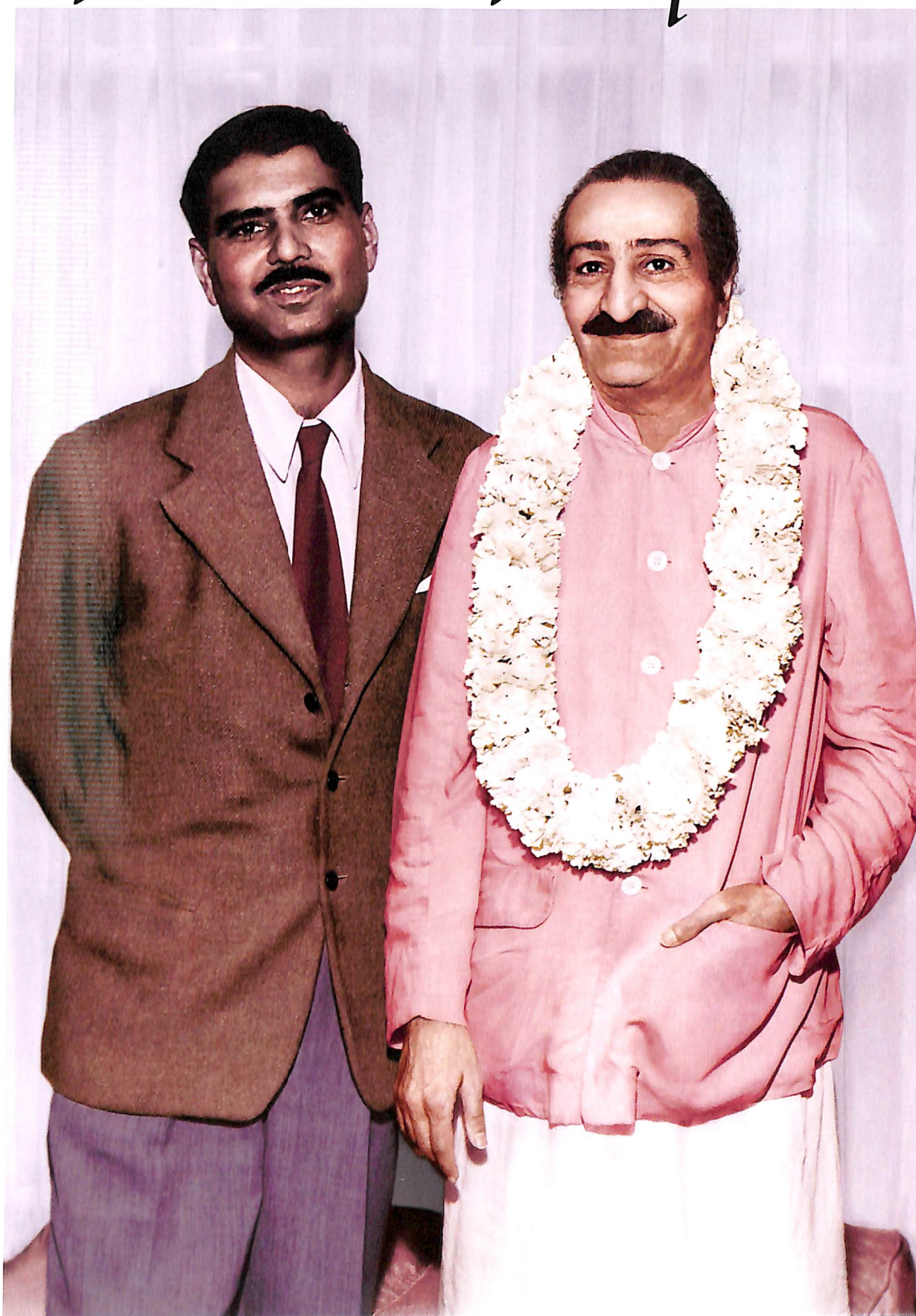


OCTOBER, 2001

# *Love Street Lamp Post*



*Meher Baba and Eruch in Washington, D.C., 1956*

*Eruch Jessawala October 13, 1916 - August 31, 2001*





## From the Editor

*"Avatar Meher Baba fulfilled  
His promise to Eruch Jessawala  
on 31st August, 2001 at 2:31 a.m.  
when He gave Eruch His hand  
and pulled him out of the muck of  
illusion to live eternally in Him.*

*Avatar Meher Baba ki Jai!"*

*Men and Women Mandali  
and Meherazad Family*

Jai Baba to all His lovers.

**A**nother one of The Greats gets his wish and returns to the Beloved.

The LampPost was half prepared when I was called to Australia – my Mother also, had received her wish and returned to Baba. I had written all necessary and my staff in California was preparing the magazine for printing. Then we got the news about Eruch. Stop the presses! Back to the drawing board. We had originally planned on the October issue being a tribute to Eruch, but when we didn't have all the stories we wanted, we postponed it till January, we would go ahead without the Eruch stories. But Baba had other ideas – our schedule was not His schedule. So although this memorial will be late in coming to you, we hope it will fill your heart with gladness, knowing how happy Eruch now is – reunited with his Beloved.

When Gary Kleiner told Eruch of Mother's passing he asked Gary to email me back:

"Jai Baba to Diana. She beat me in the race to come home!"

Only by 13 days Eruch, only by 13 days.

(Read the wonderful Tribute to Eruch from those who loved him starting on page 4.)

I had previously written:

"I am writing this from Australia from whence I was precipitously summoned in the early hours of Saturday the 18<sup>th</sup> of August. Christopher, my son who lives in Brisbane, called to tell me the hospital had called him saying that Diana Snow was in the ER with pneumonia, a heart rate of 50, and not responding. I told him to call her friends Joanna and Cecily to get to the hospital asap while I called the airlines to change my ticket from the 17th September to the next day. I had called Mother just the day before, telling her I was coming next month and not to 'go' before

I got there. She was happy to hear that and looking forward to my visit. We could all see she was not going to have to wait much longer to get her firmly avowed wish to return to her Beloved. She had been telling Baba since she was 85 that she was definitely ready to go, but didn't know how it was going to happen since she had said ruefully "This body is indestructible!" She seldom got sick and at 92 years old she laughed at the word 'osteoporosis' – had never broken a bone in her life. I called Christopher back to tell him the tickets were changed for the next day,

but while we were speaking the hospital called to say Diana had just passed. I was happy she had got her wish, and had passed peacefully, but I was miffed, to say the least, that she had not waited till I was there to hold her hand as she transited to His arms. But I guess after 50 years of loving Baba, she did not need me to be saying "Baba Baba" for her. I'm sure there were so many of her old friends and family waiting to welcome her – Francis Brabazon amongst them.

Diana was known to so many people around the world, having been very active in the Baba communities since the '50s. Even if you had never met her, if you had stayed at the Pilgrim Center before the last five years, you would have been sleeping on sheets she had made back in the '70s before it opened. For the first few years after I started being involved with the Baba Center in Los Angeles, and going to India, I was known to all as Diana Snow's daughter – and proud I was to carry that moniker.

Above is a photo of Mother and Eruch in Mandali Hall on her last visit over there. The two old friends were sharing a private moment together.

Since there *are* no coincidences, I wonder if perhaps the passing of the Avatar's right hand man didn't have something to do with setting the events of September 11th in motion...



I have read that the soul chooses the body for its next incarnation, knowing the lessons needed to be learned and knowing how and when it will die. As Baba tells us that no one dies before their Divinely appointed time, I am imagining the untold numbers who died on that infamous day, quietly going through their lives, totally separated from each other, but marching inexorably to their joint, predestined appointment with fate.

