

The Day Becomes the Answer

Wit and Wisdom of Elizabeth

Disciple of Meher Baba

By Charles Haynes

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The book cover features a painting of an elderly woman with short, curly white hair, smiling and looking upwards. She is wearing a teal-colored top and a necklace of light-colored beads. The background of the painting is a vast, dark landscape under a bright, hazy sky with soft clouds. A small figure is visible in the distance on a path that leads towards the horizon.

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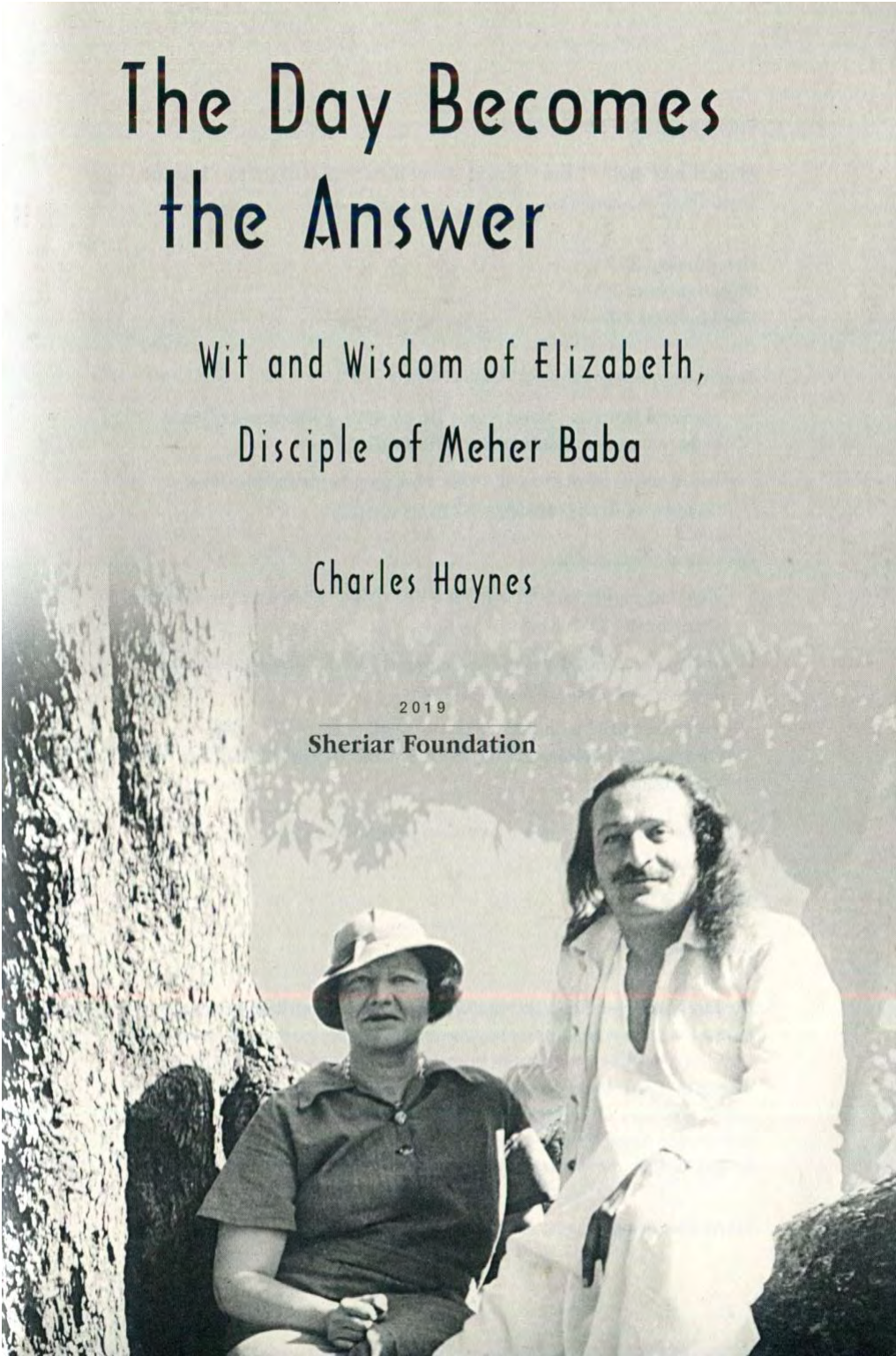
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2019

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*For Christopher,
beloved husband,
answered prayer*



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Elizabeth Chapin Patterson (1896—1980)

PREFACE

*A*t this writing, it has been 37 years—to the day—since Meher Baba took Elizabeth to abide in Him on December 6, 1980. And yet, Elizabeth's presence in my life remains as fresh and numinous as the day we first met in 1957. As my husband Christopher can attest, I invoke her wit and wisdom almost daily. More deeply, I feel her companionship and guidance in so many ways, big and small. Perhaps that explains why it has been so natural and joyful to record these vignettes of life with Elizabeth. Her words and example are living realities, ever present in my heart. No one has done more to shape my life with Meher Baba, including my work in the world, than the woman I was fortunate to call "Aunty Boo."

I am grateful to the two other members of Baba's Trio, my sister Wendy and brother John, who were both so dear to Elizabeth, and to our mother Jane, who nurtured our relationship with Elizabeth. Thanks also to my many friends in Meher Baba who have given me opportunities to share these stories at gatherings of His lovers across the world. Special thanks are due to Sheriar Foundation, especially Andy Lesnik, Sheila Krynski, and Sheila Gambill, for bringing this volume to fruition.

Finally, a heartfelt salute to the staff and Board of Directors of Meher Spiritual Center for their wholehearted dedication to maintaining the Center as Meher Baba wished.

First, last, and always, Christopher and I are forever grateful to Beloved Meher Baba for His many gifts, including the gift of Elizabeth in our life together. To honor her memory, we chose to be married on the anniversary of the day Elizabeth rejoined Baba. Her discipleship is a daily source of inspiration for us, as we hope it will be for you.-

Charles Haynes
Alexandria, Virginia
December 6, 2017

INTRODUCTION

"YES, BABA DEAR"

When I first glimpsed Elizabeth Chapin Patterson more than 60 years ago, she was standing in the doorway of Youpon Dunes, a beautiful art deco home on the ocean built by her parents in Myrtle Beach, South Carolina. I knew very little about her beyond the brief description given by my mother of two ladies, Elizabeth and Kitty, whom she had recently met. To pique our interest, Mother highlighted Kitty, who, she assured us, loved children and knew lots of games to play.

My brother John, sister Wendy, and I bounded up the stairs to the entrance of Youpon Dunes. There stood a slightly stooped older woman with silvery white hair. "Oh," I exclaimed, "are you Kitty?" She looked at me with piercing light blue eyes and said, "No, I am Elizabeth. But you may call me Aunty Boo." After a pause, she smiled and added, "You see, when I was a little girl, I couldn't say 'Elizabeth' so I called myself 'Boo.'"

In that moment, Elizabeth became our Aunty Boo. To say that she adopted us as her family is true enough, but even that does not fully capture the central role Aunty Boo played in our lives. First and foremost, she introduced us to Meher Baba, writing to India about our family and then, when Baba came to the West in 1958, arranging for us to participate in His *sahavas** at Meher Spiritual Center. She was, in the deepest meaning of the word, our link to Him.



Elizabeth holding Baba's hand, 1930s

From the beginning, Elizabeth and my mother Jane were close companions in Meher Baba's love and service. In an inscription to Jane in a copy of the *Bhagavad Gita*, Elizabeth wrote, "Twin fountains from One Source." For me, my siblings, and Wendy's husband Buz, Aunty Boo was spiritual mother and guide, our daily example of true discipleship with Baba.

Meher Baba Himself described Elizabeth as "My rock"-and indeed she was the most imperturbable, practical, and steadfast human being I have ever known. If "spirituality is poise," as Meher Baba has said, then Elizabeth was an exemplar of true spirituality. Baba's Persian name for her was Dilruba, meaning "stealer of hearts."

Meher Baba entrusted Elizabeth, together with Princess Norina

*Gatherings held by a guru or Master so that His devotees may enjoy His company for extended periods.

Matchabelli,* with the leadership of His work in the United States, including the founding of Meher Spiritual Center in Myrtle Beach, the place Baba described as "My Home in the West" that would be "a place of pilgrimage for all time." Whatever Baba asked, Elizabeth always responded immediately and wholeheartedly, offering everything she had in His service. According to Baba's sister Mani, Elizabeth's nickname among Baba's Eastern women disciples was "Yes, Baba dear" because whatever Baba asked of her Elizabeth instantly responded, "Yes, Baba dear."

Observing her closely over the years, I came to realize that Elizabeth did whatever she undertook for Meher Baba, large or small, as though everything depended on her actions, while simultaneously remembering that she did nothing.

To put it another way, she always did her best, putting Baba first in all things while leaving the results entirely to Him ..



Norina embracing Elizabeth at Meher Center, late 1940s

*Princess Norina Matchabelli (1880-1957), a well-known stage and film actress, met Meher Baba on His first visit to the United States in 1931 and lived with Him in India during the 1930s. With Elizabeth, she founded the *Meher Baba Journal* and Meher Spiritual Center.

Always fully in the present, Elizabeth rarely reminisced about the past or speculated about the future, preferring instead to focus on the practical realities she faced each day. She would often deflect questions about her early times with Baba by saying, "I think I have written about that somewhere." (And indeed she had in the *Meher Baba Journal*, the publication she and Norina edited in the 1930s and early 1940s.) It always felt to me as though Elizabeth was living every day as though it were the only day of her life. As Elizabeth would often say, "Meher Baba is in the Now."

Elizabeth was an intensely private person, reticent to speak or inquire about personal matters. Nevertheless, she was warm and welcoming toward visitors to Meher Center and remarkably accepting of the wide variety of dress, hairstyles, and opinions that arrived at her doorstep beginning in the 1960s. She had an aura of quiet authority that commanded deference and respect. When called on to enforce the rules of the Center—a role the rest of us gladly ceded to her whenever possible—Elizabeth was clear and direct, but invariably kind.

Elizabeth was generally reluctant to dispense advice about personal or spiritual dilemmas. But if asked, she would answer. Without asserting spiritual authority or invoking Meher Baba, Elizabeth gave simple but wise guidance that would frequently challenge one's assumptions and expectations. Those who knew her came to understand that one should not ask Elizabeth for advice unless one was prepared to hear the answer.

When I once asked her about friendships, Elizabeth replied that she could count her close friends on one hand. Throughout her life, she explained, her friends were mostly "work friends"—meaning people with whom she worked in Baba's cause. In the years we knew her, my

mother Jane was her closest companion and Kitty Davy her daily partner in Baba's work at Meher Center.* Because timing is everything with Baba, it should be noted that Jane came into Elizabeth's life the very week of Norina Matchabelli's funeral in June 1957. In a natural and seamless way, Jane filled the role of companion in life and work that Norina had occupied since 1931.

For much of her life, Elizabeth was married to Kenneth Patterson, who passed away in 1956, one year before we met her. It was a marriage of convenience that, as she confided to my mother, "was never consummated." The marriage served to fulfill the expectation placed on people



Above: Jane and Elizabeth enjoying a program at the Meeting Place on the Center

Below: Elizabeth with Kitty, her companion in Baba's work at the Center for many years, in front of Dilruba in the 1970s.

* Kitty Davy (1891-1991), a teacher of music, met Meher Baba in London in 1931 during His first trip to the Western world. She lived with Baba in India from 1937 until 1952 when she was asked by Baba to remain in Myrtle Beach to help Elizabeth and Norina in their work at Meher Center.

in Elizabeth's social circle. For many years, she referred to herself in correspondence and on calling cards as "Mrs. Kenneth A. Patterson," reflecting the conventions of her time. Although she and Kenneth remained friends, correspondence reveals periodic tensions about his role in her life. They lived apart and spent little time together. Kenneth, a gay man, had his own life and circle of friends in New York even as Elizabeth, Norina, and Nadine Tolstoy lived in another apartment in the same city during the 1940s.

In Elizabeth's time, the nature of her marriage to Kenneth and her close friendship with Norina were private matters rarely discussed. As far as I know, Elizabeth in her later years spoke candidly of these relationships only with my mother. But it was always apparent to me that Elizabeth especially enjoyed female company and nurtured through the years close friendships with women. The necessity to be oblique about this dimension of her life no doubt shaped her interactions with others, contributing to her already natural tendency to keep personal matters private.

Elizabeth had a wry sense of humor, so subtle that it could be easily missed. During her last illness, to cite a typical example, Elizabeth had to be served meals in bed. Carrying away her dinner tray one evening, Mother said, "Elizabeth, you haven't eaten your green beans." Without missing a beat, Elizabeth looked up and replied, "Well, they looked like has-beans to me." She found humor in the events of daily life, but she was not fond of telling jokes. Nor did she always understand the jokes I attempted to tell. At lunch one day, I tried out what I thought was a funny joke. When I delivered the punch line, Elizabeth looked appalled and exclaimed, "Goodness gracious!" I said, "Aunty Boo, it was a joke." After a pause, she said, "I see. Well, next time I think you should begin by saying 'this is a joke.'"

Elizabeth loved words and wordplay, often calling for a dictionary to elucidate the exact meaning of a term that would come up in conversation. My favorite personal example comes from a letter Elizabeth wrote to me from India when I was in college. "Mani and I have been speaking of you and she calls you Baba's missionary. I said let us look up the meaning of missionary. She had a *Concise Oxford Dictionary* and one of the meanings given was: 'Mission-person's vocation, or divinely appointed work in life.' This last seems to fit what Baba meant for you as His missionary. The work, of course, will unfold in life."

Early in life, Elizabeth was an avid reader of poetry, travel writing, and spiritual literature. She especially loved poetry, as her large library attests. Her tastes ranged from poets of her own time, such as Sara Teasdale and Witter Bynner, to compilations of Persian poetry and Sir Edwin Arnold's translation of the *Bhagavad Gita*. Throughout her collection of poetry books, she marked and underlined favorite passages in pencil, and these passages often give a glimpse of her own spiritual aspirations. She also wrote poems of her own. A number of these poems, which she called "inspirational fragments," were published in the *Meher Baba Journal*. She also wrote poems for Norina and enclosed them in her letters during the early 1930s. Over a period of years in the 1920s and 1930s, Elizabeth copied favorite poems with themes of love and friendship into a leather-bound journal, and she included some of her own verse. In the following lines, placed at the end of the journal, Elizabeth might be addressing Meher Baba, soon after first meeting Him physically:

You came to me unsought
 Because I thought only to find
 One such as you in dreams.
 You stole into my life

When I was sad at heart.
 I woke to find you there.
 When I most needed love
 You came and spread
 the warm glow through my life.
 I looked out and saw the
 world transformed, reflecting heaven.
 So it is that I love you
 Through time and all eternity.

