to fulfill the difficult task of keeping the children's attention at a deep level, she had found but one answer - not discipline, not structure, not merely hard assignments - but to be herself, her most creative and easy self.

I felt these dreams reflected a release from the inner need to arrive at spiritual things though an emphasis on discipline and structure, and an "okay" to following what is in the heart - wholehearted creative love, the creative easy self - in order to find the Real Self, Baba, God as my real Self.

Diane Applebaum

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### "Enough, Enough, I am Yours"

It's hard to begin one's "Baba story" - certainly it began long before I became aware there was such a story to be told.

I first became aware of my journey during my college years. I remember long rambling discussions in the wee hours of the morning about the nature of God and the universe. One night in particular, during a drug-induced frenzy, I was sure I had found the "answer." I took copious



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notes, knowing I would probably forget this revelation by morning. The next day, looking at my illegible scribbling, I realized I had found nothing. I was back at ground zero. But a longing and a fervor to "know" had been firmly planted in my heart.

Soon after that I gave up drugs as a means of discovering God and began reading every spiritual book I could find. I read about Hinduism, Islam, the Sufis and Guru Maharajji among others. My favorite pastime was dreaming of my inevitable entry into nirvana. From my reading I was sure I would achieve this state of divine bliss during this lifetime. All I had to do was find my spiritual master and he would guide me toward my goal.

I began reading about spiritual masters and keeping an expectant eye out for the appearance of the one destined to be my own. I tried to attach myself to this one or that one, but the attachment never really took place. I was beginning to get a little impatient I mean, after all, I was READY! Or so I thought.

This preoccupation with finding my spiritual master took up the better part of five years. I know now that five years is a very short time to long for union with one's Beloved, but at the time five years seemed painfully long. I began to voice my impatience.

I knew instinctively my spiritual master lived in India. For years I felt doomed because there seemed no way I could ever find Him. I imagined India with hundreds of gurus on every street corner, and millions of street corners in thousands of cities. Obviously, an insurmountable task.

After about five years of searching and waiting and knowing I couldn't get to India, I issued a statement to my future master, "If you are as great as you need to be for me to follow you, you'll just have to find me where I am. I will begin to prepare myself so that I will be ready when you get here." Looking back, I am amazed at my arrogance.

About this time, I came upon the statement, "The master shows himself to the disciple when the disciple is ready." It

was then that I realized that maybe it was not that he was slow, maybe, just maybe, I was not ready. Okay, I'd get ready. I soon discovered there was nothing to do to "get ready." I realized preparing myself for my master meant nurturing and intensifying my longing - nothing more. But I didn't think I was capable of this as I already longed so hard at times I thought my heart would burst

It was during this time of longing that I first heard the name of Meher Baba from some friends of mine. A little later, I was taking dance lessons at a place which happened to be two doors down from a Baba center. I used to walk by and peer in the window. After one look at Baba's picture on the "Don't Worry, Be Happy" poster, I knew for certain that this was not the one for me.

I was determined not to be taken in by any bogus guru and Baba looked like the biggest dufus I had ever seen. I wasn't going to fall into that trap. "Don't worry, be happy" sounded so juvenile and that big grin looked so comical. I wanted a serious master. Baba might fool all those other people but he wasn't going to fool me!

Around this time I met Vickie. Somehow, I found out she was a Baba-lover. I spent about a year suggesting we get together to talk about Baba but we never set a firm date. While I wanted to hear more about Baba, I was also apprehensive. In December 1977 she went to India. I saw her at a party right after she returned. She gave me a bangle. I was entranced by it and very sad when it broke a week later. I felt as if more than the bangle had broken.

The following Fall I enrolled in an eurhythmics class at Georgia State University. In that class I became good friends with Cathy. When I found out that she was a Baba-lover, I found myself even more interested in her. We didn't really talk about it much, but I was aware of His presence in her life and I was a little envious of that. She had what I wanted so desperately.

About halfway through the course I had a dream. I was on the top of a huge mountain with someone I had only met

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the night before. He was the brother of a good friend of mine. Our conversation was actually a monologue on my part lamenting the fact that my master had not shown himself to me yet. My companion spoke only once, reminding me that the master shows himself when the disciple is ready. I told him I knew that, and explained it was the only thing that had kept me going these last years. But how much longer could I wait? .

About that time, I spotted a huge eagle flying in circles high above our heads. It circled lower and lower, finally landing on a stone pillar right beside me. When I looked over, on the body of the eagle was the head of Meher Baba! His long hair was flowing out behind Him in a gentle breeze. His eyes were riveted on mine with a gaze that went clear to my very soul and beyond. I felt He knew me and loved me utterly and completely - more than I could ever know or love myself. And then there was that smile!

I have never seen such a satisfied grin on anyone's face in my entire life. It was incredible. I knew right away that it was Baba, even though I had only seen that one picture of Him when He was much older. I realized that He was the One I had been searching for and waiting for and longing for. He was my Master. My Beloved.

By the time I woke up, I was numb. Here was the end of my journey; now, what do I do? My heart was hooked for sure, but my mind was going crazy with doubts and questions - especially when I learned Baba said He was God! GOD! You've got to be kidding! I couldn't even fathom the implications. What about Jesus, my whole upbringing, everything - was that all lies? GOD! How could that possibly be?