**B**aba says "It is His will – they are now safely with Him. War can at best be only a means to an end; it can never be an end in itself. It is therefore imperatively necessary for the war lords to search their own hearts and to make sure that the ends for which they are fighting are a reflection of the Divine plan which is to lead humanity to a spiritual brotherhood, cemented by an inviolable sense of the unity of all human beings, irrespective of the distinctions based on class, color, nationality, race, religion or creed. War effort will be justified or stand condemned not by the results which it produces, but by the ends by which it is inspired....

When truly understood, all conflicts and wars are seen to be a part of the Divine game; they are thus a result of the Divine will which finds expression in the world of manifestation,

*(continued on page 51 column 3)*



# LoveStreet LampPost

## welcome...

*The LoveStreet LampPost is dedicated with love to Avatar Meher Baba. Its primary purpose is to contribute to a sense of community among all His lovers by providing a place for sharing His remembrance. All the members of the Baba family are invited to contribute to this feast of Love.*

Your stories, photos, art work, poetry, letters, articles, and humor are all actively solicited. We seek expressions of Baba's message of Love and Truth.

Please submit your text on computer disks if possible (in any software format); typewritten copy on white paper is also acceptable. Be sure to clearly identify all submissions and credit every quote or reference.

### submissions, subscriptions, donations:

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# Baba's Eruch

## Right Hand Man of the Avatar of the Age

October 13, 1916 - August 31, 2001

Davana Brown

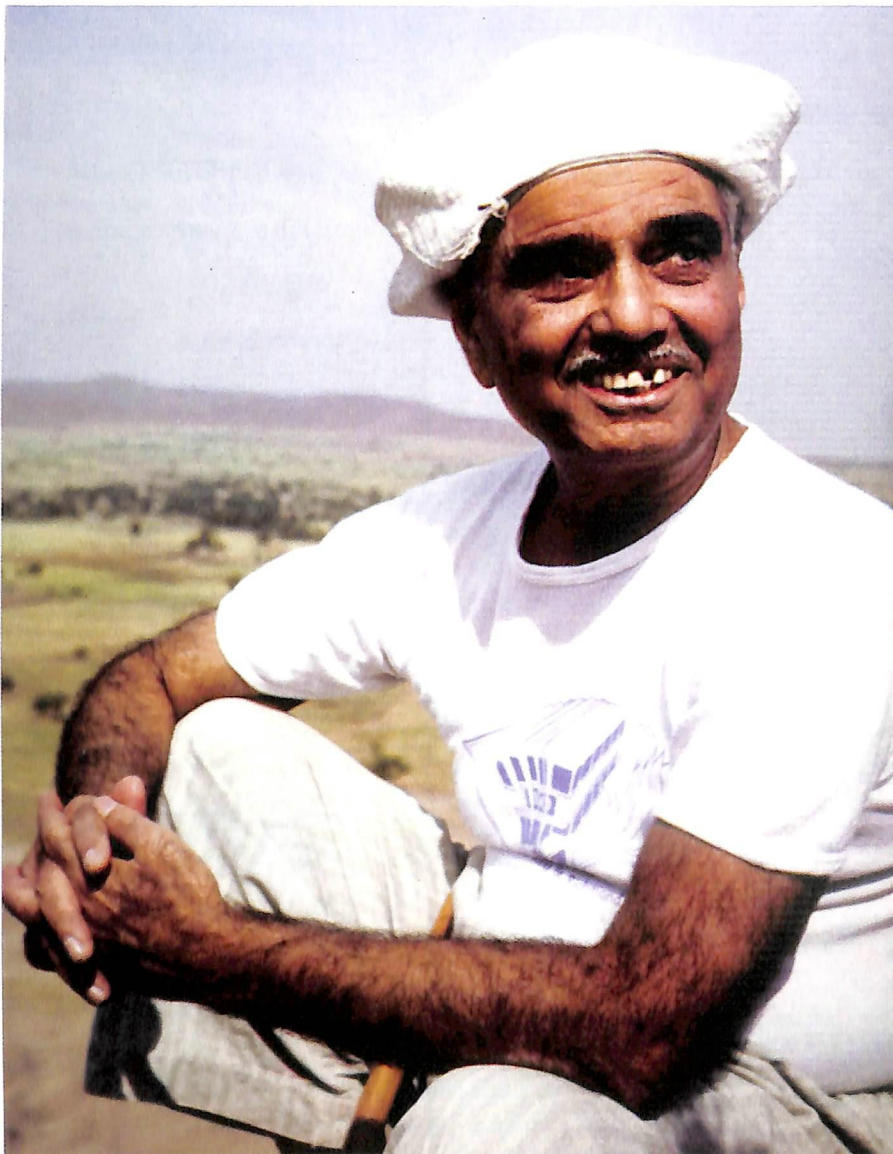
**B**eloved Avatar Meher Baba fulfilled His promise to Eruch B. Jessawala on 31st August 2001 at 2:31 a.m. when He gave Eruch His hand and pulled him out of the muck of illusion to live eternally in Him."

For those of the Baba-family who have been blessed to visit Meherabad in the past thirty two years since Beloved Avatar Meher Baba dropped His physical form, the above message sent out to the worldwide Baba family will need no explanation. But for those who have not been able to make the pilgrimage to Meherabad and Meherabad and meet Eruch personally, the story behind this message perhaps needs telling.

In the 32 years since Baba dropped His physical form, not a pilgrim season would pass without Eruch sharing with the Baba-lovers gathered in Mandali Hall how he was waiting for that day when Baba would give him His hand and lift him out of the muck of illusion. He would then regale the crowd with the story behind his statement.

The year was 1949, before the commencement of the New Life. Baba wanted a period of relaxation, so He asked Eruch to think of a place where He could go and relax. Eruch knew that there were two requirements to be met in finding a place for Baba: first, that it was secluded, and secondly that there would be a good mast contact. Eruch suggested a place on the coast, not far from Bombay, called Vengurla; it had long stretches of beautiful secluded beaches and he knew that there was a mast staying in the vicinity whom Baba could contact. Baba agreed and plans were made for Baba and a few of the mandali to stay in the Government rest house there.

One day shortly after their arrival, Baba directed the women mandali to proceed to the beach, go swimming for as long as they wished, and when they were finished, to return to the rest house



alone. He and Eruch would continue further along the beach, as Baba wanted to contact the mast.

It was midday and the sun was beating down upon them. Eruch explained to Baba they would have to walk about three miles to reach the distant town across the stretch of backwaters, but Baba wouldn't hear of it. Baba gestured to Eruch that it was too far and too hot and why couldn't they cross the inlet waters in one of the dug-out canoes that the fisher boys used to haul the catch.

Vengurla was a fishing community and for as far as Baba and Eruch could see, the waters were dotted with peculiar makeshift fishing boats. These canoes were really huge tree trunks which had their centers carved out to form a hold for the fish and the boys would swim alongside, guiding the boats to the far shore. Eruch didn't like the idea at all and told Baba that it was very dangerous be-

cause the boats couldn't hold their combined weight - they were made for fish not people. But Baba was adamant that everything would be fine and that He was not about to walk the distance in the hot sun, so Eruch had no choice but to acquiesce to Baba's wish, dangerous as he felt it might be.

Eruch called a couple of the young boys aside and told them that if they ferried them safely to the other side he would give the boys a good tip. Of course, the boys assured Eruch that they would be careful. Then Baba climbed into the makeshift boat and Eruch followed.

Eruch would describe how he and Baba could hardly move for fear that the boat would tip over, and how, halfway across this backwater bay one of the boys from another fishing boat saw these two strange figures in the boat and swam over to play some mischief on his friends. He dove under the water and pulled the feet of one of the boys ferrying them across, toppling the boat into the murky depths within seconds.