In the years our family knew her, Elizabeth's constant focus on maintaining Meher Center gave her little time to read literature, listen to music, or engage in the other interests of her early life. She disliked television and rarely went to see movies or plays except on outings during her trips to New York to see our family. On those visits, she would take care to expose my brother, sister, and me to the arts, taking us to films, musicals, and theater.

Elizabeth did, however, keep her lifelong love of automobiles and driving, a passion that played a significant role in Meher Baba's work. From the earliest days of her time with Baba in India until His last visit to Meher Center in 1958, Elizabeth was often Baba's driver. In fact, one of Baba's gestures for her was to make the motion of holding a steering wheel. In the 1930s, Elizabeth drove the famous Blue Bus for Baba and His companions across India, enduring what can only be described as challenging and sometimes harrowing driving conditions.* Serving as driver came with a cost: on May 24, 1952, Elizabeth was at the wheel with

*Elizabeth's account of the Blue Bus tours, "Spiritual Journey with a Modern Guru," may be found in *Treasures from the Meher Baba Journals*, compiled and edited by Jane Barry Haynes and published by Sheriar Press in 1980.

Baba next to her in the front seat when her car was forced off the road by an oncoming vehicle. Baba was seriously injured, as was Elizabeth. Mehera, Baba's closest woman disciple, suffered the gravest injuries and barely survived. Mani sustained minor injuries. As difficult as it was to have been the driver, Baba in His compassion found ways to let Elizabeth know that the "accident" was an unavoidable part of His universal suffering.

Elizabeth said little about Baba's accident to me except to explain, when I asked, how she recovered to drive again. "I lost the use of my hands," she told me. "So I practiced each day squeezing this ball (she held up a small, red rubber ball) until I was able to grasp the steering wheel." Once recovered, she returned with joy to daily driving. Because it was difficult for her to walk distances, she used the car to inspect the Center, parking near cabins and slowly making her way inside to see that everything was in order.

Driving with Elizabeth could be somewhat of an adventure. Diminutive and hunched in her later years, she could barely see over the steering wheel. And much to the annoyance of other drivers, she frequently drove in the passing lane, often quite slowly, a habit I assume she picked up driving on the left side of the road in India. To save gas in the 1930s, she explained, you would accelerate and then release to coast. Needless to say, this driving style did not translate well on modern highways. In the last years of her life, when the doctor told her she must give up driving, I would take her to church and into the Center when I was home. Although she never said a word of complaint about giving up the wheel, I could tell that she greatly missed being in the driver's seat.

Growing up in a family listed in the Chicago and New York Social Registers, Elizabeth went to Miss Porter's School and had her "coming out" as a debutante. But Elizabeth was uninterested in the trappings of wealth, viewing money as a practical necessity, especially in service of Baba's

cause. Although many thought her very wealthy, she actually had a limited income. She would describe money as "left hand, right hand," meaning it would come in and then go out for Baba's work. When donors were few in the early days of the Center, Elizabeth personally supported the maintenance of the retreat.

Elizabeth's detached, practical view of money extended to such things as silver she had received as wedding gifts, elegant china that had once belonged to her mother, and other luxury items packed away in the attic. When I once asked her about the various objects in trunks, she replied, "That was another life." The one exception to this indifference came at Thanksgiving and Christmas, when she would happily set a beautiful holiday table for dinner with Kitty, Margaret, her nephew Harry, our family, and other guests. Fancy dishes, glassware, and special candlesticks would suddenly appear for the occasion. An excited Elizabeth would often erect a folding screen between the living and dining rooms to hide the table before the big reveal.

In the years we knew her, caring for Meher Center consumed Elizabeth's days from early morning until bedtime. Even her civic engagement—serving as an officer in her father's company, raising support for the hospital, attending the local Methodist Church—was understood by her to be critical for Baba's Center. And there is no question that in conservative South Carolina her service to community and church did much to quell local misgivings about a spiritual center dedicated to an Eastern Master. Elizabeth's upbringing and education gave her refinement and an air of authority that served her well in Baba's work, particularly in her relationships with community leaders and local clergy, who respected Meher Center because they respected Mrs. Patterson.

Elizabeth enjoyed driving into Meher Center frequently, visiting cabins, checking the condition of the paths and roads, looking for that one thing that was broken, missing, or out of place. Few things gave

her more pleasure than to take the odd chair or knick-knack home for a small fix or a new coat of paint on a spread of newspapers on the floor of her bedroom. She was always laser focused on keeping Meher Center 100% in readiness for Baba, which for her came to mean keeping it ready for all those Baba drew to be with Him at His Home.

Although anchored in Myrtle Beach during the years I knew her, Elizabeth was an inveterate traveler for much of her life. An indomitable woman with a great spirit of adventure, she visited every region of the world over the course of her 84 years. From her trip to the Arctic on a Russian icebreaker in the 1930s to her travels with Meher Baba across India to her cruises to European and Asian countries with my mother in her later years, she was never happier than when she could discover new places and people. One of my enduring images of Elizabeth is seeing her propped up in bed—which served as her office in the inner sanctum of her bedroom at Dilruba—surrounded by maps and brochures planning months in advance her next trip to some exotic location. It was one of the few distractions she allowed herself in the midst of the never-ending work of running Meher Center. Baba had ordered her to take a month of vacation every year, so she took special joy in finding just the right trip with Jane to someplace where she could fully relax and renew. "You see," she told us with a twinkle in her eye, "sometimes we have to retreat from the retreat."

Elizabeth also made it possible for us children to experience the world through travel. When I was a teenager, for example, she mapped out my "grand tour" across Europe to all of the places associated with Meher Baba. She later encouraged our frequent trips to India to spend time with Meher Baba's *mandali** in Meherazad and Meherabad. "It is good to be

* A term most often applied by Meher Baba to those who lived with Him, although Baba sometimes used the term to denote close disciples, those who were of His Circle.



Summer of 1957, when we first met Elizabeth

broadminded," she told me when planning that first European trip, "but travel makes you so."

No description of Elizabeth would be complete without mentioning her deep and abiding love for animals. From her time in India where Baba put her in charge of His many animal companions at Meherabad to the end of her life surrounded by cats, a dog, and Jimmy the turtle, Elizabeth was deeply happy in the company of animals. And the love and affection was returned. So much so that all of our family's dogs, cats, and the aforementioned turtle gravitated from our house to hers to spend time with Elizabeth. We often joked, more than half seriously, how animals had it far better than people in Elizabeth's home.

In daily life, Elizabeth was a person of few words. But when she spoke—as I hope to convey in the pages that follow—her words were filled with wisdom and humor grounded in her many years of discipleship.



Left to right: Charles, Elizabeth, John, Jane, and Wendy celebrating Christmas together in the Original Kitchen at the Center

with Meher Baba. This book is neither a biography of Elizabeth nor a memoir of my time with her; it is simply my attempt to convey insights into Meher Baba's message of love and truth through vignettes of daily life with Elizabeth. I confine myself to *only* what was said and done in my presence—from my first meeting of Elizabeth in June 1957 until her death in December 1980.

By 1957 when our family met her, Elizabeth had already lived a very full life in Meher Baba's service, having met Him in 1931, resided with Him in India in the 1930s and early 1940s, founded Meher Center in the mid-1940s, and much more. The wit and wisdom collected here therefore flow from years, if not lifetimes, of accumulated spiritual experience palpable in her words and deeds. What emerges is less a portrait of Elizabeth and more a glimpse into what it means to live each day as a true disciple of Meher Baba, the living Christ.



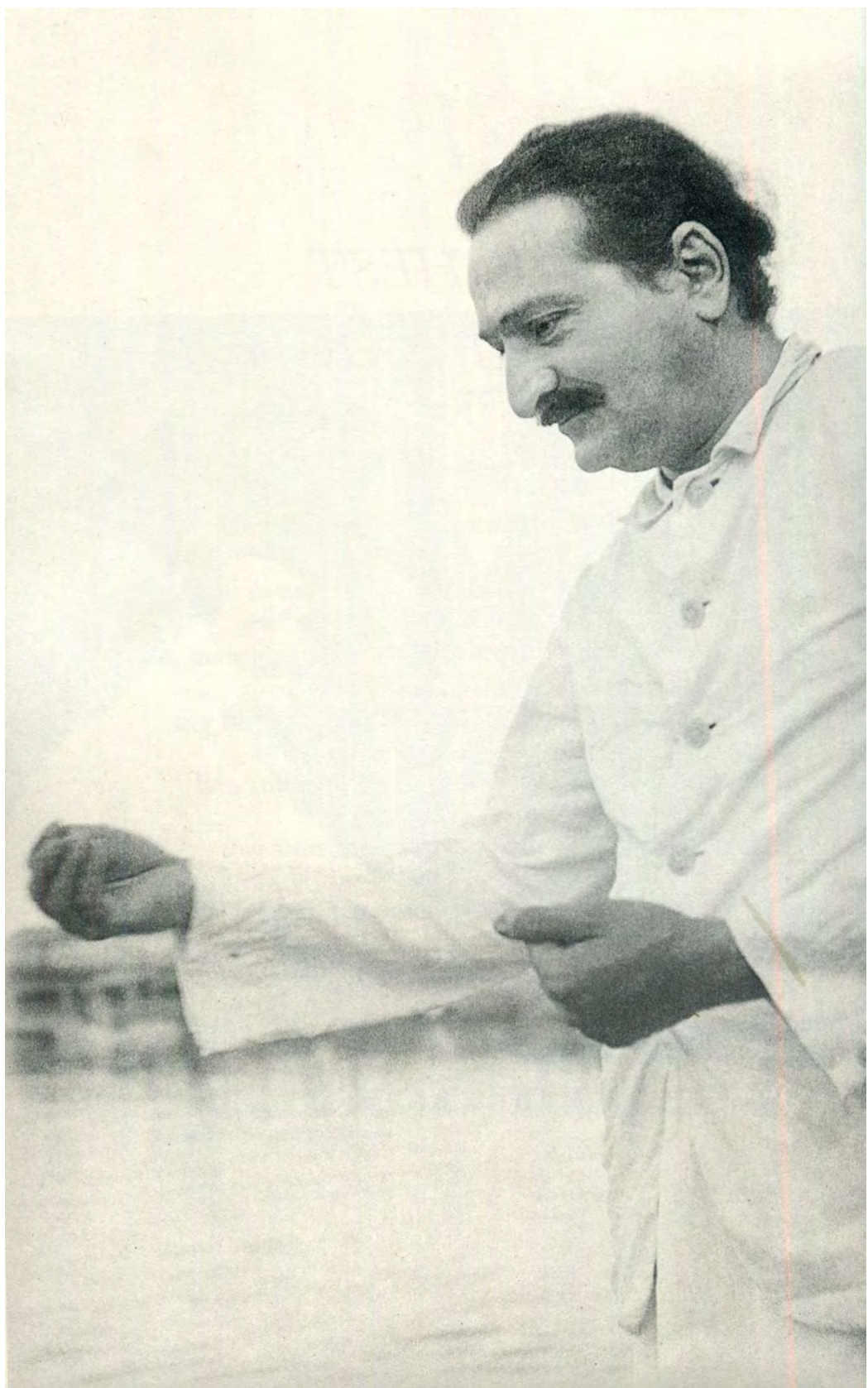
Elizabeth with Baba at the Tiger Valley Cave, Panchgani, India, 1938. Baba had given Elizabeth permission to stay 12 hours in this cave, a dwelling that had been used by Baba for His work in seclusion.

I

HIGHEST OF THE HIGH

*Know you all that if I am the Highest of the High,
my role demands that I strip you of all your
possessions and wants, consume all your desires
and make you desireless rather than satisfy your
desires. Sadhus, saints, yogis and walis can give you
what you want; but I take away your wants and
free you from attachments, and liberate you
from the bondage of ignorance. I am the
One to take, not the One to give
what you want or as you want.*

MEHER BABA



Highest of the High

One day in the early 1960s, Elizabeth gathered us in her living room at Dilruba for a discussion about possible titles for Charles Purdom's forthcoming biography of Meher Baba. Purdom had asked Elizabeth for suggestions and she, in turn, assembled Jane, Kitty, Margaret, Wendy, and myself to brainstorm the question. As I recall, no one was particularly enthused about "The God Man," Purdom's own preference (and his ultimate choice). Kitty proposed that "Avatar" should be somewhere in the title. Others put forward a variety of possibilities- "Ancient One," "The Life of the Avatar," and so forth.

Elizabeth, as was her way, sat silent through the back and forth, listening intently without signaling preference for one title or another. When we had all had our say, she leaned forward and said: "Yes, that's all very interesting. But I always think of Baba as the Highest of the High."

Then, with a twinkle in her eye, she added: "You see, if tomorrow they were to find something higher than Avatar, that would be Baba."

Without Limit

In my experience, Elizabeth had a clear, intuitive sense of Meher Baba's ways—how He would wish things to be done. If it felt like "Baba"—and here, of course, she was relying on her many years in His company—then it was what should be done. Practical, natural, and loving were key markers of Baba's ways as understood by Elizabeth.

Although confident in her deep sense of what Baba wanted, Elizabeth never in my hearing spoke for Baba or, in any way, invoked Baba's authority to instruct others. She did, however, make the final decisions about running the Center because that was the work Baba gave her to do.

Elizabeth disliked conflict or controversy, and she would do almost anything to avoid both if at all possible, especially at Meher Center. When one of us would complain in her presence about how someone was interpreting Baba or living for Baba, she would invariably say, "Well, that's between her (or him) and Baba."

Over the years, Elizabeth listened patiently to countless interpretations of Meher Baba. Although she did not participate, she was acutely aware of the many disagreements and arguments about what Baba meant or did not mean by His words and deeds. For this reason, when Elizabeth invited people who had been with Baba to speak at the Center, she encouraged them to focus as much as possible on their experiences with Him and let Baba speak for Himself. She was particularly wary of "question and answer" sessions when people sometimes took the opportunity to give speeches rather than

ask questions. If there were questions, she preferred a break between the talk and the Q and A to avoid spoiling the atmosphere created by hearing about Baba.

One day I asked Elizabeth what she thought about all of the conflicting interpretations and debates surrounding Baba's words and actions. She was quiet for a moment. Then she leaned forward in her chair, looked me in the eyes, and said: "Everyone tries to limit Baba. But always remember, no one can limit Baba."