Soon I learnt that Cathy was on her way to India for a month. I asked for only one thing. Would she please bring me a rock from Meherabad hill? When she returned and placed some small rocks in my hand, I immediately burst into tears and cried and cried. I didn't know where this pain was coming from. All I knew was that I wanted to really

know Baba as Cathy did, and I felt that I didn't. I was hooked and being pulled in, but this fish wasn't landed yet - just in more pain and confusion than I thought possible. We set a date to go to the Center.

All the way to Myrtle Beach, I was babbling continuously. "Why am I doing this? Who is Baba? How can He be God? How can I follow a dead man?" Little did I know what was in store for me.

We arrived safely and checked into the Log Cabin. I was immediately swept up by the beauty of the Center and the warmth and love emanating from every corner. It truly seemed the most beautiful place to be even though it was the dead of winter. Who cared? I was falling in love.

I spent the entire first day on the Center in the Lagoon Cabin having a conversation with Baba and God. I would address one and then the other. "God, you know I believe in You, and He (Baba) says He's You, so I must believe in Him too, but how can I relate to a picture! Baba, if you were only here so that I could look into your eyes and hold your hands, then maybe I would know. It's just so hard this way." This conversation lasted the entire day, taking on many different forms; but all with the same plea: appear before me! I finally left the Lagoon Cabin with little resolved.

That evening, a Baba-lover asked me to give her a ride to the Gateway where she was catching a ride home. I said sure. My Volkswagon had been giving me a little trouble and sure enough, it wouldn't start. I knew it would easily jump start if I could roll it down a hill. We would have to push it backwards around a small corner and then up a short incline before we could roll it down a hill. The terrain was sandy and filled with roots - not a very good surface for easy pushing.

Our first attempt was unsuccessful. I, of course, quickly appraised this woman as a weakling and suggested she really push the second time. She suggested we ask Baba for help. Rolling my eyes, I said, "You ask," thinking all we really

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needed was for her to push harder. I barely got my shoulder to the car the second time when it glided easily and swiftly up the incline. I jumped in and it jump started without a hitch.

Halfway to the Gateway, I remarked how hard she must have pushed that second time. She looked at me startled and said she hadn't really pushed at all! Uh oh, I thought to myself - what's going on here! I dropped her off at the Gateway and headed back through the dark woods.

About halfway back I realized for the first time that Baba could indeed appear before me on the road as I had been asking Him all day long. But I knew instantly that if He did, I would not be able to get out of the car, go over to Him, take His hands and look into His eyes. On the contrary I would be petrified! I immediately began to call aloud to Baba, "Please, please do not appear on the road before me." About this time, I began to hear the most beautiful silvery voices coming out of the woods on either side of the road. The windows were rolled up as it was chilly out, but I heard them clearly. I immediately said to Baba, "Enough, enough, I'm yours." I wanted no more shenanigans!

When I got back, I parked my car facing downhill, my heart racing a mile a minute. I happened to glance in the car next to mine before getting out. There was Baba sitting in the driver's seat of the car! He appeared to be about thirty years old and I knew it was Him although I had never seen a picture of Him at that age. This time He was not smiling but looked at me with a very serious expression, as if to say, "All right, Caran, you've gotten your wish, now on with it."

I had had enough visions for one day. With my heart pounding madly, I literally flew from there to the Original Kitchen. Two Baba-lovers were there having a quiet evening cup of tea when I burst in on them. "Tell me everything you know about Baba! Who is He? What are *mandali*? Where are they? Tell me about Meherazad, Meherabad!" Eventually they calmed me down enough to get me to ask one question at a time. We talked until we had

to go back to our cabins. I left with a million questions still, but that night I slept as soundly as a baby - knowing I had at last truly found my Master and my Home.

Caran Bramlette

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### The Universal Surgeon

I was part of a large family, with five brothers and three sisters. We were all active and healthy until, when I was fourteen, I slipped inside our house and fell. My right hip, knee and ankle were all affected, although neither I nor anyone in the family thought it was very serious. Our local doctor treated me and I seemed to be okay.

But, as days and months passed, I developed a very high temperature and severe pain developed in my ankle, knee and hip. Again our family doctor was consulted but this time he was not able to relieve the pain. It was decided that I should be sent to a large hospital in another city. There many x-rays were taken and finally an operation was performed on my hip. Afterwards I was put in plaster from my chest to toe and had to stay that way for six months.

When the six months was up, I was taken back to the hospital for a check-up. To my horror, it was decided that I would have to be put in plaster again, only this time they said it must be for a period of three years! I was horrified. Every six months a new plaster cast was made for me, and the three year period extended for seven long years. Finally the plaster was removed.

I was an adult now, and I emerged pale, shaky and with a leg which was so stiff that I could not move it. I was

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given a walking stick to support myself and I reconciled myself to the fact that my leg would be crippled for life. It was my fate and I was thankful, in spite of the stiff leg, just to be out of the plaster.

Because of my disability I could not find a job. An uncle of mine, knowing about my handicap, invited me to come live with him. He was the local President of the Red Cross Society in his town and wanted me to take part in its activities. I felt this would give me an opportunity to serve the people and I went to live with my uncle.

I persuaded the Red Cross Society to divert some of its funds to making artificial limbs, crutches and the like. I felt I knew something of what it was like to be without a leg and hence I saw to it that these artificial limbs were distributed to the needy irrespective of their caste or station in life. I did this for fifteen years. The Governor of my State appreciated my work and I am proud to say that I was given a Red Cross Medal and Certificate for my services.