When Eruch would describe this incident in Mandali Hall, he would emphasize how filthy and black these waters were. The moment the boat capsized, he lost sight of Baba and frantically flailed his arms everywhere in the waters trying to catch hold of Baba by feel as he could not see anything. Suddenly, he caught hold of Baba's arm and as they sank to the bottom, with a strong kick, Eruch pushed off with his feet and in a few moments Baba and Eruch shot up to the surface. With one hand holding on to Baba and the other holding Baba's satchel, all Eruch could do was kick with his feet and direct Baba to paddle with His hands. They finally reached the shore, exhausted but safe.

Baba told Eruch to run back to the guesthouse and get Him some fresh clothes. This posed a problem as it would leave Baba unattended for some time, but there was no choice. This was one of the few times in Baba's ministry when He was left alone.

Eruch ran back to the bungalow to get the fresh clothes, while Baba remained seated under a nearby tree. However, when he got to the bungalow he found it locked, as the women had not yet returned. With Baba waiting alone under a tree there was no time to lose, so he broke into the quarters through a bathroom window, retrieved some clean clothes for Baba and ran all the way back as fast as he could. Eruch found Baba where he had left Him and quickly helped Him to wash with water from a nearby well and change into a clean sadra. Baba then contacted the mast in the town.

As Eruch would often explain when he told this story, a good mast contact for Baba was His real relaxation, and after such a contact Baba would be in an especially good mood, with even His stride reflecting His happiness. As they stood together, Eruch said to Baba, "I told you it was dangerous Baba. What would the world have thought if you had drowned? It would have been a terrible thing, Baba."

Baba then turned to Eruch and said, "Just as today you have given Me your hand and pulled Me out of these murky waters, a day will come when I will lend you My hand and pull you out of the muck of illusion."

Eruch would then sigh and say, "I am waiting for that day."

And that day finally did arrive on 31st August 2001, in the wee hours of the morning in his room, the Manonash cabin, surrounded by his family and the Meherazad mandali. As Eruch's final moments gained momentum, a clear, barely audible "O Baba . . . O Baba" slipped from his lips as his breath became more and more



irregular. His Beloved's name was the last word Eruch spoke aloud.

From the medical perspective, Eruch died of a heart attack, and his official medical report states this, but in the real sense, his vanished heart found its final fulfillment in the Beloved's victory!

There had been many recent signs that the time was drawing near, with Eruch's increasing breathlessness, difficulty in walking and profound weakness shaping his last hours and days. But there were also many earlier hints that the last chapter was about to commence.

On a quiet Wednesday morning in October 2000, Eruch decided he would like to go to Meherabad unannounced so that he could take darshan. After having Baba's darshan, he turned to those of us accompanying him and said very seriously, "I think this is my last pilgrimage." And although Eruch came to Meherabad three more times - on Mehera's Birthday, for Amartithi on January 30th and for Baba's birthday, the quality of those visits was different, for he had to hurry in and out before the huge crowds pressed in upon him. That quiet Wednesday in October was, as Eruch foretold, his last personal pilgrimage.

Where to begin this account of his last days depends surely upon the teller of the tale, but for myself I shall always remember 8th November 2000 as the date from which Eruch took his final plunge to swim the last laps of the race.

As most of the Baba world knew, Eruch's health had been failing for a number of years. His battle with Myasthenia Gravis, a





by his side during the tea times at Meherazad.

During this period, Eruch would enjoy watching videos of the saints and Perfect Masters, particularly the life stories of Tukaram and Dyaneshwar and the Indian Epics, Mahabharat and the Ramayana. In his ever loving way, he would invite those close to him to watch these movies with him, and so we would sit together in silence, enjoying his proximity and the rare and only chance it gave him to relax and feel free from the cares of the day. In the TV room Eruch could be in his own thoughts, enjoy the stories of the great saints, and have a few moments where he could remain undisturbed.

Throughout the years, Eruch would occasionally tell the story of Tukaram to pilgrims in Mandali Hall. As a result of his fondness for the story of this Perfect Master from Maharashtra, Heather Nadel and Alan Wagner chose this story for the annual play performed on Baba's Birthday. Although Eruch had been quite ill in the weeks before Baba's Birth-

day, he was intent on going to Meherabad on 25th February to see the play, based on the old 1937 film Tukaram which he loved watching at Meherazad. Looking back on the energy Eruch had to muster to get through that incredibly intense day, one cannot help but be amazed that he did it. The energy expended on Baba's Birthday

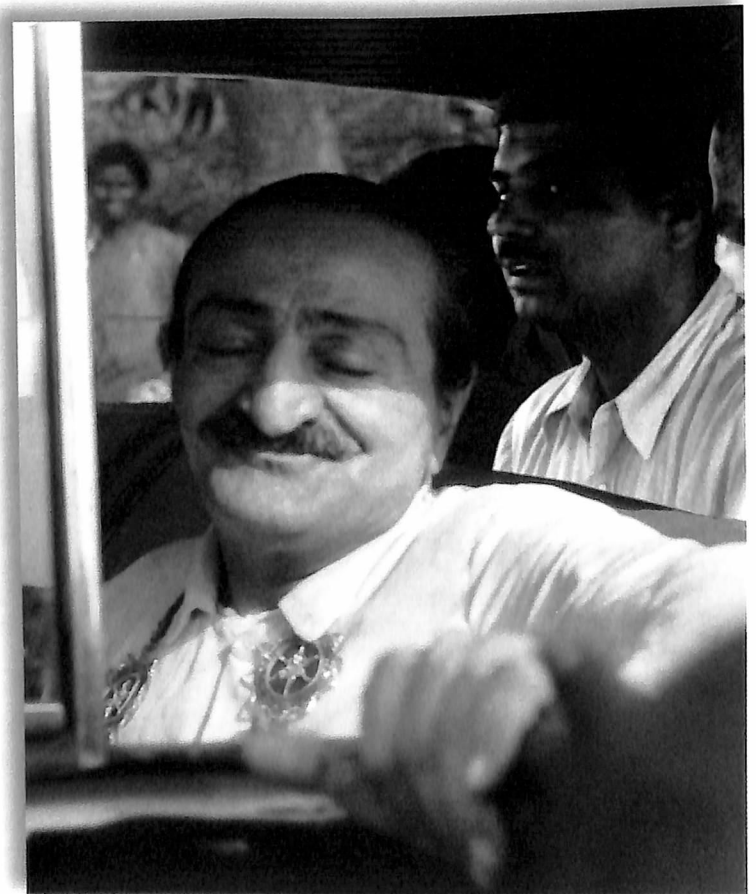
rare auto-immune neuro-muscular disease, and the ensuing Congestive Heart Failure, never deterred him from carrying out his duties. He was determined not to pamper his body but remain active in Baba's work till his last breath. Often Eruch would joke half seriously, when he was asked about his condition, that he was suffering from "my sins," his own name for the Myasthenia.

That morning on the 8th of November, Eruch felt unusually low and extremely weak, yet in spite of this, he attended the Trust Office as usual. As he walked slowly towards Bhauji's office at the other end of the long verandah, I heard him say so fervently and in a tone he was not wont to use, "Baba I can't bear any more. Baba please take me now, - please, Baba - I just can't bear any more."

And within myself, I felt that Baba heard his plea and responded, for from that day forward Eruch's health took a steep and rapid decline from which there was no return.

In the following months, Eruch continued on in spite of infection after infection, increasing problems with his circulation and blood pressure which would cause him to experience fainting episodes and increasing weakness, especially in his legs. His energy decreased until it became apparent that greeting the many pilgrims who would visit Meherazad on each pilgrim day was taking a serious toll on his reserves. Even the energy required to speak and engage with others was becoming more tenuous, difficult and tiring. So in his inimitable fashion Eruch began to switch gears, sharing his love in various ways that did not require his verbal exchange or physical touch. At tea time, Eruch began to personally give out biscuits to those who were with him - including Meherazad's pet dog Moti who loved Eruch and never failed to sit nearby during these little sessions.