A Glimpse

After Meher Baba left the Center in May 1958, I simultaneously felt Him with me and longed to see Him again. Elizabeth found subtle ways to encourage this longing, knowing, I now realize, that such longing would deepen my experience of His presence in my heart.

When I was about ten years old, she called me into her bedroom one afternoon and asked me to sit on the side of the bed. "I have something very important to ask you," she began with much seriousness. "Will you think about it carefully and give me your answer?" A little nervous at the gravity of her words, I said, "Yes, Aunty Boo."

"If Baba were to call you to India for only three days, would you go?" she asked. "Yes," I replied with great enthusiasm, "I would love to go!"

"Keep in mind," she said, "you would have to go all alone. And before leaving you would need to get all sorts of vaccinations. Plus you would have to travel many hours by plane and then many more by train. It would be a very difficult journey."

"None of that matters," I insisted, "I would go."

"But what if Baba changed the plan and sent word that you could only be there for *one* day? And you would still need to get those shots—some with very big needles—and travel all by yourself for many hours. And keep in mind that many people get quite ill from the food."

"Yes," I said, "I would go even for one day!"

"But what if Baba changed it again and said that you could only see Him for one hour and then come all the way back home?" Then she once again gave the litany of hardships and dangers that I would need to endure for only one hour with Baba.

By now I could barely contain my excitement. "Yes," I exclaimed, "I would go."

"Yes," she said, "but what would you do if Baba changed His mind *again* and sent a cable saying that you could only see Him for five minutes? Would you go through all of the hardships and dangers to be at Meherazad for five minutes—and then journey all of the way back?"

Now I had tears in my eyes. "Yes, Aunty Boo," I said, "I would go even if it were for only five minutes!"

Elizabeth looked at me and smiled. "I am very happy to hear that," she said quietly. "You see, even a glimpse of Baba is worth every hardship. A glimpse of Baba is everything."

The Perfect Master

One day in the early 1970s, Elizabeth called me over to Dilruba to be present at her meeting with a Perfect Master, or, more precisely, a man who had shown up at the Gateway claiming to be a Perfect Master. It would dawn on me years later that asking me to come over for challeng-

ing encounters with unusual people—something she did quite regularly when I was in town—was her way of teaching me how Baba would want us to handle difficult situations.

The man, whose name I have forgotten, had informed the person on duty at the Gateway that he was a Perfect Master who had come to take charge of Meher Center because he was, in fact, Meher Baba's Charge-Man. Not knowing quite what to do with the "Perfect Master" and not wanting to let him loose on the Center—the Gateway staff did what they often did for the most difficult cases: they called Elizabeth, "Goodness gracious," she said. "Well, send him right over."

When the man arrived at Dilruba, I greeted him at the door and took him into the living room to meet Elizabeth. She shook his hand and invited him to sit down. "I understand," she said, "that you have something you would like to tell me."

"Yes, I do," he replied with considerable conviction. "I am a Perfect Master sent by Meher Baba to take over the leadership of this center."

Elizabeth looked at him and asked, "Why don't you tell me how you came to know that you are a Perfect Master?"

That was all the invitation he needed. With great enthusiasm, he began to narrate a long, convoluted story about how he became a Perfect Master. From time to time, Elizabeth would interject "that's very interesting" or "unbelievable!" Finally, after what seemed an interminable amount of time, the man reached a point where he had nothing left to say. "So," he concluded, "that is how I became a Perfect Master."

Elizabeth sat silent for a few moments. Then she looked directly into his eyes and said sweetly, but firmly: "Well, that's all very interesting, but you can't possibly be a Perfect Master."

Visibly stunned, the man looked confused and vulnerable for the first time since his arrival. He leaned forward in his chair and asked, almost plaintively, "Why not?"

Elizabeth smiled and replied without a trace of annoyance or malice in her voice, but just an inarguable matter-of-factness:

"Because you see, I have met one—and you are nothing like Him."

The man was rendered speechless. After a few moments of silence, he got up to leave. We never heard from him again.

Why Meher Baba?

From time to time, local Myrtle Beach clergy would visit Elizabeth for tea and conversation at Dilruba, often followed by an opportunity to spend time in the Center. Christian ministers invariably treated Elizabeth with deference and respect given her standing in the community as an officer in the company founded by her father, Simeon Chapin, and her connection to Chapin Foundation, a charity that supported many churches in Myrtle Beach. They also knew her as a civic leader and longtime member of the First United Methodist Church.

If I was home, Elizabeth asked me to join the conversation given my interest in theology and religious studies. Much of the conversation consisted of general pleasantries about the work of the minister's church, the needs of the community, or the natural beauty of Meher Center. Sometimes, however, the visitor would raise a question about Meher Baba.

During one memorable visit, a minister asked: "Mrs. Patterson, if you have Jesus, why do you need Meher Baba?"

After thinking for a moment, Elizabeth replied, "You know, I never really understood Jesus until I met Meher Baba. It is the same message

of Divine Love, but each time it is lived, it is new. Many talk of love and service—Meher Baba lived it."

On another occasion, soon after Meher Baba dropped His physical body on January 31, 1969, Elizabeth's own minister, Dr. Robert DuBose, came to see her to offer his condolences. Dr. DuBose was a compassionate and loving man who would often come to the Center to enjoy the quietude and prepare his sermons.

Once settled in his seat with a cup of tea, Dr. DuBose got right to the purpose of his visit. "Mrs. Patterson," he began, "I heard about Meher Baba's passing. I want you to know that I offer my deepest sympathy. I know how close you were to Him—and how much you will miss Him now that He's gone."

With a look of surprise on her face, Elizabeth said emphatically, "Oh, no. You see, He is so much more available now!"

The Threshold

In the summer after meeting Baba in May 1958, we spent many happy days as children at Youpon Dunes with Elizabeth and Kitty. One day, I went to Elizabeth's bedroom to speak with her. I stood at the entrance to her bedroom and started to ask my question.

Elizabeth looked up from what she was doing, smiled at me, and said: "You know, Baba doesn't want us to stand on the threshold. When we did, He would gesture, 'come in or go out—but do not stand on the threshold.' So why don't you come in?"

My heart leapt. I crossed the threshold and never looked back.



II

MEHER SPIRITUAL CENTER

*All the love that you put into making of my centre
comes from my heart where you are very close.*

I send you my love to be shared

with Kitty Ruth Jane Trio

and each with you

on your birthday.

MEHER BABA

CABLE FROM MEHER BABA TO ELIZABETH FOR HER BIRTHDAY, JULY 26, 1966



Meher Baba with Norina (left) and Elizabeth, India, ca. 1947

Readiness

*I*n the early days of the founding of Meher Spiritual Center in the 1940s, Elizabeth and Norina were one-pointed in their efforts to prepare the place for Meher Baba's coming—an event that was repeatedly postponed by Baba until He finally arrived in April 1952. From that time forward, Elizabeth continued to work to ensure that the Center would always be ready for Baba—any day, any time He might choose to visit the place He called "My Home in the West."

Meher Baba did come to stay at Meher Center twice more in 1956 and 1958. Although Baba indicated in 1958 that He would not return to the West, Elizabeth held out hope that He would change plans (as Baba often did) and return to the Center someday. Her focus on keeping the Center ready for Baba never wavered. Readiness, however, did not imply absence. For Elizabeth, Baba was simultaneously expected at any time and present at all times. She often recalled Baba's promise given during His stay in 1958: "I will never leave My Center."

After Baba dropped the physical body in January 1969, Elizabeth continued to keep the Center in readiness as though He might arrive



Elizabeth by Long Lake st Meher Spiritual Center

through the gate at any moment. But now "readiness" required focusing on the growing number of people coming to the Center seeking Baba. As she said to me more than once, "Always remember that the Center is for the people Baba sends here."

The Abode for One and All

During the mid-1940s, Baba, Elizabeth, and Norina referred to Meher Center as "the Abode for One and All." Later it was called "Meher-Center-on-the Lakes" and finally, by the late 1950s, "Meher Spiritual Center." By whatever name, Baba made it clear to Elizabeth and Norina that His Home was always to be a "universal center," a place where everyone would be welcome to experience His love.

Elizabeth rarely spoke of how she and Norina—supported by a dedicated group of Baba's Western followers—carved out a beautiful 500-acre retreat from land that was essentially wilderness. When pressed one day on how they accomplished it—especially during the war years when materials were not easily available—Elizabeth said simply, "Well, all you need do is tell two women they can't do something."

Consistent with her laser-focus on the present, Elizabeth did not look back and reminisce about the past. Consequently, I heard little from her about the years of hard work she and Norina put into the making of the Center. She was, however, quick to credit Norina for her contributions. If someone remarked how perfect the vistas were or how lovely the placement of the original cabins, Elizabeth would smile and say, "Yes, many beautiful touches were from Norina." Then, in a tone that suggested this would explain everything, she would add, "You see, Norina was *Italian*."

One day, a visitor unfamiliar with Meher Baba stood looking at the vista of the Center from outside Elizabeth's home. "Oh," the visitor exclaimed, "this is such a beautiful place of nature." Ever the master of understatement, Elizabeth smiled and said, "Yes, the Center has great natural beauty. But when He came here, Meher Baba gave it that 'plus quality.'"

People often told Elizabeth that the Center was very familiar, reminding them of a place that was special in their lives. "You see," she once told me, "they feel a sense of familiarity because of an inner connection with Baba. People find Baba here because they bring Him here in their hearts."

Kitchen Utensils

When I would accompany Elizabeth on her forays into Meher Center in the 1960s and 1970s, I was awed by her attention to detail. Hunched over from injury and age and moving



*Elizabeth consulting with Baba on the beach at Meher Center, 1956
Also pictured: (L to R) Lud Dimpfl, Don Stevens, Eruch Jessawala,
and Meherjee Karkaria.*



very slowly, she would go up the steps of a cabin—one step, stop, another step, stop, until finally she reached the screen door. Then she would look around the cabin with an eagle eye and begin to inspect the contents. Are there enough pillows? Is there a small tear in the screen? And—her favorite—what dishes or kitchen

utensils are missing that she would need to replace? On one visit, I recall Elizabeth counting out the forks, spoons, and knives in a family cabin. "Oh dear," she said, clearly delighted to have found a shortage. "We will need more forks!" She paused and looked at me. "How can a family enjoy their retreat if they don't have enough forks?"

Elizabeth's simple aim (and her joy) was to make people as comfortable as possible so they could rest in quietude and enjoy Baba's presence. She saw her role as seeing to practical necessities; she trusted that Baba would do the rest.

Warm in the Nest

One day at lunch with Elizabeth and Kitty, I mentioned that a new family was coming to the Center that afternoon and I was going to give them a tour. Elizabeth looked up from her plate and said, "Well, just remember, they may be new to us—but they are not new to Baba."

In my experience, Elizabeth was both deeply interested in each visitor and simultaneously detached about how they might respond to Meher Baba. After all, she explained to me on more than one occasion, "You cannot give something to someone that they already have." It was Elizabeth's deep conviction that Baba and Baba alone draws people to the Center-and Baba alone gives them what they are meant to receive. Our role is to make them feel welcome; His role is to awaken Himself in their hearts when the moment is right.

At the same time, however, Elizabeth asked me to keep in touch with people I knew who were drawn to Him. She did this herself with any number of people who came into her life and expressed some level of interest in Baba. "You see," she would quote Norina saying, "we must keep them warm in the nest."

Running Meher Center

When disputes arose in the Meher Baba community about development of the Center in the 1950s, Elizabeth was sometimes criticized for the direction she wished to take. On one occasion, a number of people wrote to Baba asking Him to make the decision in their favor. He wrote back to say, "Whatever Elizabeth decides is what I want for My Center." That settled the matter.

As Baba entered into deep seclusion beginning in the late 1950s and lasting almost continuously until He dropped His body in 1969, Elizabeth had limited opportunities to ask Baba directly about the work of the Center. But despite the general restrictions on correspondence with Baba, Elizabeth had special permission to write to Baba's sister Mani on rare occasions—and Mani would often be able to get a reply from Baba. Increasingly, however, Baba emphasized that Elizabeth was to do her best and He would be there guiding her. By the time Baba dropped the body, Elizabeth—like other close ones in His family around the world—was accustomed to relying on Baba's inner guidance.

Elizabeth was given broad authority by Baba to run the Center, but she did not make decisions in isolation. She regularly consulted the Board of Directors and staff and, in my experience, welcomed discussion of alternatives. In Board deliberations about some difficult issue, she would listen carefully to what everyone had to say and then weigh in at the end. Fortunately for the Center, the final decision was hers to make.

As growing numbers of people came to the Center, Elizabeth found it necessary to add to the directives given by Baba about safety and rules of behavior. When Baba was still in the body, Elizabeth would write for approval of the directive. Later she crafted rules she thought



Kitty, Elizabeth and Jane, collectively called "Elikitjane" by Baba in cables

were needed based on what she felt Baba would want. One day I raised a question about some new directive under consideration. Was it really necessary? "Well," she replied, "if people didn't do these things we wouldn't need rules."

Although Elizabeth set the rules at the Center, she did not see herself as an arbiter of how people should love or follow Meher Baba. I recall a discussion at lunch one day about some controversy that had arisen in the nearby Baba community. Kitty and my mother were clearly upset about the behavior of the people involved, concerned that it would reflect

poorly on Baba and the Center. When they asked Elizabeth what she thought, she was quiet for a moment and then replied: "I can't say what people do in their own lives. That is between them and Baba. I can only say what they do at the Center. That is all Baba has given me."

Trusting Meher Baba

Because Elizabeth appeared so confident and resolute in the years I knew her, it never occurred to me that anyone would question her authority. That's why I was taken aback one day when she confided in me something personal and unexpected about her work for Baba over

the decades. We were alone in the Dilruba living room speaking about the Center. Apropos of nothing in particular, Elizabeth looked at me and said, "You know, everything I have ever tried to do for Baba has been met with opposition."

Although I had no idea what she meant at the time, I have come to realize through reading correspondence and papers connected with development of the Center that, indeed, Elizabeth often faced opposition—even from Norina—on key decisions concerning the Center. Through it all, however, she kept true to what she felt was right for Baba's work. And through it all, Baba gave her the one vote of confidence that ultimately mattered—His.

In times of crisis—or what we felt was a crisis—Elizabeth remained imperturbable, trusting Baba completely. On one especially chaotic occasion, we were all in an uproar about some problem that had arisen at the Center. I no longer recall what the problem was, but it seemed dire in that moment. Elizabeth sat quietly in the Dilruba living room as the rest of us ran in and out, answering doors and phones, looking distraught. At one point, she looked up and said, "All I can say is, it is a good thing Baba runs His Center—or we would all be in trouble!"