While working for the Red Cross I came to know a number of people who loved Meher Baba. One of them was Dr. T. Dhanapati Rao who always used to wish me well, although I took no active part in the local Baba functions. My sister was also a Baba lover and would occasionally go to Meherabad. One day, in 1982 she told me that she was planning to go. I expressed a desire to go with her. An elder brother volunteered to drive us from Bombay to Meherabad in his car and so we set out for Bombay by train.

We arrived at Meherabad on January 29, 1982 and went straight to Meher Baba's *Samadhi*. My brother and sister knelt down inside and prayed. When my turn came, without thinking about it, I also knelt down and prayed. After a few minutes, I got up, still unaware that anything extraordinary had happened. But my brother and sister were shocked to see me in a kneeling posture and asked me whether I felt any pain. Only then did I realize what I had done, that I had bent my stiff leg for the first time in forty years - I could not believe it! To assure myself that it had really happened, I

went and knelt down again at Baba's feet, putting my forehead on the marble slab.

When I returned to my home and met my doctor, he simply said, "It is a miracle - the greatest of all surgeons has cured you. There is no explanation for what has happened to you in the medical world."

After forty years of suffering, Meher Baba cured my leg so completely that I have had no problems with it ever since and have been able to walk once again like a normal person.

Isn't it a miracle? But even more "miraculous" is His compassion. In fact, I had been totally reconciled to my condition. I had no thought of asking Baba to cure me when I came to Meherabad. I had simply gone to pay my respects to Meher Baba, but His compassion is so great that even without my asking, when I went to bow down to Him, He made this possible. Perhaps it is only an outward example of what Baba does inwardly as well. He cures us so that those obstacles which prevent us from bowing down to Him in our hearts are removed.

Is He not really the Universal Surgeon? May His blessings be on one and all.

B. Mohan Das

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### "Christmas with Meher Baba"

As a child, I was raised in a Catholic environment, but despite all the instructions and ceremonies I was subjected to, I did not have a strong belief in God or Jesus Christ, who had lived so long ago that I felt He did not have any relevance to my life. In fact, I used to get into a lot of trouble in the convent school I attended because of my



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attitudes about religion, so much so that the nuns would tell me that it would take more than prayers to get me into heaven. Basically, I believed that God was for weaklings and that anyone who believed in God was stupid, yet in my heart, I was crying out for something.

Some years later, after I have moved to New York City by myself, I remember thinking at nights that there must be something else to life than this and, if there was a God out there, there must be some way I could find out. It wasn't a religion I was looking for because I was not fond of churches and rituals; I wanted something real.

This feeling went on for quite some time, until one Christmas in 1981 I had a dream that I should cancel my planned trip to California and stay alone in the city over the holidays because I was supposed to meet a man who was an architect. So I postponed my trip and that Christmas Eve I was waitressing in a small restaurant when I walked this person who I instantly knew was the architect in my dream.

After he was seated we began to talk and I asked him, for no apparent reason, if he had a guru. I didn't even know what a guru was but he looked at me and said, "As a matter of fact, I do." He began telling me about Meher Baba and I immediately started getting defensive and sarcastic with him. Despite this initial response, we became friends and some time later, as we got to know each other better, he started giving me books about Baba to read. I found it difficult to read about Baba and His philosophy and we used to fight all the time over his reliance on a master and his apparent inability to live life on his own.

Then, one day, he told me he was going down to Myrtle Beach with some friends and he handed me a plane ticket and told me if I wanted to go he would meet me there in a few days. Having gone to Baba meetings with him in New York, I thought that Baba lovers were some of the weirdest people I had ever met, but the opportunity to get out of the city for a few days was too tempting to resist. So, I flew down to Myrtle Beach, arrived at night, and was led to a

cabin in the woods by Ann Conlon who said, "Goodnight," and left me there in this unlocked cabin all alone. Needless to say, my over active imagination began to conjure up images of all sorts of horrors but, before I knew it, I fell asleep.

I had a very pleasant time at the Center until the end of my visit when Jane Haynes took me for a tour of Baba's house. Everything was fine until we reached Baba's room where I saw all these people bowing down to Baba's bed. I remember thinking, "I don't bow down to anything, why should I bow down to a bed?" The next thing I knew, I was sitting there and my head was being pressed down. I looked behind me but there was nothing there and still this incredible pressure at the back of my head was forcing it down. The harder I tried to push up, the stronger this force pushed my head down. I began getting sweaty and nervous and, as I looked around the room, I realized that the other people there were not even aware that this was going on. Finally, I couldn't take it any longer and I got up and ran out of the house.

After I returned home from the Center, the experiences I had there started growing on me and even though I still couldn't read Baba's words, I did begin reading stories about Him. Then on New Year's Day of 1983, I decided that I wanted to go to India and I told my friend that he had to go with me. He couldn't believe it. He wanted me to love Baba so much but, because of my previous stubbornness, he was afraid I would change my mind and not go. But Baba was slowly wearing me down and even though I didn't love Him, I began to soften up like a sandy shore being eroded by the relentless ocean.

We finally went to India in the summer of 1983 and on the first day I went to Meherazad. I was the last one off the bus. I could see the *mandali* greeting everyone with "Jai Baba hugs" and my mind gave off a red alert saying, 'Run, get out now. Run for your life because if you go in there you're never going to get out.' I began making escape plans

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to sneak off the bus, walk back to Ahmednagar, get a rickshaw back to Bombay and take the first plane home.

Just then, someone saw me and said, "And this is Karen" and dragged me in. As soon as I went into Mandali Hall I started to cry. I was so mortified to be crying in front of fifty strangers but I couldn't stop and I continued this crying and sobbing for three days. This was totally out of character for someone who limits their crying to two minutes every five years, but I knew then it was all over, I had been caught and trapped by Baba and I have never regretted it.