The biscuits were anointed with the name "puppy biscuits" - as we all became eager puppies wanting to receive one of these love-packed cookies from Eruch's hand. But even that finally became too much of a chore for Eruch to attend to personally and he delegated the giving out to one of the men residents who were always





was surely the most he expended in any one day until the end. Although the immensity of the day's activities did take its toll on Eruch's health, he truly loved the play and felt tremendous satisfaction in having seen it.

When the new season opened, Eruch's health was so precarious that he only managed to sit in the hall on his usual Thursday a few times. Although the old days of telling stories nonstop had come to an end, he did share with the pilgrims on each of those Thursdays what he felt compelled to share. The Vengurla story related above was told by Eruch on his first day back in the hall, but the main thrust this season revolved around one particular incident in his life with Meher Baba.

It so happened that Baba one day asked the mandali, "Who do you take Me to be?" There were many answers the mandali offered in reply, Eruch said, from "You are the Avatar, the God-man, the Highest of the High" to "You are the Eternal Beloved and the Ancient One." But none of these answers were satisfactory to Baba. Finally, Baba himself gave the mandali the answer. "Who is Meher Baba? He is the One who provokes this question in you. The Being of all Beings."

If at all Eruch wanted to convey anything to the pilgrims gathered in Mandali Hall this season, it was this legacy - "Who is Meher Baba?" On one occasion, Eruch told this same story twice in one session, not because he had forgotten that he had already told it, but rather because he was compelled to make sure that we got it!

On the last Sunday, Mandali Hall was packed with a large group of Indian and western pilgrims. Notably that Sunday, there was a large group from Hamirpur, in the north of India. Eruch was in a happy mood during the program, which included some of his favorite songs, "Victory Unto Thee", "Amazing Grace," and a rousing upbeat song written and sung by Stephen Edelman called "Meher Baba's Daaman". Eruch even joined in on the chorus of the song and clapped his hands in rhythm. One of the Hamirpur Baba-lovers sang his own composition "Meher Baba Loves You", in English, to the enjoyment of all and then before the films began, Eruch spoke to the crowd.

"Do you know what it means to hold on to Baba's daaman?" he asked. Eruch paused for a long moment. Then he continued, relating how he used to think when Baba gestured "Hold onto My Daaman" that it meant literally to hold on to His sadra - to the hem of His garment. But years later he realized that it was not that - not the physical garment that Baba wanted His lovers to hold onto, but rather His Form - that Form which housed Reality. "And how do we do that?" Eruch emphasized, "We hold on to His Feet."

After the program was over, Eruch stood up to leave Mandali Hall for his room. As he approached Baba's Seat, he stopped before it, bowed his head momentarily, and then he turned back to the pilgrims still seated in the hall. "If anyone were to ask you, Who is Meher Baba? the answer is, 'He is the One who provokes this question in you - The Being of all Beings.'" And in a final gesture of emphasis he raised both hands as he repeated - "The Being of all Beings." Then with great effort and assistance, he left Mandali Hall to rest in his room. It was to be the last time Eruch spoke in Mandali Hall.

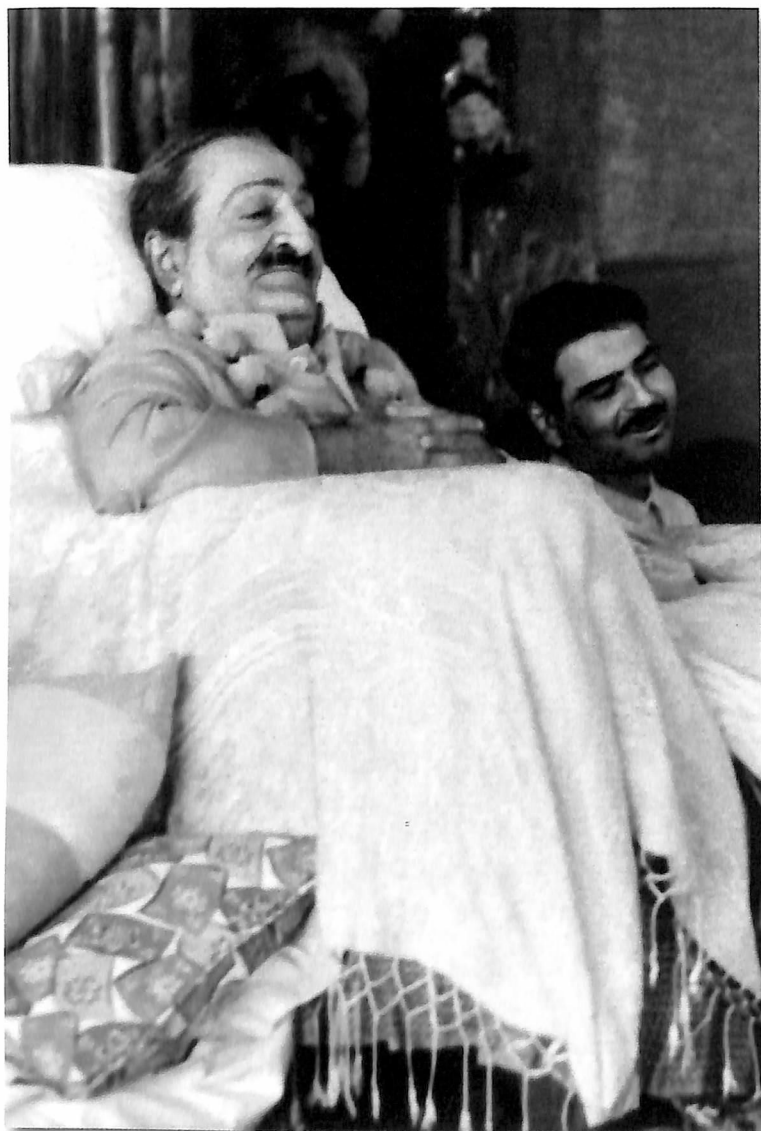
During the last week, Eruch was watching the Indian Epic The Ramayana - the story of Ram and Sita. He loved this series as it depicts quite beautifully the story of the Avatar's Advent as Ram, the Upholder of Righteousness.



On the 30th of August, Eruch as usual wanted to watch the video after tea. With two residents on either side of him, lovingly helping to support his steps, Eruch traversed the distance from the verandah to the TV room situated behind the Blue Bus. Although the distance is just a few feet, even this much walking had become increasingly difficult for him in the last week. This episode enacted Sita and Ram and Laxman's crossing of the Sharayu river and the beginning of their fourteen year exile from Ayodhya.

The episode opens with the boatman slyly telling Ram that he cannot allow Ram's feet to touch his boat for fear that His very touch might destroy the boat. This is a well-known reference to how the touch of Ram's foot freed a soul that had been incarcerated in a rock by a rishi's curse.





Ram smiles and the boatman tells him that only if he is allowed to wash Ram's feet, by cooling them first with the river water, can Ram be ferried across in his boat. Ram agrees and the boatman and his wife wash Ram's feet and then, overjoyed, drink the water. When they reach the other shore, Ram tries to give the boatman Sita's ring in payment. But the boatman refuses, telling Ram, "You think you can pay me merely with a ring? Just as today I have ferried you across these waters, let the day come when you, Ram, ferry me across the waters of illusion."

Every day our video sessions would end at 5:00 o'clock exactly. This would be the time when Dr. Goher would drive over in her "Duckie", a motorized little scooter-chair. Eruch's brother Meherwan, sister Manu and other close ones would all sit together on the men mandali's verandah and share news of the day or reminisce about the golden years of life with Baba. It also became their time to just be with Eruch.