The Future of Meher Center

Elizabeth was so integral to the life of the Center that it was difficult for me to imagine what the Center would be like after her time. Who could possibly guide the Center with the same compassion, wisdom, and authority? One day I was bold and asked her how she envisioned the future of Meher Center.

I began by asking how the Center should meet the challenges of large numbers of pilgrims anticipated in the years ahead?

"Well," Elizabeth replied, "that is why there is a Board of Directors. They will have to decide. But keep in mind that Baba already has a plan for His Center."

What about the commercial development that may surround the Center as Myrtle Beach expands?

"All I can say is, Baba has given us 500 acres and that should be quite enough. One day the Center will be an oasis in Myrtle Beach, much like Central Park in New York."

Where would the Center find the necessary resources to maintain the property and to provide for the guests in the way Baba wished?

"You know," she said, "I asked Baba that very question. And He gestured, 'Don't worry, I will provide.' And then He made a gesture for 'millions.'"

Finally, I shared what was in my heart: "Aunty Boo, what will the Center be without you here?"

Elizabeth answered, "With Baba's work, no one is indispensable."

III

THE DAY BECOMES THE ANSWER

*External silence helps the inner silence
and only in internal silence is Baba found,
in profound inner silence.*

I am never silent.

I speak eternally.

*The voice that is heard
deep within the soul is my voice.*

MEHER BABA

SPARKS FROM MEHER BABA, P. 8



Listening to Baba

*E*lizabeth met the challenges of daily life with astonishing equanimity. While those around her might wring their hands and wonder what to do, Elizabeth would remain completely calm, always finding the most practical and sensible way forward. As a teenager, I remember imagining her reaction to various potential disasters. If Dilruba and the Center burned to the ground, for example, I pictured Elizabeth looking around at the scorched earth and saying, "Well, we will need to find a place to stay tonight."

Elizabeth's poise extended to her day-to-day decisions about how to resolve even the knottiest of dilemmas. No second-guessing or torturous discussions about "what does Baba want?" Just careful deliberation followed by confident action. Of course, she did not think herself infallible and was always open to a course correction if someone offered a better solution. But Elizabeth never let the prospect of being wrong or the complexities of the challenges she faced paralyze her. She simply did what she thought was best and left the rest to Baba. If one trusts Baba, she believed, there are no "mistakes."

How did Elizabeth come to trust Baba so completely? One day, I decided to ask. "Aunty Boo," I said, "how do you know what Baba wants you to do each day?"

Without hesitation, she replied: "Every morning I take a few moments to listen in silence for Baba's guidance."

Then she smiled and added, "Now, He doesn't answer in so many words. But when I listen each morning, the day becomes the answer."

Giving Advice

When asked for advice, Elizabeth usually responded by saying, "Let me sleep on it," a practice she inherited from her father. If the question arrived in the mail or by cable, she carefully placed the letter or telegram on the mantle under her favorite photograph of Baba, an early 1940s image of His profile looking slightly downward. Then the next morning she offered practical, candid, and sometimes uncomfortable advice, prefaced by "It came to me last night."

In the 23 years I knew Elizabeth, I did not once hear her invoke Baba's authority when giving advice. But the wisdom that "came to her" had the ring of authenticity and truth. Always practical and clear, her answers made me ask myself on more than one occasion, "Why didn't I think of that?"

Elizabeth neither encouraged nor discouraged me from asking her for advice. If asked, she responded. If not asked, she let me find my own way. No one in my youth—except for Baba Himself—treated me with more respect or loved me as unconditionally as Aunty Boo.

Elizabeth did, however, expect me to seek Baba's guidance in all things big and small. When He was in the body, but in seclusion, she would sometimes insert my questions into her rare letters to Mani. After

Baba left the body, Elizabeth continued to remind me to ask Baba for His guidance, now within my heart. On one occasion, I recall telling Elizabeth about a service project I planned to do for Baba. When I finished speaking, she smiled at me and said, "It is wonderful that you wish to do that for Baba. But remember, if you are going to do something for Baba, you should ask Him." From that day forward, I made it a practice to ask Baba first.

The Truth Within

Rather than attempting to give people her version of the truth, Elizabeth would find ways to help people recognize truth within their own hearts. "You see," she once explained to me, "it means so much more when it comes from them."

Observing Elizabeth with first-time visitors to Meher Center was an education in listening, deep listening, to what each person has to share. People from all walks of life and with every imaginable view of God and the world came to her door with stories to tell of how they came to be there—and what they were seeking.

Elizabeth listened intently and patiently, rarely interrupting. Over the years, I came to realize that she was listening for the truth—or, more precisely, listening for something in what was being said that rang true from her experience of Baba. It could be an insight, a particular phrase, or a life experience. When the visitor finished speaking, Elizabeth would repeat that one insight, phrase, or experience. "You know," she would say with a warm smile, "what you have said is so true. It is exactly what Meher Baba has told us."

Invariably, the visitor would be visibly touched. In this way, Elizabeth conveyed that the truth is found in every heart, or, as she once put it, "we cannot give anything to anyone that they do not already have."

True Detachment

In the fall of my junior year at Emory University, I came home seeking Elizabeth's advice. As student body president, I was struggling to get the university to move forward on steps to address the legacy of racism on campus. Specific measures had been agreed to after black students staged protests the previous spring. I had helped negotiate an agreement with the administration to make substantive changes, including recruitment of black faculty and students and improvements to campus life for minority students.

Elizabeth had been very supportive of my efforts to combat racism at the university. She had advised me, for example, to recast student "demands" as "petitions" when I approached the president of the university—a strategy that worked wonders. But in the months following the protests, the administration was doing far too little to implement the agreement reached to end the conflict. Things seemed at an impasse.

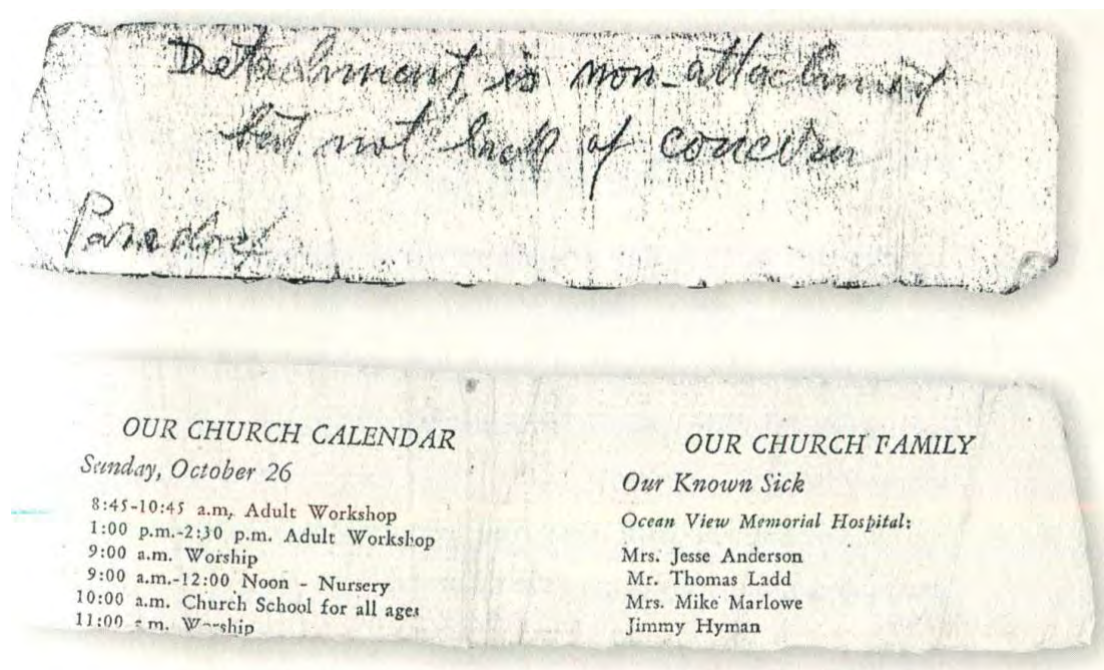
When I arrived home, I met with Elizabeth and my mother at Dilruba. I began by saying that I felt my efforts had failed and it might be best for me to resign as student body president. Looking very upset, Mother reacted by listing all the reasons that I shouldn't resign. I reiterated that I felt there was nothing more I could do.

Elizabeth remained quiet during this exchange. Finally, she leaned forward in her chair and said, "Charles, I am very happy to hear you say this." Mother immediately interjected, "Elizabeth, how can you say that!" Undaunted, Elizabeth looked at me and said, "It is good that you realize there is very little that you can do." She paused for a moment and then added, "Now that you understand that, you are ready to go back and finish what you have started."

The next day, I accompanied Elizabeth to church. When we returned home, she called me into her bedroom and handed me a small scrap of paper. "This came to me during the service," she explained. I could tell that the paper had been torn from the edge of the church bulletin. On one side was a snippet of the church service. On the other side was a message scribbled in pencil in Elizabeth's handwriting:

Detachment is non-attachment,
but not lack of concern
Paradox

With this slip of paper in my wallet, I returned to Emory with both a sense of freedom and resolve. Doors opened that spring, advancing our goals for racial justice at the university.



Elizabeth's definition of detachment written in pencil on the Sunday bulletin of First United Methodist Church in Myrtle Beach, which she tore off and gave to Charles later that day, October 26, 1969

Attending Church

When at home, I would frequently accompany Elizabeth to church. We were both members of the First United Methodist Church in Myrtle Beach, a church her father helped to build. In fact, the very chandeliers that hung from the church ceiling came from her parents' Chicago home.

One Sunday while driving home after the service, I asked Elizabeth what she thought about something the minister had said in the sermon that I found thought-provoking. Looking slightly abashed, Elizabeth responded, "Really, did he say that?"

"Yes," I replied, "that was his central point." "Well," she said, "I must not have been listening."

Somewhat surprised, I asked, "Aunty Boo, if you don't listen to the sermon, why do you go to church?"

"Oh," she replied in a tone that suggested the answer was self-evident, "I go to church to take Baba there."

The Real Gift

One day when I was a child, I suffered what felt like a great loss. Of course, I can no longer recall what it was. I ran to Aunty Boo seeking solace. She gave me a warm hug and then said words that have sustained and comforted me during many times of loss and disappointment:

"In our life with Him, Baba will take away the rhinestones—but always remember, He will give the Diamond."

"My Redeemer Liveth"

Very early on the morning of January 31, 1969, the telephone rang in my dorm-room at Emory University. Half asleep, I stumbled out of bed, picked up the receiver, and heard "Charles." I knew immediately it was Aunty Boo with urgent news. That winter, my mother was at Emory to direct a play, raising a little money to make it possible for my sister Diane to attend Baba's *darshan** that spring. Because Mother didn't have a telephone in the room where she was housed on campus, Elizabeth would sometimes call me to convey messages for Jane.

After I responded with "Yes, Aunty Boo," Elizabeth said, "Baba tells us that God alone is Real. There is nothing else." Then she was silent.

After a moment, she continued, "Adi has called to say that Beloved Baba has dropped His physical body."

I felt the breath knocked out of me. All I could manage to utter was, "Oh."

Elizabeth then added, "Baba says that He goes now, but will come again. Now contact your mother."

Elizabeth later told us that just after 2 a.m. on January 31, she awoke suddenly from a sound sleep, sat upright in bed, and heard these words of scripture from a favorite hymn: "I know that my redeemer liveth."

As it happened, that was the exact time that Meher Baba left His body.

* Literally, the act of seeing; audience with a spiritual Master or saint, or the experience of His presence.



Baba holding Kippy, Elizabeth's Boston Terrier, who became a favorite in the ashram beginning in 1937 and traveled on the Blue Bus Tours

IV

ANIMAL COMPANIONS

It is very difficult to grasp the entire meaning of the word 'Avatar.' For mankind it is easy and simple to declare that the Avatar is God and that it means that God becomes man. But this is not all that the word 'Avatar' means or conveys.

It would be more appropriate to say that the Avatar is God and that God becomes man for all mankind and simultaneously God also becomes a sparrow for all sparrows in Creation, an ant for all ants in Creation, a pig for all pigs in Creation, a particle of dust for all dusts in Creation, a particle of air for all airs in Creation, etc., for each and everything that is in Creation.

MEHER BABA



Elizabeth feeding Lily the gazelle, one of the many animal companions she cared for as directed by Baba, late 1930s

The Gift of Animals

Elizabeth had a deep and abiding love of animals that infused her daily life. She treated each animal companion—hers and ours—with extraordinary care and concern. Curious about how she came to love animals, I asked one day if she had pets as a child. "Oh, no," she replied, "I always wanted animals, but Father wouldn't allow it in the places where we lived."

She paused for a moment, smiled, and added, "But when I went to India to live with Baba, He put me in charge of caring for the animals. So you see, Baba gave me my animals."

From her time in India until the end of her life, animal companions were near and dear to Elizabeth. Although she rarely explained her love of animals, one day toward the end of her life she offered an insight into her relationships with them. She was visiting with her nephew Harry. I happened to be there. After a few pleasantries, Harry broached a delicate and uncomfortable subject.

"Aunt Boo," he began, "I think it is time that you gave up animals, especially these cats (six or seven at the time). After all, a lot of the work falls to Kitty, who has no business doing that at her age."



Elizabeth on her bed watching Jimmy the turtle meet a smaller turtle found in the Dilruba yard. Charles is looking on. After the encounter, the visiting turtle was returned to the wild, 1970s.

Elizabeth sat still for what felt like a very long moment. Finally, in a quiet voice she replied, "First, let me say that I help feed the cats. It doesn't all fall to Kitty."

Then Elizabeth leaned forward in her chair, looked directly at Harry, and said with deep feeling: "My animals have helped to make me who I am—and I have helped to make them who they are. So, you see, I could not possibly give them up."

Nothing more was ever said on the subject.

Jimmy the Turtle

Like many children, I had an invisible companion as a small child. In my case, it was a turtle that accompanied me everywhere. To her credit, my mother treated the invisible turtle with respect, often asking what the turtle was saying or doing. One day when I was about six, Jimmy the yardman brought a small box turtle to me that he had almost

run over with the lawnmower. Delighted to see my companion come to life, I named the turtle "Jimmy" in honor of his rescuer.

When my parents separated and we moved from Durham to Myrtle Beach, Jimmy the turtle moved with us. And when we met Elizabeth soon after the move, she took an immediate interest in helping me care for Jimmy. "You know," she would explain to me, "Baba's work with animals is just as important as His work with people. That is why we must take very good care of them."

One day, Elizabeth came to Happy House—the home she had provided for us in Myrtle Beach—and asked me to sit with her on the porch. Our family was preparing to move to New York, where Mother planned to pursue her acting career.