Following this first visit to India, I had fallen in love with Baba but I still thought that now that I had been to India that was that, and there was no reason to go back again. But the memories of my experience there were so wonderful that they would come back to me strongly every day. I had accepted Baba as God when I was there, yet I did not know what that meant, and more importantly, I did not know what that meant to me. The fact that Baba was God seemed to be just words and, although I was not looking for proof, I was trying to understand my connection with Him.

I never had had any strong religious convictions before, but now that I had accepted Baba as God, each night I would ask, "Baba what are You to me?" Living in a city like New York can be a frightening experience at times and I used to say to Baba, while looking at His picture, "Where are You in New York?"

Until that time, I had never worn a Baba locket or pendant because I felt I would not be able to explain Baba to someone if they saw His picture and asked me about Him. One day, in December 1984, I asked my friend if he had a Baba locket for me. "I think I do," he said and went home to his house and returned with a small box and handed it to me.

When I opened it up, sure enough, there was a small Baba pendant, and I knew immediately that it was the right one for me. He explained that this was one of the five pendants that Baba had blessed in the late sixties and it was

the only one he had not given away over the years and he added, "I guess I was saving this one for you." I felt quite happy to have this pendant and I have worn it ever since because it helps me to remember Baba more and more every day.

One day, during Christmas season, another friend of mine who designs and makes porcelain jewelry, asked me if I would help him out by managing a stall at a local crafts fair in Connecticut. Since it was the holiday season there were many people at the fair purchasing Christmas gifts and it was quite busy the entire weekend. At one point during the first day, I noticed a woman staring at me from across the room.

As she approached, I saw that she was a very beautiful, olive skinned Italian woman about forty years old. She busied herself looking over the jewelry and all the while kept looking at me and around me and I began to get a little apprehensive about her motives. However, she purchased quite a lot of jewelry and told me that she wanted to purchase more as gifts but that she had spent all the money she had brought with her. I offered to hold the rest of her selections until the next day when she promised to return and pay for them.

The following day she returned and paid for the jewelry I was holding for her, and she also picked out a pair of earrings for herself which I gave her as a present because she had purchased so many things. This made her very happy and saying, "Merry Christmas," she turned to go away but then stopped and said, "I have to tell you that I would have bought anything you were selling." And I thought, "Here it comes, she must be some kind of a crazy or something." She continued, "As I looked at you from across the room you were the only one who had such good energy emanating from you that I would have bought anything you were selling."

She went on to say that she was a psychic and, although she did not pursue such experiences, they had come to her naturally since birth. She told me, "There's such love

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around you and you're a very good soul," and many other things that I did not understand.

Just then a friend of mine from the island of Jamaica joined us and, after overhearing our conversation, began to ask the woman questions about her life and future, which the woman uncomfortably tried to avoid answering. All of sudden the woman exclaimed, "Oh my God," and as I looked at her face, which had such a dark complexion, I saw that she had turned completely white.

"What is it?" I asked. "Look at my arms!" she said and I saw the hair on her arms was standing straight up and she had goose bumps all over them. She stared at us, looking from one to the other, and then she said, "It's you, there is a spirit surrounding you and it's a man." My Jamaican friend, who was terrified of voodoo, began screaming and wailing and ran off. The woman said, "I didn't know at first which one of you it was, but it's you."

Then she looked directly at my throat, where the Baba pendant was hanging beneath my scarf and sweater and she said, "Who is He? Who is that man?" I reached into my sweater and pulled out the pendant and said, "Is this who you see?" "Yes," she answered, "who is He?" "This is Meher Baba," I replied. "Oh," she exclaimed, "He is pure love. He surrounds you and protects you at all times and He loves you very, very much." Then, with tears in her eyes, she picked up her packages, said, "Merry Christmas," and silently walked away.

I just stood there, so amazed and shaken that this woman had seen Baba and I thought how lucky she was and how lucky I was and never knew it. It was then that I realized that this was the answer to the question I had asked Baba every night, "What do You mean to me?" I felt that I had this amazing secret with Baba, that He was always with me. I felt so happy to know this and feel it. And so, this was my Christmas with Meher Baba.

Karen Golden

## Trust Me - No Matter What

In 1968 Meher Baba entered and enriched my life in a powerful way and, for three years after that event, I felt totally engulfed in Him and my feet didn't seem to touch the ground. But eventually I not only came down to earth, but even seemed to splash into the ocean, for I became a sailing enthusiast and would get quite caught up in Australia's bids to win the America's Cup.

This is a yacht race that the Americans won by beating the British in 1851 and which they have continued to win ever since. Challengers have come from all over the world in an attempt to win the "ornate old mug" which goes to the victor but, despite spending millions of dollars, they had all failed.

Among the most consistent challengers was Australia. Before any boat left Aussie shores the Australian public firmly believed that "this was the boat to break the longest winning streak in the sporting history of the world." (132 years). For twenty-one years Australians would have high expectations, only to have them dashed by the New York Yacht Club, either beating us soundly or changing the rules of the race if they felt threatened. I somehow became enmeshed in these races every time they were put on, only to be let down and then I would think, "that's the last time I get involved, never again."

Now those of you that know Australians, know that they love the role of the underdog - it brings out their fighting spirit! So this situation served to unite the normally complacent Australian with his fellow countrymen and most spent their nights, from midnight on, watching the races on television (America's day being our night). We became a nation of zombies during these cup races.