When the hour was up, Meherwan would lovingly assist Eruch in walking the distance from his chair in front of the Blue Bus to Baba's Mandali Hall, where he would be with Baba on his own for some minutes before retiring to his room for dinner and his night rest.

But that day as we sat together watching the Ramayana, Eruch did not make a move to get up even when it was 5:00pm. He would always want me to tell him the time and so as usual I leaned towards him and asked if he wanted me to stop the video as it was 5pm. With a gesture of his hand he indicated that it should continue.

He looked so entranced by the scene being portrayed on the screen that I can only now in retrospect wonder whether Eruch was himself silently reliving the event in his life that drew such a sharp parallel to what we were witnessing in the story.

It felt as though Eruch, on some unspoken level, knew that the hour was approaching when His Beloved Baba would finally give him His hand and lift him from the muck of illusion. But whatever he may have felt only he knows, and this is merely my own conjecture. Nevertheless, the air was filled with an indefinable completion as the scene ended and Eruch announced "enough." I turned off the video and helped him out of his chair to begin the "long" walk back to the verandah.

With Stephen Edelman and Gary Kleiner lending him their arms for support, Eruch would walk slowly to his seat on the verandah. Gary and Stephen became Eruch's walking sticks and he enjoyed their company tremendously. As the days drew to a close, his own unique team of helpers remained close at hand, never wanting to miss a moment in his company. For Eruch's companionship remained as dynamic in his fragility, as commanding in his silence and as overwhelming in his humility as it had always been. He accepted whatever Baba gave him with an equanimity and graciousness that was more than just inspiring; it was a glimpse of 'Mastery in Servitude'. A glimpse, perhaps, of what made Eruch so dearly beloved of Baba that Baba once commented that if He could be said to enjoy the company of any man, He enjoyed the company of Eruch.

Eruch continued to attend the Trust Office up until the end. That last week, he came to the Trust Office on Monday and Tuesday although he was too weak to attend on Wednesday. When Thursday rolled around, he surprised everyone by announcing he was going to the Trust Office. When reminded it was his day to be in Mandali Hall with the pilgrims, he quipped that morning, "Those days are over now." He insisted that he must go to the Office as he had important work to do and he must greet Bhauji who had just returned from his trip to France. "Be ready at 9:30am sharp," he announced to those of us who accompanied him to the Office.

Eruch was so determined to go that day that there was nothing more to be said. Again, in retrospect, it marked the final tying up of loose ends; it was in his meticulous nature to see that nothing was left unattended, that Baba's work came first. As he commented one late afternoon at Meherazad during that last week when he was feeling so weak, "I must go to the Trust Office for I am Baba's Eruch." And Baba's Eruch he was till the very end, seeing to the correspondence, attending to the Trust Office routine, meeting dear Bhauji, even checking that the calendar date for the next day was changed before he left for Meherazad.

For years on end, Eruch had made it a point to embrace each and every worker gathered at the Trust Office on his arrival there and on his departure. But the energy required for individual embraces was no longer possible and so, as Eruch walked towards the car that Thursday noon, he stopped momentarily and raised both his hands in an endearing gesture of love and care to each and all before getting into the car for his final return to Meherazad.

Just as the Trust Office staff eagerly awaited Eruch's arrival, those working and living at Meherazad eagerly anticipated his return. No matter what activities one was engaged in, when the honk of the car's horn heralded his imminent return everyone waited in greeting as he disembarked slowly from the car.



On that last Thursday, Eruch's weakened state was most apparent as he walked with much effort to the nearby chair where he would sort out the mail for Meherazad before returning to his room. He sat quietly for several minutes that day, catching his breath before he could gather his strength even to sort the post and discuss the events of the day. But through it all, Eruch maintained his ever loving attitude of care and concern for all, extending a hand of greeting to one worker and a smile of care for another. As he rose from his seat, he paused and looked around at all of us, breaking the ice of concern writ on our faces with his favorite expression, "Another day, another life."

That evening appeared to be like any other of the last few days. It was only later, when we all came together in Mandali Hall to remember Eruch, that Manu revealed that his goodnight hugs to the family came with a special message that last night. Manu said Eruch told them, "Be brave, be united, and remain harmonious with all your brothers and sisters." That was his last message to his family.

It was around 12 midnight when the watchman knocked on Meherwan's door to inform him of Eruch's suddenly worsening condition. Then the watchman rushed to the women's side to inform Dr. Goher and Shelley Marrich that Eruch needed urgent medical help. Eruch's travail had come to its final act.

By 12:30am he was having difficulty breathing. He was given oxygen but he felt extremely restless and would remove the oxygen tube over and over again. During this time, Dr. Goher Irani was by Eruch's side as were Meherwan, Manu and a few others. At 1:30 am Goher's sister Katie came by his room and he turned his face and saw her standing in the doorway. With a strong, clear voice, he greeted Katie 'as he would do each evening when they saw each other. "Jai Baba, Katie!" Eruch said. It was his last greeting to her.

Eruch's time was drawing near. The Meherazad mandali by now had gathered within the Manonash cabin. The hands of the clock were moving towards the hour of his release and Eruch, still breathing with difficulty, was helped to sit up in his bed to facilitate his breathing.

As Eruch's breathing became more and more laboured, a barely audible "O Baba . . . O Baba" gently slipped out of his lips. He was now facing a framed photo of Baba that had hung for many years from a nail hammered into one of the original beams of the Manonash cabin. But Eruch needed no photo of Baba, for etched upon his heart was the image of his Beloved Lord Avatar Meher Baba and his eyes surely saw none at the end but the One who was Eruch's All in all. With his last breath, Eruch's head fell to his chest, in a final bow of salutation and surrender to his Eternal Beloved. The time was 2:31am and twenty seconds. He had finally crossed the finish line and all present shouted out in unison "Avatar Meher Baba Ki Jai!"

Many years ago Eruch shared with those of us gathered in Mandali Hall, a prayer that Baba had asked him to recite:

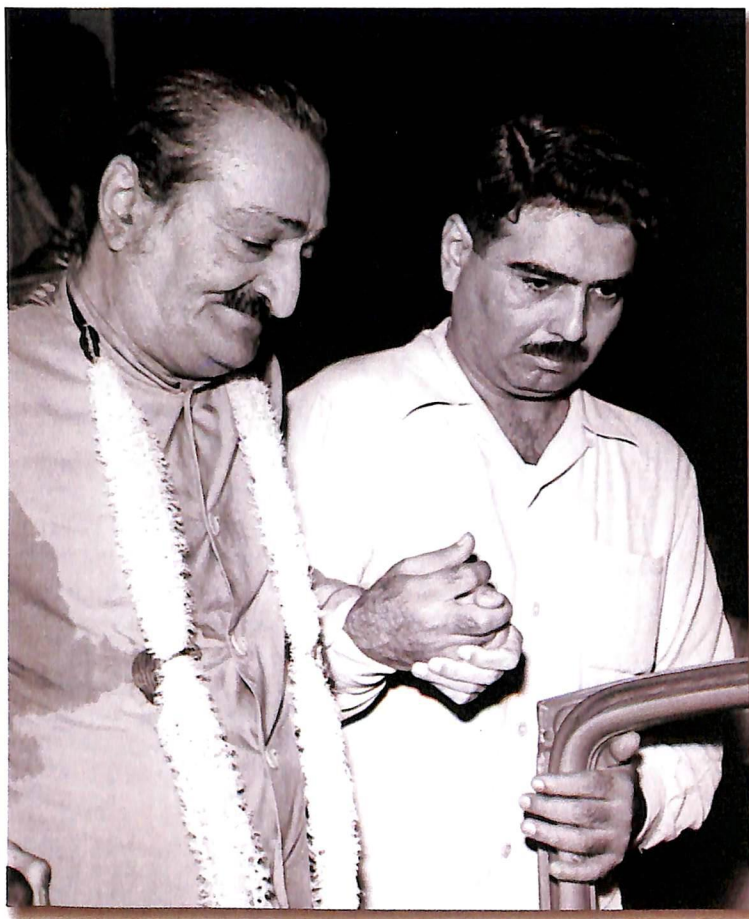
*I am not the body I am not the mind  
I am not this and I am not that  
I am nothing but a living lie  
Of that Truth that is Me  
And unless the lie is dead  
The Truth cannot be.*

For all those who aspire to the Truth, for all those who believe in the glory of Love, and for all those who long to efface themselves in total surrender to the Eternal Beloved, Eruch will ever be a shining example of a true slave. He took great pains to ensure that everyone who came in his contact never forgot who was the Beloved and who the slave.