"You know," she began, "your apartment in New York will be very small. And you will not be able to take Jimmy outside as you do here. Do you think Jimmy would be happy there?"

"I'm not sure, Aunty Boo," I replied. "Maybe not."

"That's just it," she said, "it is very hard for a turtle to live in New York." Then she said, "Perhaps Jimmy can come and live with me. Then when you visit, Jimmy will be waiting here to see you." Although I was sad at the prospect of leaving Jimmy behind, I knew how happy he would be with Elizabeth. "Yes, Aunty Boo," I said. "Jimmy should live with you."

That's how Jimmy the turtle came to abide in Dilruba with Elizabeth for the rest of his life. When I came to visit, Elizabeth would house me in the "turtle room"—a small bedroom on the attic level where Jimmy resided when he wasn't wandering around the kitchen or sitting on the dining room table. When I came to visit, she was convinced that Jimmy stuck his neck out especially far to greet me. She delighted in explaining

to me exactly how to take care of Jimmy. Of particular concern was the daily bathing ritual. She showed me how to fill up a glass dish with warm water—not too hot, not too cold—and place it on the floor with a rock for Jimmy to use for climbing in and out. Once in his bath, Jimmy was to have a glass of warm water poured over his shell. "You see," she explained, "Jimmy can't put water on his back. How would you like it if you couldn't put water on your back? So you must give him a shower. Pour it very slowly! You see, it's like a waterfall."

Through the years, Jimmy was a much-loved companion for Elizabeth. During the day, he would often wander around the kitchen under the watchful eye (and careful step) of Bessie and later Evelyn, two wonderful women who took care of the household. At meals, Jimmy could sometimes be found on the dining room table near Elizabeth, who would spoon feed him favorite soft foods, such as ice cream.

One afternoon, we were gathered in the living room with a group of new visitors. I happened to notice that Elizabeth had her left hand rolled into a fist. About 20 minutes into the visit, she suddenly stood up, saying, "I must excuse myself for a few minutes, I will return." When she headed for the stairs up to the turtle room, I knew exactly what she was doing. In her fist was a small bit of hamburger meat intended for Jimmy. Her practice was to get the meat from the refrigerator and then warm it in her hand to room temperature—convinced that Jimmy would not like it too cold. Once the proper temperature had been reached, she would make her way up the stairs to deliver it to Jimmy. Guests or no guests, when the moment arrived, she left the room, hamburger meat in hand.

Although it was very difficult for Elizabeth to climb stairs, she insisted on going upstairs to the turtle room to be with Jimmy. When

I accompanied her, I observed how she would mount one stair, stop, and then mount another until she finally reached the top. Much later I came to understand that the turtle room was her hideaway. Not only did she have private time caring for Jimmy, but also she could visit and dust her collection of Russian icons laid out on the bed. No telephones or people, just quiet time with jimmy, icons, and Baba.

Jimmy lived happily with Elizabeth for more than 20 years. Not long after Elizabeth's death in 1980, Jimmy began to decline and refuse food. Soon, he too passed away.

Meher Baba's Love of Dogs

When I was a child, Elizabeth told me a story about Kippy, her beloved female Boston terrier who traveled to India with her in the 1930s. In the early days, she recounted, Baba called them to live in the Nasik ashram. Someone told Elizabeth that she would have to leave Kippy behind because the ashram was no place for dogs. Heartbroken, Elizabeth did as she was told and left Kippy in someone's care. When she and the other disciples arrived at the ashram, Baba was there to greet them. After an embrace, Baba looked at Elizabeth



Elizabeth holding Kippy and a bunny, in India, late 1930s

and then cradled His arms as though He were holding a baby and gestured, "Where is the baby?" Taken aback, Elizabeth replied, "I left Kippy behind Baba because I thought dogs were not allowed here." Baba smiled and gestured, "Send for Kippy immediately." And from that time on, Kippy became a treasured member of the ashram--indeed the queen of the dogs and animals of the ashram, showered with love and attention from Baba and all the women disciples.

In telling me the story of Kippy—one of the rare occasions she spoke to me about the early days—Elizabeth was drawing me ever closer to Baba. She knew how it would touch my child's heart to know that Baba shared my love of dogs. Soon after Baba returned to India after the 1958 Sahavas at Meher Center, Elizabeth got me my own dog, a collie I named Buff. She took great joy in teaching me how to care for Buff. "Don't complain if she wants to stop a great deal during walks," she told me early on. "After all, it is *her* walk."

Baba Himself took a great interest in Buff, who became my closest friend. Although correspondence to India was limited because of Baba's strict seclusion, messages between Elizabeth and Mani always included references to Buff—and to Wendy's cat Puff. When Baba sent His love to Elizabeth, Kitty, and our family, He always included Buff and Puff. When Buff died from a sudden illness—one of the most devastating days of my life—Baba cabled me the following message:

"Your love for me will help Buff who is also mine.

Be in my love for you resigned and happy."

Meher Baba

Dog Companions

First in Youpon Dunes and then in Dilruba, it was dog heaven. Both Elizabeth and Kitty doted on each dog companion, treating them with such kindness, love, and respect that I am still moved by the memory. Despite her physical limitations, Elizabeth did what she could to care for them, tasks she deeply enjoyed. Kitty was frequently the one to take them for long walks on the beach. Between the two of them, the various dogs of the household lived, well, a dog's life.

Each and every dog generously returned Elizabeth's love over the years, which was not surprising because Elizabeth never failed to think of them and their needs. To cite my favorite example, when we came home after dining out in Myrtle Beach or in New York, Elizabeth would always have a treat in her purse for the dog. At first, I could not figure out when and how she got the treat. One night at a New York restaurant, I decided to keep a close watch to discover her secret. Midway through the meal, I saw her inconspicuously slip something from her plate into her open purse on her lap. Later I discovered that she always carried a long white envelop in her purse for the express purpose of taking something home for the dog.

I was fortunate to arrive on the scene in time to know Banjo, a dachshund who was given to Elizabeth in 1948 during her visit with Baba in India.* Although Banjo was getting old when I met him in 1957, Kitty was still taking him to the beach to play ball. When Elizabeth and Kitty moved from Youpon Dunes to Dilruba, Banjo had limited sight and mobility. Each night, Elizabeth¹ would somehow lift him onto her

* Elizabeth wrote "Benjoo" on the back of a photo of Norina holding him. Most likely this was the spelling of his name in India. We knew him as "Banjo."

bed. Since he could no longer sleep through the night without needing to go out, Elizabeth would get up in the middle of the night and carry Banjo outside to do his business. She never complained or asked for help. The love between them was deep and abiding.

Beauty came into the picture when Elizabeth saw him abandoned on the highway, tied to a tree with an unopened can of dog food by his side. A fairly large black mixed breed, Beauty was aggressive, most likely from abuse, and completely unmanageable. Nevertheless, Elizabeth managed to coax him into her car and take him home to Dilruba. For months, no one except Elizabeth and Kitty could or would go near Beauty. We all made sure the way was clear when we visited Dilruba. Gradually, however, Elizabeth and Kitty transformed him into a gentle, loving dog. Beauty became one of the sweetest dogs I have ever known.

After Beauty's time, Elizabeth focused on caring for my mother's dog Bo (named for the Bodhi tree under which Buddha sat when He attained Enlightenment), who lived next door at Meher House, the home Baba allowed our family to build across from His house. Bo was a Tibetan terrier with a mind of his own. Although much loved by my mother, Bo did not obey commands to come, sit, or do anything else that good dogs are trained to do. When home for college, I spent many frustrating hours tracking him down when he would dart through the door to freedom. Calling his name was a waste of breath.

With Elizabeth, however, Bo was an entirely different dog. She would come over to our house at odd times of day to check on his water supply (my mother could be a bit forgetful in this department), give him treats, and talk with him. Bo was never happier than when he saw Elizabeth making her slow, but steady way up the back steps into the kitchen where he waited for her. She could no longer walk a dog,

so she trained him—and this is truly astounding—to run in front of her car when she drove into the Center on an inspection. tour. And then Bo would obediently turn around and follow the car back home. As far as I could tell, Bo always did exactly as Elizabeth asked.

One of my most vivid memories of Elizabeth with dogs took place sometime in the mid-1970s. Once again, Elizabeth had found a dog on the side of the highway—but this time the dog had been hit by a car and was seriously injured. She took him to the vet, who did all that she could. Unfortunately, the internal injuries were so severe that treatment could only make the dog comfortable. Elizabeth was told that the dog was in no real pain but would not survive long.

Elizabeth did not wish to put a dog down unless it was absolutely necessary. So she took the dog home to Dilruba and named her "Champy" because of her champagne coloring. The next day, I came over to help with Champy's care. When I entered the front door, I heard Elizabeth speaking quietly to someone on the porch. Surprised that she had a visitor, I peeked into the porch to see who it was and to determine if I should leave and come back later.

Elizabeth was sitting alone with Champy cuddled in her lap. Champy seemed quite content as she looked up at Elizabeth's face. I stood in the next room listening as Elizabeth spoke to Champy, saying over and over again: "Don't worry or be afraid. Everything will be all right. You belong to Baba and He will always take care of you. Baba loves you very much."

That same day, Champy passed away peacefully in Elizabeth's arms.



Elizabeth with Wendy and Jane at the ribbon cutting for a new building for Sheriar Press in 1974

V

*DAILY MT
AND WISDOM*

*From the spiritual point of view,
the only important thing is to realize Divine Life and
to help others realize it in everyday happenings.*

*To penetrate into the essence
of all being and significance and to
release the fragrance of that inner attainment
for the guidance and benefit of others—
by expressing, in the world of forms, truth, love,
purity, and beauty—this is the sole game
that has intrinsic and absolute worth.
All other happenings, incidents, and attainments in
themselves can have no lasting importance.*

MEHER BABA



A rare candid shot of Elizabeth laughing, seated next to Jane, 1970s

Elizabeth was a person of few words. When she did speak, her turn of phrase, wise insights, and wry humor made much of what she said unforgettable. This section contains some of the many memorable sayings from my daily life with Elizabeth.

~ When tragedy struck, Elizabeth would first remind us to take Baba's name and then would sometimes add, "After all, what is the point in having faith unless you use it?"

~ Elizabeth began every Christmas Eve dinner with a toast to Baba. "If it were not for Baba," she would say, "we might not know one another." One year she added with a twinkle in her eye, "And perhaps we wouldn't even want to!"

~ For years, Elizabeth resisted having a television in Youpon Dunes and then Dilruba. In the black and white era, she deflected the idea by saying, "The people do not look real. Let's wait until they appear in color." When color TV became available, she finally consented to a television in Dilruba. It was, of course, black and white.

~ Unlike Elizabeth, Kitty enjoyed a little television in the evening, especially the news. On rare occasions, Elizabeth agreed to have the news on during dinner on the porch. Invariably, Elizabeth complained about the "advertisements," insisting that Kitty lower the volume during commercials. A tug-of-war ensued as the two debated whether or not what was on the screen was a commercial or the news. As soon as it was polite to do so, Elizabeth would rise from her seat saying, "I think that is quite enough now." Kitty would remain engrossed in the news.

~ Elizabeth would sometimes take us to "the cinema" for documentaries about other cultures or stories involving dogs or other animals. Beyond that, however, she had little interest in popular entertainment. One evening, Wendy and I were headed out the door of Dilruba to see *The Poseidon Adventure*. When we stopped to say goodnight to Elizabeth, she asked what we were going to see. I explained that the plot was about the fate of passengers when an ocean liner is hit and begins to sink. With an expression of astonishment on her face, Elizabeth said, "Goodness gracious! Why would anyone pay to see disaster?"

~ I never once heard Elizabeth speak ill of anyone in all the years I knew her. Gossip and backbiting were simply not tolerated in her presence. If I uttered a complaint about someone, she would say, "You can't change anyone else; you can only change yourself."

~ When Margaret Craske* visited at holidays and in the summer, she would regale us at the dinner table with funny stories about the

* Margaret Craske (1892-1990), British ballet dancer, choreographer, and teacher of ballet, met Meher Baba in 1931 during His first trip to the Western world. She lived with Baba in India from 1939 until 1946, when she moved to the United States and resumed teaching ballet.

tests and trials of her time with Baba in India. Elizabeth, who preferred not to hear hardship stories about life with Baba, however humorous, would call these Margaret's "black stories." One evening, Margaret was clearly tweaking Elizabeth by telling a lengthy story about a miserable illness she contracted in India. Her patience exhausted, Elizabeth finally spoke up saying, "Maggie, that's enough of your black stories. Can we speak about something pleasant?" Margaret, who bristled at being called "Maggie," shot back, "All right *Aunty Boo*, if you say so."

~ Elizabeth was firm and direct but always fair when calling people on the carpet about their behavior at the Center. "Do you think that would be pleasing to Baba?" she might ask. If the person said "No," she would say, "That's just it." Elizabeth was especially patient with people who were just learning about how to live for Baba. "Remember," she would tell us, "people cannot help what they don't know."

~ Although Elizabeth trusted Baba completely to do His work, she simultaneously took responsibility for her own actions while serving Him. "Yes," she once told me, "Baba will take care of everything, but let's not put spokes in His wheel!"

~ One day, Elizabeth invited Mother, Wendy, and me to look through her collection of photographs with an eye toward selecting a few for *Treasures from the Meher Baba Journals*, a book Mother was editing. When Mother commented that one of the photos was not very flattering of Baba, Elizabeth told us the following story. "When I first arrived in India," she began, "I took a great many photographs of Baba. After some months, Baba called me to Him and asked to see the photographs. As I was going through the pile, I came to one that I

thought didn't look like Baba. 'Baba,' I said, 'this is not a good photograph. I will discard it.' Looking displeased, Baba spelled out on the board, 'Never discard *any* image of me. Though it may not appeal to you, remember that at sometime in the future it will touch the heart of someone. "'

~ When planning my trip to visit places associated with Baba in Europe, Elizabeth explained that I would be taking many trains. She asked if I had a watch because "in Europe the trains are on time and you must be punctual." I told her no, explaining that in the past I would get a watch and then lose it. So I decided that I couldn't keep a watch. "Well," she said, "you will just have to change won't you?" With that she gave me ten dollars and dispatched me to the drugstore to buy a Timex. I wore that watch every day until it gave out more than a decade later.

~ When Elizabeth visited us in New York, she would often take John, Wendy, and me to eat at Schrafft's, a now-defunct chain of restaurants favored by ladies who went to lunch. During one of these outings, Wendy and I were seized by an uncontrollable case of the giggles. Let's just say, people stared. When we got up to leave, Elizabeth put up her coat collar around her face as she made her way out the door. Once outside, she stood in front of the restaurant staring fixedly at the entrance. "Aunty Boo," I finally asked, "what are you doing?" She looked at me and replied, "I am memorizing which Schrafft's this is—because, you see, we can never come back here again."