In 1983 Australia sent three challengers to America to compete with other boats from around the world in a series of elimination trials to see which boat would finally challenge the Americans. One of the Australian boats -

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Australia II - looked outstanding with its high technology and became the final challenger by winning forty-eight out of the fifty-four races that it sailed against boats from other countries.

The America's Cup is a series of seven races, with the first to win four being the winner. Race number one commences: Australia II is just overtaking Liberty, the American defending boat, when Australia II's rudder breaks, they have limited steering, and so lose the race. Race number two: Australia II breaks a bolt that holds the mainsail up just before the race commences. The race cannot be delayed except for unsuitable weather so interim repairs are done, Australia II races, is leading for a time, but eventually succumbs to the disadvantage that the boat experiences, again she loses the race. By this time Australians are getting upset and, to add insult to injury, Liberty's skipper declares that, "God is an American!"

Race number three: and, at last, the Australians win a race.

Race number four: Australia II is leading by an incredible six minutes, but the wind dies down, the boats become becalmed and with the finish line in sight the race runs out of time. It begins to appear to Australians that God indeed may be an American, and that Liberty's skipper had a direct line to Him! The race was resailed the next day and Liberty won by a good margin. Liberty now had three races won and only needed one more win to retain the cup!

It was felt that it was impossible to win three races in a row, which Australia II now needed. The disappointment was palpable all over Australia. To be beaten fairly was in order, but to be seemingly beaten by God's hand was hard to bear. It is at this time that Meher Baba seemed to directly enter the picture.

I woke up that morning and I was feeling utterly depressed. Technological advancement wasn't going to reign over lesser technology; the New York Yacht Club was not going to be brought to justice, the skipper of the

American boat was going to get away with saying, "God is an American." I also had other pressures to deal with at the time. Francis Brabazon's health was deteriorating, some other Baba work was not going well and, for some reason, I was assailed by unwanted thoughts, old sanskaras coming to surface which I found difficult to deal with. On top of all this, a business that I was involved in, along with twelve other Baba lovers, was a financial disaster. Everything seemed to be going wrong. I felt very low. I thought, "I've had enough of this, damnit, I'm just sick of it!" I started driving towards Brisbane, our capital city.

After driving for about an hour, I was on a freeway, still feeling very down. Then, while looking ahead at a straight stretch of road, Baba appeared before me. He was very beautiful. He looked young, probably about thirty. He was bright white in His flowing *sadra* and His right hand was outstretched towards me with His palm upturned and in it was the ocean and the whole boat race.

Baba conveyed to me, "Go back, and I will let them win." I replied, "But, Baba, you can't change history for me. There are thousands of people involved." Then Baba added, "You are my lover."

Overwhelmed, I turned about, and began to drive back home. On the way, words for a telegram to send to the Australian challenge in America came to me. The words were: "Don't worry, be happy, you have already won, now you start scoring. Your part is to do your best." So I sent this telegram, unsigned. Because they weren't my words, I couldn't put my name to them.

I felt absolutely jubilant. My Lord had come to me and we were going to win! I told everyone in the office that we were going to win; not to worry. The funny part about it is, the two Baba girls, Ros and Sandra, intuitively took it as a matter of course even though I didn't mention Baba's involvement. The others thought I was a bit crazy. But I just knew we were going to win - He had said so!



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Early the next morning, when I got up, I turned the television on to watch the fifth race. The Australian boat was in an unbeatable position; the water was golden and sparkling and there was Baba's face... smiling. They won. Australian press waved the headlines, "Miracles Happen After All!"

The Australians also won the sixth race after they alone got a most rare 100 degree wind shift which took them from behind to being massively in front. Liberty and Australia II had now won three races each. The cup rested on the result of the final race.

Then came the last race on September 26 (claimed to be watched on television by five hundred million people), Liberty's crew rightly took a gamble that the winds would be light and removed a large proportion of their ballast. By good sailing and tactics, Liberty found itself in a very comfortable position ahead of Australia II. At the end of the fifth leg of the race, the Aussies were trailing far behind with a leg ahead on which they had proved to be slower than Liberty. The situation again looked impossible for the Australians.

Here we were, sitting up all night in front of the television, watching, and suddenly I thought, "My God, the level of commitment I have given to this thing! Baba said it was going to win! And if it doesn't, something would take place within me like a short circuit!" I looked up at Baba's photo, and He smiled.... I knew it was all right. I remember the long faces of the others in the room that changed to looks of amusement when I said, "Everything is OK, we are going to win. How could the Avatar not favor such a beautiful white boat!"

I didn't have long to wait; Australia II got two private wind shifts and seemingly in one breathtaking moment, it appeared beside Liberty. Those watching were amazed as it dramatically reversed its hopeless position and just sailed right through Liberty's wind shadow and on past the line.

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Australians went wild. They had won the America's Cup and ended the longest winning streak in history. Some commentators and sportswriters seemed to be aware that the white boat had had help. Australian press waved the headlines, "Miracles Happen After All!" And some noticed that "God's hand entered the race."

I looked at Baba's photograph and He seemed to be saying...  
"Trust Me - no matter what."

Roy Hayes

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## Gypsy Finds His Eternal Abode

This is the short sad story, though spiritually profound and sweet, of a young boy named Gypsy. He was the son of M.G. Sharma of Delhi, who held a high position in the Police Department. Gypsy was an energetic, robust youth, much loved by his family and friends alike. But when he was just nineteen he became a victim of a malignant tumor. In August 1981 the disease confined him to bed and he could move in the house only in a wheelchair. He faced his physical sufferings bravely, however, and kept up a cheerful mood. Despite treatment, his condition progressively deteriorated.