He stressed time and again that one's focus should be directed on Avatar Meher Baba and no one else. Such a matchless life will not be witnessed again for another seven hundred years!







## One of My Treasured Memories

Eruch Jessawala

I can recall two especially intimate moments with Meher Baba. The one occurred one day at lunchtime. All the other mandali had gone to have their meal. It has been my habit for a long time to not have lunch, and this proved most useful in giving me more time for my work for Baba. On this particular occasion, Baba was sitting in the hall, and I was standing in my usual place, facing Him. Baba gestured for me to get a chair. So I did, and Baba gestured for me to put it near His chair.

I thought that Baba must be tired of sitting in His chair. This was after the accident and Baba's hip gave Him a lot of pain. I thought Baba wanted to switch chairs for a while. But when I went to help Baba, He gestured, "No, you sit." So I sat there, near Baba's chair, looking at Baba. Not a word was said. I just sat gazing at Baba and He looked at me.

Although I spent so much time with Baba, I almost never got the opportunity to simply stare at Him. I was always too busy. Even when I looked at Him, I usually had to concentrate so hard on His fingers, at first to read the board, then His gestures. I would look at His face to catch the vivid expressions which passed with incredible rapidity across it so I would know the right inflection to put on the words I was speaking out, but I never got the opportunity to simply stare at Baba this way.

So I sat in silence gazing at Baba, and He sat in silence staring at me. And I found cool tears streaking down my cheeks. Nothing was ever said, but that remains one of my treasured memories of my time with Baba.

*That's The Way It Was*, Eruch Jessawala, pp. 284-285

"Eruch loves Me very much—he is My right hand..." Meher Baba, *The Awakener*, vol. ix, no.1 and 2.

"He [Baba] sat there in the airport and talked to us about Eruch His interpreter, his strength which was more than we could imagine, and his child-like mildness." Hedi Mertens, *The Awakener*, vol. iv, no.2.

"You know how important Eruch is for my work. By remaining by my side, he serves me twenty-four hours a day, keeps watch by my side, reads my signs and gestures, looks after my smallest chores, and in addition, he handles the correspondence." Meher Baba, *Lord Meher*, vol.16.

"Eruch did not have a wink of sleep for sixteen days once." Meher Baba, *Lord Meher*, vol.18.

"If ever I personally like the company of anyone, it is that of Eruch." Meher Baba, *The Ancient One*.

"The mandali are all Gems. There is no one to match Eruch." Meher Baba, *Lord Meher*, vol.13.

## Stories from Meherabad

Philip Lutgendorf

Mira and Alex arrived at Meherabad Hill in the morning, just a few minutes before Eruch's body was brought from Meherazad. They had a driver from Ellora who is a Baba lover, the grandson of a man who was the priest at the Kailash Temple when Baba came to Ellora in the early days. She said that Eruch looked very beautiful, and like himself, not like a corpse. Some days ago, Eruch had chosen a T-shirt for this occasion that read, "GOD—SAVE ME FROM YOUR LOVERS." She said this seemed appropriate as a reminder to the many, many people who came during the day to pay their last respects.

Eruch's body was first carried into the Samadhi and lay there for a while; then it was placed on the Mandap platform nearby. Throughout the day people filed by offering flowers. There was an atmosphere of mingled sorrow and rejoicing. In the afternoon, the body was brought to lower Meherabad and placed in Mandali Hall. Throughout the afternoon there was music as people continued to come. At around 4:30 the music died out and people sat silently. Then Dolly Dastur asked Mira to play the violin, which she did for about half an hour. She said it felt so extraordinary to have this privilege to play solo in Mandali Hall before Eruch's body lying in state surrounded by Baba lovers. The body was then placed in a plain coffin which was closed, and at 5:30 p.m. it was carried to the burial area behind the Dhuni platform where a large grave had been dug. The coffin was lowered to cries of "Avatar Meher Baba ki Jai!" and then everyone present filed by dropping flowers and handfuls of dirt. There was more music and she continued to play with other musicians. Then the work began of filling the grave with dirt and stones, using bucketfuls.

Mira talked with Mehera Arjani, the daughter of Sam and Roshan Kerawala, one of Eruch's caregivers during the last few months. She had been with him all night on the 30th/31st, massaging his feet. She said Eruch's vital signs had been growing weak for several days, but he remained conscious and alert. At about 1:30 a.m. last night, when Katie Irani came into his room briefly, Eruch recognized and greeted her. Then he appeared to fall asleep and at around 2:20 a.m. his breathing changed. He breathed his last at 2:31 AM.



## Pamela Topley

Foxy started barking and howling at 1 a.m. I had gone to bed at 11:30 p.m. and was tired. Foxy, the dog from the Trust Office compound, had never barked before at night and certainly had never howled at any time. She stayed religiously with her pups all night and never disturbed anyone. The telephone rang soon after 2:30 a.m. I just missed it because I was trying to keep the dog from waking the whole neighborhood. Soon after that Irene called and told me Eruch had passed away at 2:31 a.m. Foxy was immediately quiet and made no further noise.

I thought it best not to go to Meherazad immediately to pay my respects as it was dark and I was not sure of the road, not having traveled it at night on my scooter. So I mentally prepared myself to go to Meherabad for the morning Arti. As soon as it was light enough, I jumped on my scooter and rode straight to the Tomb. There, I decided to place my head against the wall. However, before I could touch it, I felt an energy and a heat coming from the wall that was so intense, I could only stand with my head close to, but not touching, the wall.

After breakfast Eruch's body was brought from Meherazad to the Tomb and then later for a short while to the Mandap where those present, both Pilgrims and residents, paid their respects. The atmosphere was quiet - no underlying conversations - all focusing their thoughts on Eruch. If they were like me, their minds were thinking of the first or the last time they had spoken with him or of a very special something he had said. It was so easy to remember the energy that flowed out of him that reached many hundreds of pilgrims before and after Baba had left the body. Quietly the line moved passed the Mandap, each person offering their precious thoughts to Eruch.

Eruch's body was then taken to Mandali Hall where there continued to be a steady stream of people all day. The music and tributes continued throughout the day and somehow - significantly it seemed to me - soon after the Mandali arrived to sit with him, a house martin swooped out from the corner of the Hall and flew delightfully over the coffin and back again. This was repeated many times. Sometimes the bird would take a short break before continuing its flight over and back and over and back the length of the Hall and always over the coffin. The music continued with plaintive viola and harmonious singing. The atmosphere was quite delightful, though some were emotionally overcome or wracked with pain at the departing of a dear and trusted friend. So many tears flowed and dozens of roses were placed delicately beside and on him until it was time for his body to be taken to the burial ground. More music continued here of a very special kind. And whilst one knew that it was his body being garlanded and buried, one somehow also knew that Eruch had left the body immediately in the early hours of the morning and gone straight to Baba's waiting arms, to be held gently in His love for eternity.

*"I would be left to see  
How well He understood my need  
For that brief moment  
He lent you to me."*

P. Topley

## Jerry Watson

I woke up unexpectedly at 3 a.m. and was quite surprised to discover that there were no lights or power since there is a back-up generator which normally keeps the lights on at the Pilgrim Center. I retrieved my flashlight and went out into the courtyard.