Elizabeth in front of the Lagoon Cabin, Meher Spiritual Center, late 1950s or 1960s

~ Elizabeth found it hard to wake up early in the morning. During the Blue Bus tours across India, Baba gave special permission for Elizabeth as the driver to get coffee no one else was allowed. Despite this difficulty with waking up, Elizabeth in her later years was an early riser. Kitty would bring her pink wooden breakfast tray with coffee each morning before the telephone began to ring. When departure for a trip required her to get up even earlier, Elizabeth had one standing request of Kitty: "I don't mind when I must get up—as long as you don't tell me what time it is."

~ With the influx of Center guests in the late 1960s and early 1970s came a bewildering variety of lifestyles, dress, and diet—all of which Elizabeth and Kitty took in stride. One day during lunch, Mother began describing in minute detail the new macrobiotic diet as Elizabeth was eating a Southern-style lunch prepared by Evelyn. After about ten minutes of Mother's description of the many health benefits of the new diet, Elizabeth looked up from her plate and said, "Jane, I don't really mind what people eat—as long as I don't have to hear about it."

~ Early on, when people began to move to Myrtle Beach to be near Meher Center, they were sometimes referred to as the "off-Center" community. When someone used that expression in front of Elizabeth one day, she said, "That's very amusing, but it may be *too* amusing. I think we should find a better name." Someone, perhaps Elizabeth herself, suggested "nearby community," and "off-Center" was officially retired.

~ Elizabeth was deeply grateful to Baba for all He did in her life each day. As she put it to me when I was a small child, "When Baba gives, He gives with both hands."

~ Daily life with Elizabeth was a constant lesson in how to put Baba first. "We only get into trouble," she would tell me, "when we think we know more than Baba."

~ When something was said at lunch one day about the limitations and foibles of many of Meher Baba's followers, Elizabeth responded with one of her more memorable lines: "If you think we are bad now, you should have seen us before Baba!"

VI

SELECTED LETTERS FROM AUNTY BOO

*Live not in ignorance. Do not waste your precious life span
in differentiating and judging your fellow men, but
learn to long for the love of God. Even in the
midst of your worldly activities, live only to find and realize
your true Identity with your Beloved God.*

*Be pure and simple, and love all because all are one.
Live a sincere life; be natural, and be honest with yourself.
Honesty will guard you against false modesty and will give
you the strength of true humility. Spare no pains to
help others. Seek no other reward than the
gift of divine love. Yearn for this gift sincerely and intensely,
and I promise, in the name of my divine honesty, that I
will give you much more than you yearn for.*

MEHER BABA

"

July 22, 1974
To CHARLES
FROM AUNTY BOO
It's the same little wish

Nothing clever or new

But ever-so-warm

When it's going to you!

Happy Birthday

Sometimes we're
together
This time apart
always joined together
In Baba's Heart

TO CHARLES
FROM AUNTY BOO
SOMETIMES WE'RE TOGETHER
THIS TIME APART
ALWAYS JOINED TOGETHER
IN BABA'S HEART
(BIRTHDAY CARD, JULY 22, 1974)

When we were apart, Elizabeth sent letters, notes, and cards to let me/ know that she was always thinking of me. Some included mention of people and places she was seeing on her travels or practical instructions about tuition payments for school and other personal matters. Others addressed undertakings for Baba, such as group meetings. Elizabeth's cursive writing crowded the pages, covering every available space, including the margins. Letters from abroad were often on thin blue airmail envelopes that would unfold to reveal her comments on the flaps and sides. Her cards, especially at Christmas, were sometimes recycled from past years with the previous message cut off. As she aged, her writing became spidery—but remained her distinctive style. For this volume, I have selected letters that contain insights and experiences that may be of general interest, offering glimpses of her wit and wisdom.

Elizabeth took great interest in the public programs about Meher Baba that the Atlanta group organized when I was in college at Emory University. Here she offers advice on how best to present Baba to the public.

Feb. 15, 1968

Dear Charles,

Thank you so much for your "Valentine." I loved hearing from you. Will be very happy to see you at Baba's birthday time here.

Regarding the films that have gone off to you today, there are two taken at the Center by Don Stevens that you have not seen, but must see before you show them. You will have to comment because there are no captions. To anyone who sees them for the first time, they might wonder why Baba is being helped so much. It starts with Baba coming down the steps of the Lagoon Cabin, aided. There are many beautiful shots. It ends with a trip to the ocean with Baba and all following Him on the shore.

Also, you should run through the "Three Incredible Weeks." I think Kitty sent three reels (there are 4 but the 4th is the return journey to Bombay without Baba). You will have to find out in which Baba sits on top of the car with a halo of sun on His hair. Show only the best, of course, but preview them before your talk.

While it is a great responsibility, as you say, I am sure that Baba will speak through you. The greater responsibility for us all is to live the life from day to day that Baba would want us to live. Particularly those who have not met Baba, they are apt to judge Him by the disciple. Do not forget to bring out Baba's sense of humor also a little in your talk.

For myself, Baba has been the only one who has made Perfection desirable, because when we see Him we see all the attributes—and could wish we had a little of them ourselves. He is not austere, as you well know.

It is nice that Gary is bringing you and we must reimburse him for some gas.

John and Margaret will become engaged that day, but her mother does not let her come to the Center. She cannot understand Baba. That is Baba's test for John and Margaret to possibly make her want to understand. I have always said how fortunate your mother is that her three children love Baba and now Diane is coming closer. There is no separation of your lives in this way.

Must mail this tonight.

Love in Baba, hold Him closer all the time,

Aunty Boo

In the following letter, Elizabeth mentions a talk about Meher Baba I delivered at the Spiritual Unity of Nations conference in Detroit, Michigan. An audience member had claimed to see a white light on the stage during the talk. She then offers advice on how to express opposition to war, reminding me of what Baba says about its root causes. At the time, I was helping to organize the Vietnam Moratorium, a major anti-war demonstration on college campuses.

Oct. 21, 1969

Dear Charles,

It was wonderful about the Detroit lecture and that Baba was evidently with you. That was the way when Norina used to lecture about Baba in New York and elsewhere, from time to time. Baba

seemed to take over; the words came without thinking and were felt by the listeners. Some saw a white glow around her. She called it white light projection from Baba.

I am so glad that Kitty could be there, also the others who came.

I hear you are coming "en mass" at Thanksgiving. Please be sure of who is coming and how many are boys and girls. We would like you to have nice cabins but many others are asking already for reservations at that time. Tell your friends we must know soon. Although Thanksgiving may seem a long time away to them, others are definitely booking now.

Your mother showed me the article you sent her about the Emory Moratorium. In the excitement about marches, be calm and choose your words. I noticed the *Journal* quoted you as using words like politicians of "disgust and resentment" and "backlash."

Resentment only breeds resentment; it does not solve or dissolve. Baba has said: "Wars and the suffering they bring cannot be avoided by mere propaganda against war. . .it will be necessary to tackle their root cause."

In the "New Humanity" Baba has outlined about the root cause of wars and adds "the chief task before those who are deeply concerned with the rebuilding of humanity is to do their utmost to dispel the spiritual ignorance that envelops humanity."

I feel sure that if President Nixon pulled the troops out of Vietnam tomorrow, the war would not be ended. Too many countries surrounding it would be involved.

We wind up our "sanskaras," but only Baba in our time can "unwind" them, in His own timing.

In His seclusions, Baba has said He has worked out events for the next 400 years (why 400 rather than 700 years I do not know).

If upon waking in the morning we say Baba's name several times to our self, or aloud, and again before sleeping, we will be nearer to Baba who is the Source of all, the Creator and Preserver, the only one who can change the world, His own creation. He will inwardly direct our course of action, if we but listen to Baba each day.

Please Charles, take better care of your health, have an anti-flu shot, drink fruit juices.

Jai Baba, In His Love,

Aunty Boo

In the tumultuous 1960s and early 1970s, I was deeply involved in the racial justice movement at Emory University. At the end of a challenging term as student body president, I received this letter from Elizabeth with sage advice on how best to effect meaningful change.

Monday April 13, 1970

Dear Charles,

It was nice hearing from you by phone Sunday just in the nick of time to send Film No. 8 by Warren. Kitty says the Birthday party has been shown too much and this other is a good film, I believe. The other material will be sent to you when it arrives (from different places).

Now about yourself. I could hear that your voice was tired and it occurred to me that you should be somewhere quiet and if possible alone when you are at the Center. After all, it is a Retreat and you need time to be by yourself—with Baba.

About the job you are now doing to turn things over to a new President. Remember in so doing, when the time comes, turn it over

lock, stock and barrel and forget it. Someone else can also do the work well, even if not in your way. If your mind clings to the work, then you have not really turned it over. Everyone does a better job if they take over something they feel is their own responsibility, like an in-coming officer should feel.

I realize that you as the outgoing officer want to leave the list of work still to be done, goals still to be accomplished. In so doing, you should also set the tone.

For example, the language used is important, such as stating DEMANDS. Instead use the word PETITIONS. What is the difference, as they mean about the same? The word DEMAND puts up anyone's back. It is human nature to resent demands. It is the same as the tone of voice—one shouts demands and it is irritating. It makes the other fellow want to say no, when perhaps he would say yes if it were a reasonable request.

The word PETITION is an old one leaving some form of respect to it. It means business, yet gives the other fellow the opportunity for consideration of his point of view. In the case of students, they are of nature younger than Trustees and officers of a college. They (trustees and officers) are due some respect. They have the overall picture of the college to consider and most demands or petitions require money.

Remember Baba has told us there is a difference between wants and needs. There is a spiritual balance between the two. Therefore always consider, is this a want or a need that we are asking for. Wants can never be satisfied. We end by wanting more and more. Needs have a real basis. If we explain well our needs, they more often can be understood by others, including our elders. It is our right to try and make them understand the student.

No one can come into this world that should not be thankful for those who have gone before. We inherit the past; we do not start from scratch. With education this is particularly so. Men's minds have gone into every book we study; men's money and energies have gone into every college we enter. The students did not put colleges there; it was hard work and much striving of others, including past students who wanted to learn. Hold up the torch of learning in this modern day.

Love to you in Baba,

Aunty Boo

In 1971, a group of conservative Christians attended our public celebration of Baba's birthday at Emory University. After the program ended, they confronted us by attacking Baba and promoting their views of Christ and salvation. Here Elizabeth describes how their claims may be understood through the lens of Baba's teachings.

March 3, 1971

Dear Charles,

Glad to know that your Baba Birthday Program went so well. I guess Baba wants us to stay "awake" and know that there may be opposition and not take anything for granted when it is given in public. You may recall the Om group in Berkeley when Adi and Meherjee were there. They created quite a disturbance, as I understand. There must always be in the audience some on the "look-out" and think ahead what is the best thing to do, so that they (others) do not take over. At least your opponents waited until all was over and they did hear Baba's Name. For the fundamentalists who are taught there is only one Son of God, it is against their understanding. Yet Baba has said there is only one Son of God and He comes again and again.

What they call salvation from sins, Baba tells us is a longer process of "sanskaras." What Jesus said "Cast your burdens on Me," is what Baba calls lifting of sanskaras (impressions) by the Master.

Love of God is not really Love of God if it is a question of semantics. Arguments usually only deepen divisions.

This all brings us to the matter of theology which in the past has been mostly trying to solve the question of God's relation to Man (and vice versa) and to the universe through intellect. Baba has told us that intellect is the lowest form of man's understanding. We must strive for the balance of heart and head. The great saints have transcended to higher Intuition and Insight to know God.

I happened to see Dr. Robinson yesterday and asked him if he knew of any college of theology that had a great forward thinking teacher. He understood what I meant and said that he would inquire what present day university had such a "star," one who inspired.

Love in Baba,

Aunty Boo

When I moved to Cambridge, Massachusetts, to attend Harvard Divinity School, I became part of the Meher Baba community in the Boston-Cambridge region. Within the group were different perspectives on the form and content of Baba gatherings. I asked Elizabeth for her advice about meetings and here is her reply.

Oct. 29, 1971

Dear Charles,

Personally, I think the first requirement for Meher Baba meetings is that they are held for Baba. If other things are injected, other teachings inserted, then it eventually becomes an "open forum." It is

better to have few in numbers who want to love and follow Meher Baba and His way of life, than have numerous half-and-half people. We know there has to be a "beginning" for us and for all, so we can't expect a new person to be dedicated all at once. But when he or she comes to a Meher Baba meeting, they should leave knowing more about Him and His work. They should feel Baba's Love. I think one of the best ways for newcomers is to read "How to Love God." It is Baba's teaching for all, whether they come close to Him or go another path. In the end, it is the Way to God or/and Baba.

As for the Master's Prayer or the Prayer of Repentance, I think they should be said individually. If said publicly then on special occasions like Baba's Birthday or before the Day of Silence and standing in respect. Not shouted, but with meaning.

As for children at a meeting, it should be known that Baba loves children. He did not let them interrupt or distract a meeting when He gave Discourses.

At our film showing some wee children are surprisingly quiet. When they recognize Baba and then say His name "Baba" spontaneously—everyone loves it. However, the other evening we had music, Bobbi Basso [Robbie Basho] from California who plays classical guitar. We told the mothers ahead of time that if their child runs around and makes noise they must just take the child out of the hall and wait someplace else. They have to be responsible that the child does not disturb the music or the meeting for everyone else. Perhaps some time you could have a special occasion just for children.

As for reading Baba's *Discourses*, or other works of Baba's, that is one of the purposes of the meetings. Whoever reads must know how to read out loud and beforehand practice to themselves ... not come in

cold and pick out something because it will not communicate Baba. What is read must be with understanding and meaning. (If we do not understand what we read, we cannot project it to others.)

I have never heard of any Meher Baba meetings where there was a different person in charge each meeting and scarcely think it would work out and would be confusing in the end. If one were to do this, then there should be a planned program so that day's leader could not fly off on his or her own "tangent" and the meetings become something else each time. In the early days, we always worked with committees, chosen by the group. They decide programs ahead. It is a "working" committee for Baba, like in India. Baba called them arrangement-wallas (or arrangement workers). Three is a good number because it is hard for more than that to meet together. The committee can be changed after six months' trial or be re-elected. The usual time is one year, but when meetings are new that may be too long. The committee must decide among themselves who does what. Who opens the meeting and who closes it, who gives out the notices, etc. We have always closed the meetings with a short meditation—five minutes, no more—and someone who has a watch can say a soft "Jai Baba" to end it.