On February 16, 1983, twelve days before he breathed his last, his mother called out to him, "Gypsy," as he was resting in his bed. With half opened eyes he softly said, "Mummy, why did you call me? Look. Baba Meher is here in this room. I am talking with him; don't disturb me." With these words he closed his eyes again and stopped the conversation. People in the house were greatly surprised;

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what did he mean and who was this Baba Meher? None of them had ever heard the name before.

Gypsy's condition continued to worsen. In those days he was eating practically nothing. Around noon on Feb. 28th, his sister, with tears in her eyes, asked him to get up, eat something and talk. At last he opened his eyes, muttering incoherently to himself and taking Baba's name again. His sister asked, "What are you talking about, Gypsy? Who is Baba Meher?" He responded clearly, saying, "Don't you see? Baba Meher is standing here in the room in his long white robes."

His mother thought Gypsy must be delirious, but he reassured her, "Mummy, I am with Baba Meher. I am in great peace so don't worry." Convinced that the end was near, she lovingly implored, "Gypsy, my son, now is the time for you to take the Lord's name. Repeat, 'Rama, Rama.'" To this he replied, "Why should I remember Rama's name, mother. Look, Baba Meher Himself has come to take me along. I am going with him." Then Gypsy raised his hands, snapped his fingers and closed his eyes forever.

His mother was in utter distress at the loss of her son. The father, who was working in the Police Department, began to inquire from his colleagues in different parts of India about the identity of Baba Meher. He wanted to know whether such a person existed or if it was merely a creation of Gypsy's delirium. He did his best searching for Baba but to no avail.

By the middle of 1984 he retired from his job. Once, while visiting another son in Chandigarh, Punjab, he happened to see a sadhu in orange robes who was selling books on spiritual subjects. He had spread these books on the pavement. Out of inquisitiveness, Sharma picked one up at random. As he was browsing through the pages he had a real surprise when he read the following lines: "According to Kabir the concept of life is.... According to Mira the concept of life is..... According to Meher Baba the

concept of life is...." To this day Sharma does not remember what each of the above had stated about life because he was overwhelmed with a feeling of wonderment and delight that there existed a person named Meher Baba. This must be the "Baba Meher" his son had seen and Gypsy's seeing him, therefore, had not been the wild delusion of a sick person but a real experience.

He immediately asked the sadhu if he had any more information about Meher Baba. The sadhu replied that he personally did not know anything about Meher Baba; that he was just selling books. Sharma told him in a nutshell about his son Gypsy and the visions he had about Meher Baba during his last days. This moved the heart of the sadhu who said, "Perhaps you will get the necessary information about Meher Baba from an engineer who is interested in the lives of saints and masters." Then he gave Sharma his address mentioning the sector and house number.

Sharma hurried off to find that person and to get more information on Meher Baba. However, part way there he realized that although he had the person's address, he had forgotten to ask for the engineer's name which would have been more helpful in finding him. With this thought he returned to where the sadhu was selling books, but he found that he was gone. He was amazed that in such a short time not only had the sadhu left, but he had somehow managed to collect all his books and pack them up as well. But at least he felt reassured about the existence of Meher Baba.

On his return to Delhi, through sheer chance, he got the book *The God-Man* by C.B. Purdom. This was a biography of Meher Baba up to 1963. Now he was certain that "Baba Meher" and Meher Baba were one and same for there was a picture of Baba wearing a long white garment (*sadra*). Up to now, he had not mentioned his investigations to his wife, for he had not wanted her to lose the consolation of her belief that "Baba Meher" was someone great and her son had been blessed to have seen Him at his last moments. But now he showed Baba's picture to his wife and she was

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very happy to have her faith confirmed. They both felt that now they must go and visit Meher Baba. They knew nothing of Baba's current activities or whereabouts, however, but in *The God-Man* there was a map which depicted the two ashrams, Meherabad and Meherazad, near Ahmednagar, M.S. A railway route was also drawn on the map which showed that from Delhi they could reach Ahmednagar by train, changing at Manmad.

Gypsy's mother was very anxious to go to Meher Baba without delay and so, having only this much information, they decided to leave at once. Sharma, his wife and one of their sons journeyed to Ahmednagar to meet Meher Baba. On February 27, 1985 the party arrived at the railway station. Sharma did not know where to enquire about Meher Baba's ashrams. Just then, on the railway platform, in one of the canteens, he noticed a framed picture of Meher Baba. He asked the proprietor about the address of the ashram and the person directed them to visit Meherabad, near Arangaon.

The family reached Meherabad that afternoon and were given accommodations at Lower Meherabad. There they found a large group of Indians and Westerners who had come to participate in Meher Baba's birthday that was celebrated on the 25th. A light-hearted feeling of love prevailed in the entire premises; In that devotion filled atmosphere, the family was led to Avatar Meher Baba's *Samadhi* up the hill. Baba's presence, that's always there, touched their hearts.

Dolly Dastur, a Meherabad resident, had a brief talk with them. She heard about Gypsy's passing away and his references to Meher Baba that had brought the Sharma family to Meherabad. She also learned that they intended to leave on Saturday morning, so she suggested to them that they should not miss visiting Meherazad, Baba's Home. She informed them that a special bus would take them there the next day, along with the other Baba lovers staying at Meherabad. They happily agreed. In fact, they accepted this opportunity as an additional blessing from Baba.