Because there was a gentle quietness and stillness in the air, I felt the inclination to just stand for several minutes in the garden admiring the beauty of the moon and stars silhouetted against the plants and trees. I distinctly remember thinking how magical it all seemed. A fleeting thought crossed my mind that perhaps a great or unusual event may have transpired, but couldn't for the life of me figure out what that might be. I went back to sleep.

I woke up again at 6 a.m. and learned about Eruch's passing as I entered the dining room for tea. Morning Arti was a mixture of emotions, sadness and happiness. Eruch had suffered so much towards the end. How can one not feel happy for him? He had finally been relieved of all worldly responsibilities and Baba in His compassion had finally given him the green light to go to His Beloved. Baba had once said of Eruch, 'In all my advents, no one has served me like Eruch has served me.' And in another reference to the uniqueness of the relationship between Eruch and Baba, He had also made the comment, 'If at all I derive happiness in this world, it is from the company of Eruch'.

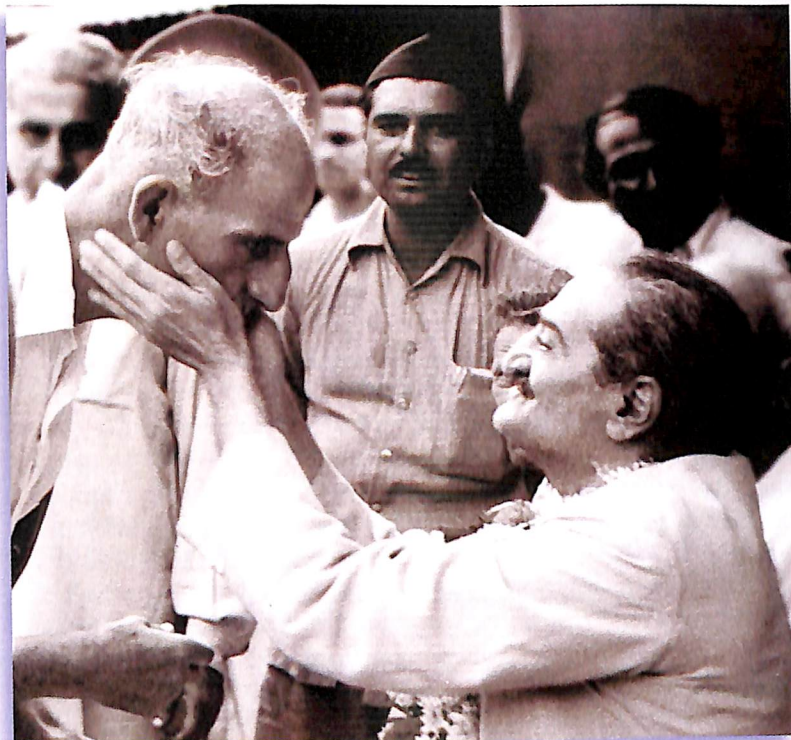
It was a day of constant vigil and inward reflection, trying to sort out my personal feelings for Eruch. To say that he had been an inspiration to thousands is an understatement. He was a dynamo of strength, the living example of how to live for the Beloved. He was a warm, close friend of whom one could ask anything. He would delight in sharing treasured stories of his companionship with Baba. He gave of himself instinctively, even to the very end. In fact, he shared a wonderful anecdote in Mandali hall last Sunday that made me realize that he was still very lucid. In spite of his difficult health, he had not lost his sense of humor.





At 10 a.m. when Eruch's body, wrapped in linen and placed on a stretcher, was transported up the hill and brought into the Samadhi to lay at Baba's feet, I caught a glimpse of Meherwan Jessawala's expression. It was so touching to see Eruch's dear younger brother bravely struggling to hold back the tears that I had to leave the area for a few minutes to collect myself. The personal side of this momentous event of Eruch's passing hit me with full force. So many images and feelings came and went throughout the day. But I was not to be left alone in my contemplations as many people began arriving from Pune, Mumbai and other outlying areas of India, some coming from as far away as Hyderabad.

At 10:30 a.m., the stretcher that held Eruch's body was moved from the Samadhi and placed under the large structure in close proximity to Baba's Tomb. Resting on a raised platform, it was there that a line formed and people were able to pay their respects - some with flowers, others with a simple greeting, and those who felt moved to do so softly touched his feet or kissed his cheek. All the while, a silent understanding seemed to prevail among the crowd - a great lover of Baba's had just passed from our midst. The body was then carried into a van and driven to lower Meherabad and placed in Mandali hall where musicians of all persuasions played Eastern and Western songs and music. I was captivated by the violin solo of Mira Lutgendorf as



she played various classical pieces, lending an air of majesty and dignity to the hall. Then the moment arrived when a soul stirring rendition of Hari Paramatma, the seven names of God Arti that Baba had composed many years ago, was sung by all. It shook the walls and reverberated throughout the hall - deep, full tones that penetrated one's entire being. I've never heard it sung in that way before. There was a haunting, ancient quality about it.

Standing at the burial ground of the men Mandali site at lower Meherabad in the late afternoon that day, as the casket was slowly lowered into the grave, I began to realize that I was saying goodbye to a very dear friend - a friend whom I had fondly known for 32 years. Eruch had been a friend who would often take a personal interest in what was going on in my life - a friend who invariably teased me upon my arrival every year by asking me if I had spoken to my colleague Alexander Graham Bell recently - alluding to my last name of Watson. The topic of Thomas Watson was significant since Eruch would remind us that it was this very same illustrious Mr. Watson who initially invited and financed Baba's first visit to America in 1931. As I thought about our relationship, it seemed that Eruch was more than just a friend. Knowing him had allowed me the privilege to capture a rare glimpse of that special link Eruch had with our Beloved Baba. Eruch was a shining example of how to love Baba in the deepest sense of the word. I shall profoundly miss him.

At the end of this glorious and profoundly significant day, with the sun rapidly descending below the horizon and nightfall gradually overtaking everything, there was a mad dash to the local Cyber Cafe to type out the impressions of the day for the genuinely concerned and inquisitive who were unable to be here. Dinner time discussions followed by films of Baba with Eruch appropriately completed the remaining hours until it was time to retire for the evening. Once again, there was silence. Looking at those same stars and a slightly fuller, brighter moon in the garden that night, in quiet reflection, I remembered the feeling that swept over me just 20 hours before. Something great and unusual had indeed occurred.



## A Reminiscence about Eruch

*from Meherwan Jessawala, reported by Ward Parks*

Meherazad seems to be full of memories these days, memories of that great man who just left us. What can one say about Eruch? The words that one tries to weave around his name and memory all seem so inadequate. Yet so many Baba lovers around the world could testify through their own heartfelt experiences and anecdotes to how deeply Eruch has touched their lives. Perhaps because he was the friend of the Friend, the closest day-to-day companion to that one true Companion, Eruch, like no one else I personally have ever met, seems to have had the ability to become a real friend to everyone.

Over the last week since Eruch passed away (on Friday 31st August), the verandas and walkways and gardens at Meherazad where Eruch lived the last half-century of his life have been scenes of numerous mini-gatherings as groups of two or three, or a half-dozen, or a score have shared reminiscences, like little running rivulets of testimonial to the magnitude of his impact. Last Thursday, September 6, these little brooks and streams converged into a larger pool, as the Meherabad pilgrims and Meherazad mandali met together in Mandali Hall (Meherazad) for a morning session of commemorating that disciple whom Baba called His Peter.