Too many questions afterwards can spoil the atmosphere. Best to have a break of some kind, music or tea, and then ask questions. Usually the questions are less and more sincere if not right after a talk.

Love in Baba,

Aunty Boo

In a letter written on Palm Sunday in 1972, Elizabeth expounds on the importance of Meher Center as our "heart's home."

March 26, 1972

Palm Sunday

Dear Charles,

Things are coming clearer now. As I see it presently, it is wonderful you can have two months at the German university. It might be best if you concentrated on one thing, your stay at the university, and come back soon after it is over.

I feel it is important that you spend the rest of this summer getting to know the Center work, all phases of it, as you are a director. The Center and all the ins and outs of people who are now coming to Baba can only be known—what there is to do—by doing it. Up to now, you have come more or less as a visitor and were with your own Baba friends mostly while here. The day-to-day (even hour by hour) work is strenuous. There are more people than we can remember because "day visitors" come too. Just listening to the many who come to the Center and hearing of their search takes much time. We always hope that no one comes who doesn't go away knowing more about Baba. Those who have actually met Baba, like yourself for instance, are in demand by the newcomers.

Whatever Plan that Baba has for you—and we know it is important to His work that you finish your education—the heart of it will be at His Center. It is where you met Baba and He revealed Himself to you as Jesus. The Center may not be the circumference of Baba's Plan for your life, but I feel the Center being Baba's Home in the West, must be your heart's home.

Love,

Aunt Boo

During a cruise with my mother in 1973, Elizabeth sent me a wonderful anecdote about two of the passengers on the ship. She also describes her excitement about what she is learning while sailing in the Mediterranean.

August 25, 1973

On board: S.S. *Veendam*

Dear Charles,

Your mom was glad to hear from you and so was I glad to know that you and Wendy landed safely; and that you and Bo are holding Fort (or forth, whichever you like) at Meher House.

Wherever one is at the Center, at the library or just walking through seems to be the right time to be there, as there are so many new and old ones coming to Baba and wanting to know more—or wanting to feel more of His love.

I want to tell you something amusing that happened on this ship. One lady from New York (who lives near the United Nations) noticed Baba's photo on your mother's locket and asked who it was. Jane told her it was Meher Baba, a great spiritual master in India.

Without further explanation, the lady from New York said: "After all God is love and we are all one—some day we will come to know it."

A lady from Louisiana overhearing the last remarks spoke up and said, "If that ever happens, I am not going to join it! I want you two ladies to know that I am an Episcopalian and if that ever folds, I will become a Catholic!"

Evidently, she was not for Oneness!

But it does everyone good to travel and widen one's horizons. I never knew before how much and how long the Moors had influence

on Mediterranean countries and islands (not only Spain). They have left their fine architectural imprint on the whole rim of this great sea. One notices it particularly in the beautiful domes—what I had thought before was Italian in Naples (for example) is throughout a remnant of Moorish influence. Most Christian churches were built over mosques; and in Sicily one of the large churches was built over the Temple of Minerva dating back to the Greeks about 2,500 years ago. There is always somebody before, as for example, the Saracens (who built square towers) and before that the Phoenicians, no one is sure how long ago.

It is known that North Africa had a high culture pre-Christian and there were great universities in Morocco. I guess there could not be great architecture without having had great learning.

So you see, Columbus and Harvard came late!

I am sure that Baba has a Plan for you by being at Harvard. A university is but a platform for the future, not only when you are there but in later years when you are asked back there to speak, then people will listen to you tell about Meher Baba and His love.

It comes to my mind about Ramon Llull (a Spaniard born in Malta) who went to the great university in Fez (North Africa) and told them about the Lover and the Beloved (which has come down to us as a little book).

Enough for now. Enclosed is a lot of love in Baba.

Aunty Boo

In a letter to Mother, I listed my career options once my time at Harvard Divinity School was finished and asked for her and Elizabeth's advice. As a joke I concluded the list with "run for Congress." As you can see from this letter, Elizabeth took me seriously.

October 16, 1973

Charles dear,

Your mother has given me your letter for my thinking. It is simply this, that as you say, Baba is guiding you. I will give you my experience: When Baba in person has given a Baba lover three options, it is usually the first one that is the direction that He is pointing. Any one of the options Baba has given will eventually lead to the goal (or God), but the first is more direct as it turns out.

Remember Baba has said you could be a teacher (I think He gave you three alternatives, but if I am not mistaken, "teacher" was the first mentioned.)

How could you ask the question about running for Congress when Baba has said that He didn't want any of His close disciples to go into politics. I am sure you are a close disciple.

Love,

Aunty Boo

P.S. Try not to spread yourself too thin: Ask yourself, is it necessary, is it useful to Baba?

In the following letter, Elizabeth briefly describes her first stay on the Center since Meher Baba was there in 1958. She refers to the Tree Room, a cabin at the Center that was originally connected to Happy House when both were located in Myrtle Beach. Our family was living in Happy House in 1958 when we met Baba. Years later, Happy House, the Tree Room, and other structures on the property were moved to the Center and made into cabins. Elizabeth mentions May 22, the day my mother had a deep inner revelation of Meher Baba during His stay at the Center in 1958.

June 2, 1974

Dear Charles,

This Irish green notepaper was given to me by Harry (whose birthday happens to be today, June 2).

An idea flashed into my head when I went into the Center this afternoon and passed the Tree Room that really it would be nice if you stayed there. After all, you named it and were living there when Baba came—and you met Him. Now the Tree Room is at the Center. Who would ever have believed it at that time that it would up and move here!

I don't mean that you should spend all your visit there, but stay a week when you first come. It would refresh you no end to actually be staying at the Center.

You may not realize that I have not stayed in the Center itself since Baba was here last and I was then in the Log Cabin. Then recently when your mother said she would like to stay in the Center for her "special day with Baba" (May 22), I suggested that we go to Happy House for a couple of days. All I can say is I have never had such

beautiful silent nights. Perhaps this is why it came to my mind: It is different even than being in one's nearby house.

Love,

Aunty Boo

In 1975, Elizabeth and Kitty traveled together to India and stayed with the women mandali at Meherazad. Elizabeth was given her old room, which gave her much joy. In this letter, she gives a glimpse of her time there.

February 22, 1975

Dear Charles,

I believe we think of people at a distance more when we speak of them. Yesterday Mani happened to mention the incident of seeing a man and a camel near Meherazad well. No camels come to these parts so it was a great surprise. No circus was in town. It must have come from some desert land but it was nibbling the high leaves off the trees—if it were not for this Mani might not have thought it real, but a mirage. She said Charles was here. But I said you had never told me the story. Then we spoke of you; and Mehera particularly asked about you. We told her of your teaching in Atlanta and that probably you and the others there were very busy with Baba's Birthday celebration.

Of course they are already decorating Meherazad and Meherabad. We will get up here and go into Baba's room at 5 am (when He was born) and sing Arti and we (Kitty and I) will see what else the girls do at that time. One thing is to wear entirely fresh clothes. Then later we go to Meherabad Hill and lay flowers in Baba's Tomb where there

will be singing and others will come there too. Then in the afternoon the village people from Pimpalgaon will give a performance of singing and probably dancing, including the children of course. In the evening will be the long torchlight procession including bullock carts, like decorated floats. We will not go to that, it takes hours and the next day Feb. 26 at noon we have to leave for Poona and Bombay, stopping over in London enroute (seeing Kitty's brother Herbert and Delia).

Love from Kitty and all others.

Love to you in Baba,

Aunty Boo

Accompanied by Jane, Elizabeth traveled to India in 1976. In this letter, she shares some of her experiences—and tweaks me about the emphasis on German in the study of theology.

February 11, 1976

Charles dear,

All too soon your mother Jane and I will be returning, but we are enjoying our *visit* while it lasts. Presently, I am with the girls at Meherazad and your mother still at Viloo's. But she spent the day of the 10th here as it was Delia's birthday and she and Peter (Townshend) were asked to come especially for the occasion. So we all enjoyed a lovely time, including Peter's music.

I hope your weather has not been too cold. It is quite cool here for India, especially at night—but sunny days. Amartithi was not a sad occasion as there was so much love expressed and Adi's keynote address stressed Baba's Eternal Life. Certainly we felt Baba present in big and little personal ways.

It seems strange that theologians stress German language when neither Jesus (or Meher Baba) understood it. Why does it not stress Aramaic to understand Jesus' meanings?

Love,

Aunty Boo

(PS. in Mani's handwriting) Ever so much love from your Meherazad family. What joy to be with your Aunty Boo & Jane!!!

Mani

Elizabeth went to India for the last time in 1977. Because of an injury to her hand, she dictated this note to my mother during their layover in Bombay.

October 11, 1977

Dear Charles,

We would like you to know what Beloved Baba spared us from. The enclosed clipping gives details of the crash of the plane that we were to take from Greece to Bombay. We were at the airport ready to embark, but the plane crashed and burned upon landing. We were delayed two days and taken care of by Swiss Air. Of course, it was a shock to everyone. It seems unbelievable that the plane was carrying nuclear isotopes that some say were being sent to a hospital in Peking.

It will be wonderful to be with the girls and the rest of the Mandali for this time. I hope that all goes well with your work. I know that Baba will reveal its purpose to you.

Much love in Baba,

Aunt Boo

Written in the year of her death, this last note from abroad is typical of Elizabeth's lifelong love of learning inspired by her travels across the world.

June 6, 1980

Dear Charles,

When we return I want very much to read about some of the Apostles' lives that I understand are given in Will Durant's books that you have in Meher House. Especially about St. James who came to Santiago (after the crucifixion of Christ) and preached here. He returned to Palestine and later his body was brought here by boat. What does Durant say?

Hope you get on with your dissertation and that we may see you June 25.

This is a real intermission for us.

Love in Baba,

Aunty Boo



Jane, Wendy, Charles and Elizabeth at Dilruba, 1970a



Meher Baba in Manzil-e-Meem ("house of the Master"), His first ashram, Bombay, India, 1922-23

VII

BIOGRAPHICAL NOTES

The only place that can hold me is the heart.

Keep me close with you—

I am always there.

MEHER BABA



Meher Baba with Mohammed, a favorite mast, 1930s

Avatar Meher Baba (1894-1969)

*"I HAVE COME NOT TO TEACH,
BUT TO AWAKEN."*

*I*t was love that drew Meher Baba's disciples to Him and it was for the sake of love that they remained with Him. Today, it is still love that draws those who seek Him. This is as He would have it, for Meher Baba's only message is now and has always been of Divine Love. His message is given not in words but through an awakening of the heart,

The story of this extraordinary man is thus a story of love. For while many speak of Divine love, Meher Baba lived it. His was a life of such love, purity, and service that it will stand for all time as the divinely human example of life as it should be lived. To those who have witnessed the simple beauty of His ways, He is the Ancient One, the One who comes age after age to reveal and renew the love of God in the world.

Meher Baba was born Merwan Sheriar Irani on February 25, 1894, in Pune, India. His parents were Persian, and His father, Sheriar Irani, was known as a true seeker of God. Although Merwan was much loved and respected as a youth, there is little in His early life that

indicates His spiritual destiny. He attended a Catholic high school and then Deccan College, both in Pune. According to Baba's own account, at age 19 the veil was lifted and He began to realize who He was.

The unveiling began one day in January 1913, when Merwan, while cycling home from college, encountered Hazrat Babajan, an ancient Muslim woman reputed to be a Perfect Master. From the moment of His first contact with Babajan, Merwan's life completely changed. He began to experience His true identity as being one with God. Merwan was then led to contact four other Perfect Masters, each of whom played a significant role in the process of His unveiling. One of these masters, Upasni Maharaj, worked with Merwan over a period of seven years. Finally, in 1921, Upasni folded his hands before Merwan, saying, "You are the Avatar. I salute You."

Who is the Avatar? At critical junctures in human history, Meher Baba explained, God takes human form. Although the life and times of each Avatar may be different, the core message of Divine Love is always the same. According to Meher Baba, the Avatar takes on Himself the suffering of the world to bring about a universal transformation of consciousness and the spiritual rebirth of humanity. Because the same Ancient One comes again and again, Meher Baba describes all of the great religions of the world as revelations of God.

Beginning in the 1920s, "Mastery in Servitude" became the theme of Meher Baba's life. He and His disciples tirelessly served the poor, the sick, the outcasts, and the mentally disturbed—establishing schools, hospitals, and ashrams for this work. Personally caring for those in need, He cleaned the latrines of the untouchables and in many other ways broke down the barriers of the caste system. After washing the feet of the lepers, He bowed down to them, saying, "I bow down to the God

in each one of you." Merwan Irani's early disciples began to call Him "Meher Baba," which means "Compassionate Father."

On July 10, 1925, Meher Baba began His lifelong silence: He would not utter a word for the next 44 years. "You have asked for and been given enough words," Baba said, "it is now time to live them." From His silence, Baba continued to communicate on many levels. His warmth and ever-present humor remained undiminished. When He wished to use words, He spelled out what He wanted to convey by means of a wooden board with the letters of the alphabet printed on it. Many of His sayings and discourses were given by this method. After 1954, Baba gave up use of the board, relying on hand gestures alone.

Meher Baba often stressed that He began His silence in order to break it. "When the Word of My love breaks out of its silence," Baba said, "and speaks in your hearts, telling you who I really am, you will know that that is the Real Word you have always been longing to hear."*

A significant dimension of Meher Baba's life in the late 1930s to the mid-1940s was His work with those He described as God-intoxicated, or *masts*, spiritually advanced individuals whose love for God is so intense that they often appear insane to most observers. In fact, Baba explained, they are not insane; they simply refuse to adjust to the world, lost as they are in the longing for God.

Although we cannot fathom the exact nature of Baba's inner work with the *masts*, we do know that He gave them spiritual help. Beyond this, He indicated that He inwardly channeled their love for God into directions that have benefited the entire universe. Baba undertook long and arduous journeys to contact *masts* and others with whom He had

* *The Awakener*, vol. 11, no. 1 (1966), p. 28.

special work. From 1937 to 1946, the years of His most extensive *mast* tours in India, Baba personally worked with more than 20,000 *masts*, seekers of God, and with the poor in travels totaling more than 75,000 miles.

In 1949, Meher Baba began an important phase of what He called His Universal Work. Dispersing His ashrams and giving up all possessions held in His name, Baba set out on the "New Life." He made the startling announcement that during this New Life He would cease to be the Master in order to assume the role of seeker of God. A small number of companions were selected to accompany Him on what Baba described as a life of "helplessness and hopelessness."* Living fully in the present, without certainty of shelter or food, the New Life companions gave up everything to trust solely in the mercy of God."