In the Trust Office at Ahmednagar, where the bus halts for ten or fifteen minutes, Dolly introduced them to Baba's sister, Mani. She also apprised Mani of the events that had drawn them to Meherabad. In Baba's love Mani embraced each of them. As they sat in the office, she told them that Gypsy was indeed a fortunate soul. She also related to them the story of her own brother, Jamshed, who passed away quite young, taking Baba's name as he breathed his last. When Baba was informed about this at Meherabad, in a celebratory mood, He distributed *pedhas* (sweets) to the *mandali* who were staying with Him. Later, when Baba's mother visited Meherabad, she disapprovingly commented about Baba's seeming lack of feeling for Jamshed. Baba replied, "Dear mother, if you were to know the state of bliss that Jamshed is now experiencing, you would have distributed big *laddoos*." Mani concluded that all who remember Baba during their last mortal moment are indeed blessed.

In the Sahavas of 1958, Avatar Meher Baba conveyed to His lovers, "I say with My Divine Authority to each and all that whosoever takes My name at the time of breathing his/her last comes to Me."

From the Trust Office the family proceeded to Meherazad. There, one of Meher Baba's closest disciples, Eruch, showed the Sharma family around Mandali Hall. He also took them inside the "Blue Bus." [After touring India in the Blue Bus, Baba had the wheels and cab removed and the body fixed in lime and mortar outside of Mandali Hall at Meherazad. Baba stayed here during His seclusion before the New Life.]

After a while all gathered in Mandali Hall. During the conversation with Baba lovers, Eruch asked Sharma as to what had brought his family to Meherazad. Gypsy's brother and father shared with the assembly what had transpired during Gypsy's last earthly days and about their finally finding some information on Meher Baba.

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Sharma also said, "In addition to what has been told today, I am compelled to share with you something more about Gypsy. Owing to some reservations I have not yet communicated this even to my wife." Mrs. Sharma looked a bit surprised. He continued, "On the first anniversary of Gypsy's death I had a dream, the significance of which was not revealed to me until this morning. In that dream my wife and I were taken to a place similar to a temple. There was a person, like a priest, who led us into the temple, down some stairs into a sort of cellar. There he directed our attention to a bust indicating that this was of Gypsy. But as I looked I saw the face had a large mustache and couldn't be Gypsy. It is only now that I realize the bust I saw in my dream was identical to the one I saw just now in the bus."

Looking at Eruch he continued, "You might have casually shown me the bust, but in a profound way it has confirmed my belief that Gypsy had an intimate connection with Meher Baba. And what a coincidence, today is the second anniversary of Gypsy's demise."

Baba stories shared in Mandali Hall have loving humorous touches of Baba's presence and guidance. In a way each is unique. However, Gypsy's story exhibited yet another facet of Baba's working in drawing His dear ones to Him.

In the evening the bus carried the Sharma family back to Meherabad. Sharma later said to his wife, "I hope my dream has certainly convinced you about Gypsy's close relationship with Meher Baba and that you no longer worry about him." Mrs. Sharma said, "In a way, yes, but in your dream you descended into a cellar while to get into the Blue Bus we had to take two steps up." Sharma kept quiet on this subject.

The next day was Friday and they met Mansari on Meherabad Hill. During their conversation she asked them whether they had visited the museum. The family replied, "No." So Mansari asked them to have Nana Kher show it to them. Nana opened the door and led them down the two

stairs and the first thing that arrested their attention, on the left, was a replica of the bust they had seen in the Blue Bus. Sharma looked at his wife and there was a look of recognition in her eyes. The dream had hit the target. This little happening filled Mrs. Sharma's heart with love for Meher Baba. All her doubts were cleared away. Now the entire family has accepted Meher Baba as the Ancient One who had once come as Rama.

Incomprehensible are Meher Baba's ways. In Gypsy's case it seems incredible that someone who had not seen Baba physically, or His picture, or even heard His name could yet have such a profound relationship with the Avatar as to have a conversation with Him during his last moments. Matchless is Meher Baba as also is His love, humor and compassion.

Bal Natu

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"Unless You Become Like These Small Ones .... "

This is a story of the ancient Love and a young lover. Somewhere in Europe there lived a young girl. She was lovely and sweet-faced, and with her light blue eyes and her fair hair falling down to her knees, she seemed like an angel stepped out of some painting of ancient times. Her beauty was not only an outer one, it was also inside. One could not describe her otherwise than radiant from within.

Her parents loved her all the more because she was very ill. Since her earliest childhood, she suffered from an incurable disease that sometimes left her in great pain and half paralyzed. But this would pass and then she would again run and jump and be full of laughter and sparkling joy.

One day, when she was little more than three years old, it so happened that her mother showed her a picture in a



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book she had just received. It showed a face - the face of a man, yet not of a man, for in this face shone eyes of a depth as inscrutable as the depth of Time, and from this depth the Sun poured forth. The mother asked the child who she thought this was. And the child replied most naturally, "This is me," and she smiled happily.

The mother was dumbstruck. How could this child know? For the face was that of Meher Baba who has said, "I am your own true Self. I am the one who resides in every heart."

Some years later, the mother went on pilgrimage to Meher Baba's Tomb in India where the presence of Meher Baba as timeless Ancient Love is felt by those who visit this place. She brought back a locket for the girl with Meher Baba's picture in it. The child beamed with joy and, from that day, she would show this picture to everyone she loved and tell them that this was Baba. Most people would understand that this was her father, but she would say, "Don't you know, He is God!"

One day, when she was seven, she came home from school weeping and sobbing. "What is the matter?" the mother enquired. "Baba is God, Baba is God," the child stammered over and over again. "Of course He is," the mother replied, and the girl calmed down. "But why should you weep for that?" The child would not answer.

Later, the mother learned from a teacher what had happened. During morning break, the girl had shown Baba's picture to her classmates and told them that He was God, whereupon the children had started to shout her down. "No, he isn't! He isn't!"

They had lined up against her and she was standing all alone, repeating over and over, "Yes, He is." This had gone on until the teacher intervened and told the children to stop shouting at her. Since that day, the children despised her and would make fun of her whenever the occasion arose. The girl could not understand why the others would do this and why they said what they had said.

So the mother explained to her about Jesus: how He had been crucified because people would not believe what He said about Himself, and that such things happened every time God comes as Man amongst men, and that she should not worry, because one day these people would come to understand.

The girl felt very sorry for Jesus after this, and whenever she saw pictures of the way to Golgotha or a crucifix, as one often finds on crossways and along paths in Europe, she would turn her face and weep. No consolations would help, except the bright face of Meher Baba, the Beloved come once again to awaken the human heart.

And she would long to meet Him, to embrace Him. She would kiss His picture and pick flowers for Him and, despite the increasing paralysis of her right hand, she tried very hard to play on her flute a tune composed by the Beloved Himself - the Gujerati Arri (hymn) - which she loved very dearly. And often she would gaze to the far horizon and say to her mother, "This does something to me, I don't know how to explain."

Her heart was silently crying out for her Beloved, and many times, while the other children were playing, she would just sit quietly in a corner or stand by, lost in what she felt inside.

The teachers complained to the mother that she did not pay attention to her lessons and was always absent-minded, looking out of the windows as if not concerned by what was said. But no amount of scolding could bring her back and the more she was scolded, the more she withdrew. Her suffering was great indeed.

When she was just nine years old, the Beloved, in His compassion, took her in His arms. She passed away on January 17, 1987. Her name was Nina.

AVATAR MEHER BABA KI JAI!

V.F

WHEN HE TAKES OVER

## BIBLIOGRAPHY

Listed below are some of the principal books by and about Avatar Meher Baba.

### BOOKS BY MEHER BABA

*BEAMS FROM MEHER BABA ON THE SPIRITUAL  
PANORAMA  
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THE EVERYTHING AND THE NOTHING  
GOD SPEAKS  
LIFE AT ITS BEST*

### BOOKS ABOUT MEHER BABA

*AVATAR* by Jean Adriel  
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*THE BELOVED* by Naosherwan Anzar  
*THE DANCE OF LOVE: MY LIFE WITH MEHER BABA*  
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*DETERMINED TO BE HIS* edited by Steve Klein  
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*THE GOD-MAN* by C. B. Purdom  
*LISTEN HUMANITY* by Don Stevens  
*LORD MEHER* Vols I & II by Bhau Kalchuri  
*LOVE ALONE PREVAILS: A STORY OF LIFE WITH  
MEHER BABA* by Kitty Davy

For a complete list of books by or about Meher Baba, write:

Sheriar Press  
1414 Madison St.  
N. Myrtle Beach, S.C., 29582  
U.S.A

Avatar's Abode  
Box 22  
Woombye, Qld.  
Australia 4559

Meher Nazar Books  
King's Rd, Post Bag #31  
AHMEDNAGAR, M.S.  
India

*Believe that I am the Ancient One.  
Do not doubt that for a moment.  
There is no possibility of my being  
anyone else. I am not this body  
that you see. It is only a coat  
I put on when I visit you. I am  
Infinite Consciousness. I sit with  
you, play and laugh with you, but  
simultaneously, I am working on all  
planes of existence....*

*Think of me; remain cheerful in all  
your trials and I am with you helping you.*

*Meher Baba*

## Register of Editorial Alterations

- Page 3, para 4, line 3, obeissance changed to obeisance
- Page 12, para 3, line 8, twoards changed to towards
- Page 21, para 2, line 3, carressed changed to caressed
- Page 22, para 1, line 1, "could ... said," (duplicated line) deleted
- Page 23, para 3, line 2, "hand hand" changed to "hand"
- Page 24, para 1, line 4, *Speaks.* changed to *Speaks.*"
- Page 27, para 2, line 5, intution changed to intuition
- Page 41, para 2, line 12, intuitively changed to intuitively
- Page 49, para 3, line 5, pretence changed to pretense
- Page 52, para 1, line 7, lead changed to led
- Page 52, para 4, line 4, saw changed to sat
- Page 63, para 4, line 9, unbelievable changed to unbelievable
- Page 67, para 3, line 2, "He he" changed to "He"
- Page 67, para 5, line 4, irresistably changed to irresistibly
- Page 73, para 3, line 4, becuse changed to because
- Page 77, para 1, line 4, michievously changed to mischievously
- Page 79, para 5, line 1, eurthymics changed to eurhythmics
- Page 86, para 3, line 2, "that that" changed to "that"
- Page 86, para 4, line 9, philsophy changed to philosophy
- Page 87, para 3, line 7, stubbornness changed to stubbornness
- Page 92, para 4, line 7, Libery changed to Liberty
- Page 94, para 3, line 2, television changed to television
- Page 96, para 3, line 1, delerious changed to delirious
- Page 99, para 1, line 8, "was" changed to "Baba was"
- Page 100, para 1, line 5, anniversay changed to anniversary