Although the full meaning of this New Life is still unfolding today, at least this much may be gathered from Baba's statements about that period of His life: In the New Life, God became fully human, thus forging in human consciousness a new path to Himself. The New Life is a life in the world, yet free from the world, in which the seeker loves God for the sake of love alone. By becoming the companion and seeker, Baba brought about a new way of living for God that would be available for all in years to come who have the courage to live it.

Meher Baba emerged from the New Life in 1952 to declare publically that He was the God-Man, the Avatar of the Age. For the next 17 years, Baba gave of Himself to an unprecedented degree as He moved toward completion of His work. Baba forewarned His

* Meher Baba gave up all possessions with the exception of His Tomb-Shrine at Meherabad, India, and Meher Spiritual Center in Myrtle Beach. Elizabeth and Norina were His only lovers in the West allowed to communicate with Him during the New Life because, as Baba put it in a letter to them, they were His "link to the West."

disciples that this work would require of Him great suffering, including the shedding of His blood on American and Indian soil. Outwardly, this suffering took the form of two automobile accidents, the first in the United States (May 24, 1952) and the second in India (December 2, 1956). In one, the entire left side of His body was injured; in the other, the entire right side of His body was severely damaged.

Despite His suffering, Meher Baba opened the gates of His love by giving darshan (personal blessing) to thousands of people during the 1950s and early 1960s. During this time, He made three visits to Meher Spiritual Center in Myrtle Beach, South Carolina, which He called "My Home in the West." One of the last darshans, the East-West Gathering



Baba with Eruch Jessawala and Nariman Dadachanji during His stay at Meher Center in 1958

held in Pune, India, in 1962, symbolized the awakening of oneness at the heart of Baba's work. People of many races, nationalities, and faiths came together as one family. Meher Baba told the gathering, "May My love make you feel one day that God is in everyone."

Meher Baba spent His last years completing His Universal Work in seclusion. Although the full nature of this work remains to be manifested, Baba was pleased with the results, saying in 1968, "My work is done. It is completed one hundred percent to my satisfaction." On January 31, 1969, Meher Baba laid aside His physical body to live forever in the hearts of those who come to know and experience His love.

For those who love and follow Meher Baba today, the story of His love has not ended; it has only just begun. Now is the time of the manifestation of His love. He will not speak through a new creed or dogma, for He has not come to establish a new religion. He will speak His Word of love, as He always has, directly to the heart. And in His speaking, the world will once again be awakened to the reality of Divine love in our midst.

When I wrote an earlier version of this biographical sketch of Meher Baba some 40 years ago, I immediately took it next door and read it aloud to Elizabeth. When I finished, I expected a long list of comments and changes. Instead, she sat still for a few minutes and then said, "Very beautiful." Naturally, this made me very happy. She did, however, make one change. Where I wrote, "laid aside His body," she changed to, "laid aside His physical body." "You see," she said, "Baba did not drop the body—He dropped only His physical body."

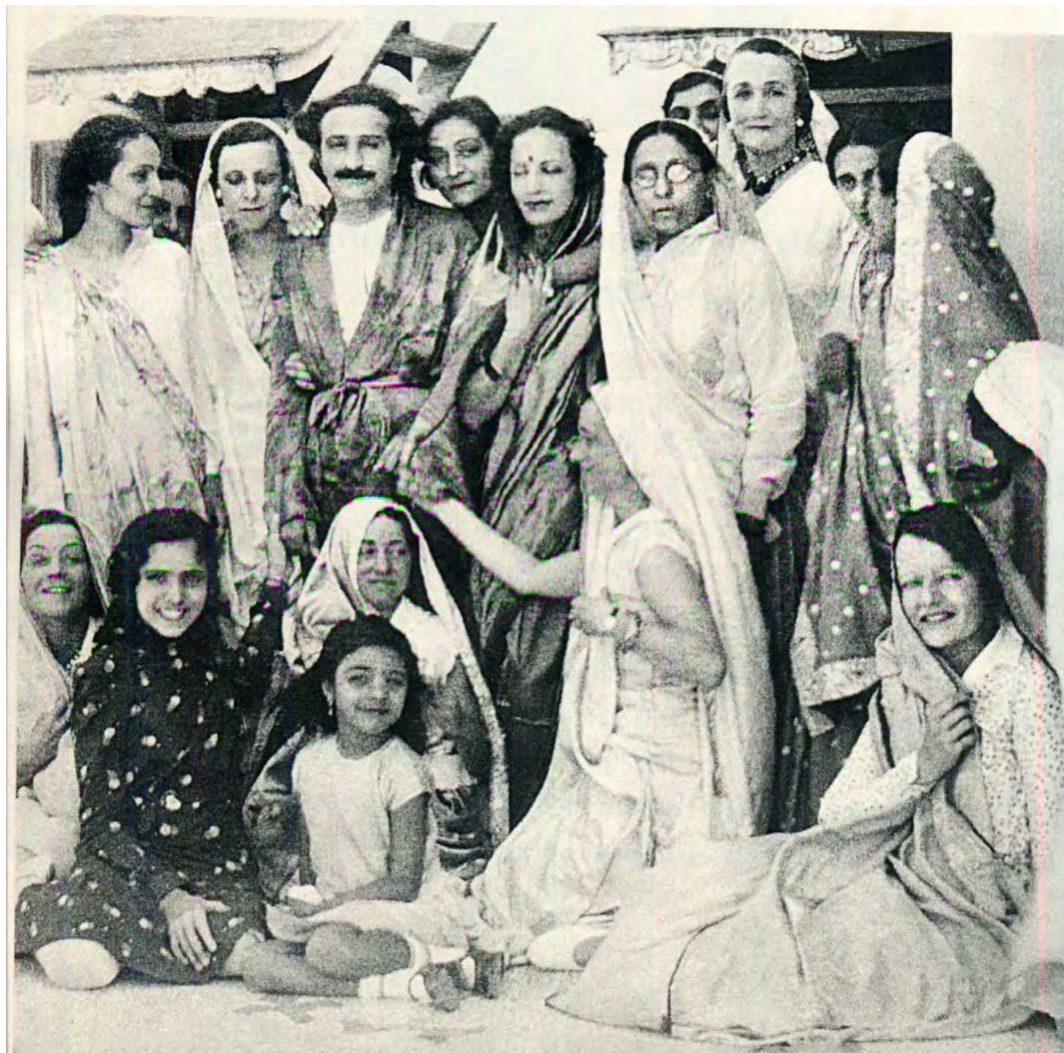


**Elizabeth Chapin Patterson
(1896-1980)**

*B*orn in Chicago, Illinois, on July 26, 1896, Elizabeth Chapin Patterson was one of the first women to enter business as an insurance broker. Elizabeth served as a volunteer ambulance driver for the Red Cross during World War I and later traveled around the world, including a trip near the North Pole on a Russian icebreaker. In 1928, she married Kenneth Patterson, a stockbroker. On November 17, 1931, Elizabeth met Meher Baba at Harmon-on-Hudson, New York. From that moment on, her entire life was dedicated to Him. In the 1930s, she lived and traveled with Baba throughout India and the West, serving as His driver during thousands of miles of what came to be known as the "Blue Bus tours." Later, she shared in His suffering as the driver of His car in the 1952 accident in Prague, Oklahoma.

In 1941, Elizabeth returned from India to the United States with Princess Norina Matchabelli at Baba's direction to search for property that could become a spiritual center for Meher Baba's work in the West. Their search finally led to the 500 acres of virgin forestland in Myrtle Beach, South Carolina, that became Meher Spiritual Center. She donated the land, given to Elizabeth by her father, Simeon Chapin, to Baba, fulfilling His condition that the land be "given from the heart."

Elizabeth's legacy of her work for Baba includes not only Meher Center, but also her role as editor of the *Meher Baba Journal* and her



Baba with women disciples, Kandivali, India, 1933. Elizabeth is seated in the lower right-hand corner.

years of service to the Myrtle Beach community. Elizabeth passed away in Myrtle Beach on December 6, 1980. Her ashes were interred near His Tomb-Shrine on Meherabad Hill next to Norina and not far from the graves of beloved dog companions, including Kippy. At Baba's directive, a special item of her clothing—Elizabeth selected her tweed coat that Baba had worn—was buried at Meher Center between Dilruba and Baba's house. The inscription in both places reads, "Elizabeth, disciple of Meher Baba."



Elizabeth with Mehera, Meher Baba's closest woman disciple, Meherazad, 1977. Dr. Goher, one of the women mandali, took this photograph using Dana Ferry's camera.

PHOTO CREDITS

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- iv Elizabeth's passport photo. Courtesy of ECPA.
- viii Elizabeth with Baba in the 1930s. Courtesy of ECPA.
- ix Elizabeth with Norina, late 1940s, Meher Center. Courtesy of Norina Matchabelli Collection.
- xi (top) Jane and Elizabeth, Meher Center. Photographer unknown.
- xi (bottom) Kitty and Elizabeth, Meher Center. Photographer unknown.
- xviii Elizabeth with Wendy and Charles, Myrtle Beach, Summer 1957. Photographer unknown. Courtesy of Charles Haynes/Christopher Wilson Collection.
- xix Elizabeth with Charles, John, Jane, and Wendy, Meher Center. Photographer unknown. Courtesy of Charles Haynes/Christopher Wilson Collection.
- xx Baba with Elizabeth, Tiger Valley Cave, India, 1938. Photographer unknown. Courtesy of Meher Nazar Publications.
- 2 Baba in India. Courtesy of ECPA.
- 10 Elizabeth, Meher Center, 1970s. Photographer: Chris Barker. Courtesy of Chris Barker.
- 12 Norina, Baba, and Elizabeth, India, ca. 1947. Courtesy of Norina Matchabelli Collection.
- 14 Elizabeth by Long Lake, Meher Center. Photographer: Jack Thompson. Courtesy of Jack Thompson. All rights reserved.
- 16–17 Elizabeth on beach at Meher Center with Baba and group, 1956. Photographer unknown. Courtesy of Meher Center Archives.
- 20 Kitty, Jane, and Elizabeth, Meher Center. Photographer unknown.
- 24 Elizabeth, Meher Center, 1970s. Photographer: Chris Barker. Courtesy of Chris Barker.
- 29 (top) Note written by Elizabeth, Myrtle Beach. Courtesy of Charles Haynes/Christopher Wilson Collection.
- 29 (bottom) Back of note. Courtesy of Charles Haynes/Christopher Wilson Collection.
- 32 Baba holding Kippy, India. Photographer unknown. Courtesy of ECPA.
- 34 Elizabeth feeding Lily the gazelle, India, late 1930s. Photographer unknown. Courtesy of ECPA.
- 36 Jimmy the turtle with Elizabeth and Charles, Meher Center, 1970s. Courtesy of Charles Haynes/Christopher Wilson Collection.
- 39 Elizabeth holding Kippy and a bunny, India, late 1930s. Courtesy of Norina Matchabelli Collection.
- 44 Elizabeth with Jane and Wendy, at the dedication of Sheriar Press, North Myrtle Beach, 1974. Photographer: David Fenster. Courtesy of Meher Nazar Publications.
- 46 Elizabeth and Jane, Meher Center, 1970s. Photographer unknown.
- 51 Elizabeth in front of Lagoon Cabin, Meher Center, 1950s or 1960s. Photographer unknown. Courtesy of Charles Haynes/Christopher Wilson Collection.
- 54 Birthday card from Elizabeth, 1974. Courtesy of Charles Haynes/Christopher Wilson Collection.
- 73 Jane, Wendy, Charles, and Elizabeth at Dilruba, Myrtle Beach, 1970s. Photographer unknown. Courtesy of Charles Haynes/Christopher Wilson Collection.
- 74 Meher Baba in Manzil-e-Meem, Bombay, India, 1922–23. Photographer: Asthma. Courtesy of MSI Collection.
- 76 Baba with Mohammed, India, 1930s. Photographer: Elizabeth Patterson. Courtesy of ECPA.
- 81 Baba, Meher Center, 1958. Photographer: Darwin Shaw. Courtesy of Shaw Family Baba Archive.
- 83 Elizabeth, 1920s. Photographer unknown. Courtesy of ECPA.
- 84 Baba with women disciples, Kandivali, India, 1933. Photographer: Quentin Tod (with Elizabeth's camera). Courtesy of ECPA.
- 85 Elizabeth with Mehera, India, 1977. Photographer: Dr. Goher using Dana Ferry's camera. Courtesy of Dana Ferry.

The Day Becomes the Answer



MEHER BABA WITH ELIZABETH IN RAHURI, INDIA

FROM THE INTRODUCTION:

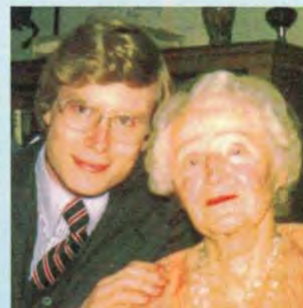
Meher Baba Himself described Elizabeth as "My rock"—and indeed she was the most imperturbable, practical, and steadfast human being I have ever known. If "spirituality is poise," as Meher Baba has said, then Elizabeth was an exemplar of true spirituality. Baba's Persian name for her was Dilruba, meaning "stealer of hearts."... Elizabeth's nickname among Baba's Eastern women disciples was "Yes, Baba dear" because whatever Baba asked of her Elizabeth instantly responded, "Yes, Baba dear."

In his recollections of life with Elizabeth Chapin Patterson (1896–1980), Charles Haynes provides an intimate portrait of one of Meher Baba's foremost Western disciples. Through her care for Meher Spiritual Center and everyday interactions, Elizabeth—with her remarkable wit and wisdom—left an enduring example of how to live Meher Baba's message of love and truth.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Charles Haynes met Meher Baba on May 21, 1958, one year after first learning about Him from Elizabeth Patterson. In 1962, Charles

participated in Meher Baba's East-West Gathering held in Poona, India. For 23 years, Elizabeth was a spiritual mother for Charles, as well as his sister Wendy and brother John. Charles also served with Elizabeth on the



CHARLES WITH ELIZABETH IN MYRTLE BEACH

Meher Center Board of Directors. He is author or co-author of nine books, including *Meher Baba, The Awakener*. He and his husband, Christopher Wilson, live in Alexandria, VA.

July 22, 1974
To CHARLES
FROM AUNT BOO
It's the same little wish

Nothing closer or new

But ever-so-warm

When it's going to you!

Happy Birthday
Sometimes we're
together
This time apart
always joined together
In Baba's Heart

CARD FROM ELIZABETH
TO CHARLES WHILE HE WAS
AWAY AT SCHOOL

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