While a number of episodes and stories were recollected, the one that I would like to record here, illustrating the depth of Baba's trust in Eruch and the quality of service that this "fortunate slave" rendered to his Master, was narrated by Eruch's younger brother, Meherwan. The story dates back to the mid-40s, during a period when Eruch was staying with his family in Bindra House in Pune and would frequently be called by Baba to be with Him at Meherazad. As Meherwan continued:

"On one of these visits, a wealthy man came to have Baba's darshan. Before leaving, while bowing down to Baba, the man placed a packet at Baba's feet. 'What is it?' Baba asked. 'A small token of love offering,' the man replied. 'There is no need for it,' Baba gestured, and asked him to take it away.

But the man insisted that Baba keep it, and departed. Baba then told Eruch to take the packet, keep the money, and give it to a deserving person. 'But how will I find such a person?' Eruch asked. 'Don't worry,' Baba assured him, 'you will know.' Baba then washed Eruch's feet with His own hands and bowed down to him. 'Before you give the packet,' Baba instructed him, 'wash the feet of the one you give it to and bow down to that person, just as I have done to you.'

Over the years I often noticed that, whenever Baba gave Eruch an assignment, Eruch would always be most anxious to execute that work, lest he might die with the work unfinished! Now in this case, the packet of money and the charge Baba had given to him weighed heavily on him. So when he returned to Pune, he would pay visits to pan and beetle leaf shops, sugarcane juice stalls, and other wayside centres of gossip and small talk, trying to catch word of some needy person matching Baba's description.

One day, while passing by a vendor of sugar cane juice, Eruch happened to hear a customer say, 'I really pity that honest and truthful man: formerly he was in such happy circumstances, until he was accused by his corrupt seniors under some fabricated charge. He has been completely ruined and now lives in penury. What a plight the poor fellow is in!'

Eruch approached the speaker and asked, 'Who are you talking about?' 'What is that to you?' the man fired back, looking at him suspiciously. 'My elder brother likes to give help to people who are in dire straits,' Eruch replied. 'I think he would be interested in the man you are speaking of.'

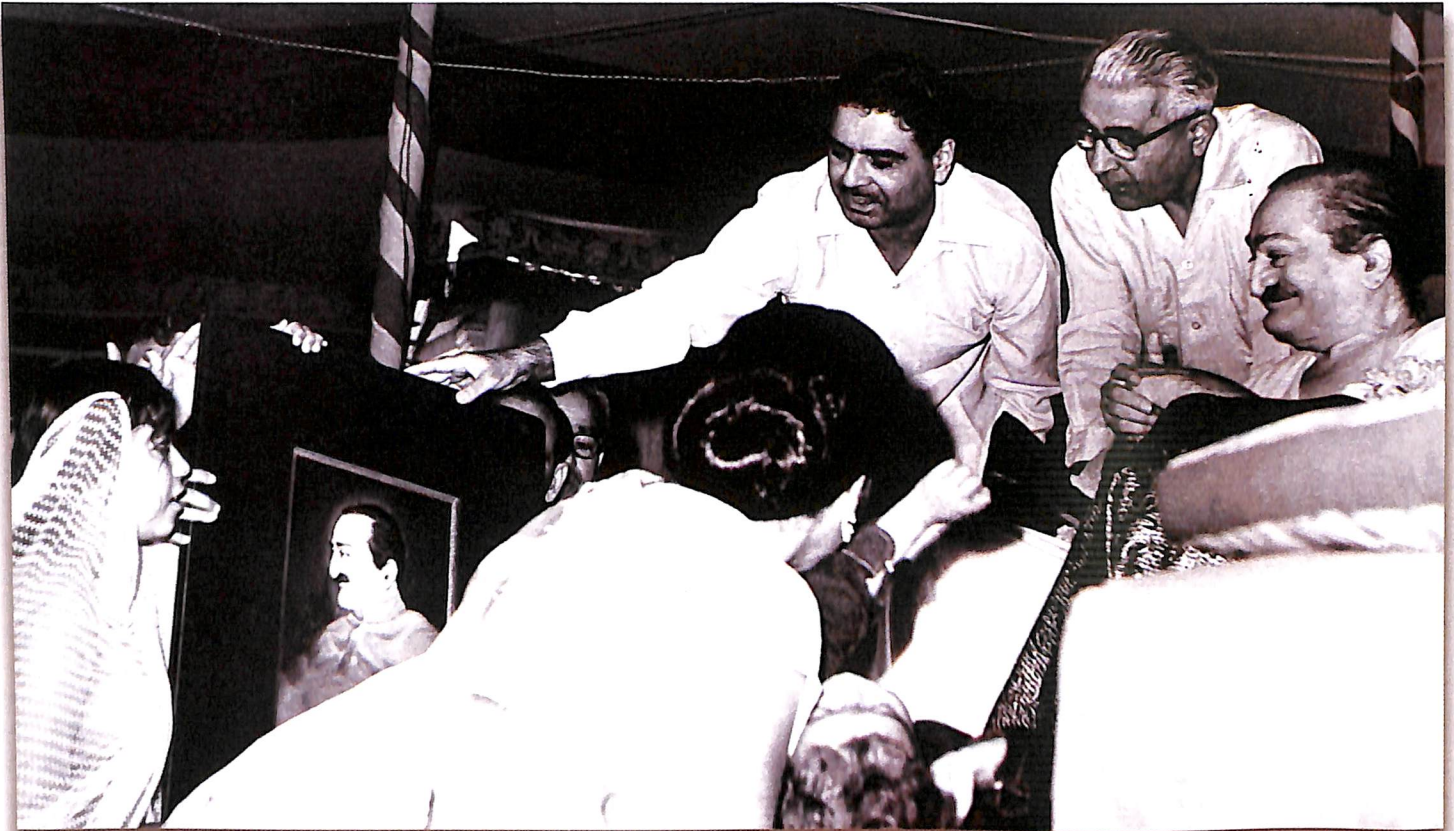
Eruch got all the information and immediately set off by S.T. bus for the village of Bhore, some 40 miles to the south-west of Pune on the Pune-Satara highway. The road to Bhore branched off the main road and led across a large dam, the famous Bhatgur Dam, at that time the largest masonry dam in the world. Reaching the village beyond, Eruch inquired, and was duly led to a small ramshackle hovel on a run-down, filthy by-lane. 'This is the place,' he was told.

He knocked on the door. A woman opened it. She was very beautiful, but wore a haggard look on her face, and was dressed in rags. 'Where is the man of the house?' Eruch asked her. 'He has gone out,' she answered, looking very alarmed. 'Why do you want him? My husband has done no wrong!' For Eruch in his khaki clothes seemed like some official who had come to harass her or her husband in some way. What else would induce a stranger to visit such a remote outpost?

Eruch tried to pacify her and said that he had come to offer some help to her husband. At that she said, 'No, no, please go away, as we will never be able to repay any loan.' Eruch reassured her on this point and was able to win her confidence. Then she explained to him that her husband was out at work. In fact, he was a toll-gate attendant on the very road over the dam that Eruch had crossed on the way to the village. 'He will be coming back home this evening,' she said. 'Very well,' Eruch answered, 'I'll return







tomorrow, bringing help, as I've assured you. Will your husband be here then? Ask him not to go before I come and see him."

She promised him that he would be there, and Eruch departed for Pune. At Bindra House that night, he asked me, "Would you like to come with me on a picnic tomorrow at the site of the world's largest dam?" Still just a boy at the time, this idea was appealing to me, and this is where I became a witness to the rest of the story. That next morning, packed lunch in hand, the two of us caught an early bus to Bhor. When we reached the hut, we found the man waiting for us. "What can I do for you?" he asked. "My elder brother sent me," Eruch told him. "He wishes to give you some help in your predicament." "I can't accept a loan," the man said. "I wouldn't be able to pay it back." "There is no question of repayment. This is a gift of love from my elder brother. Please accept it, and he will be obliged to you." "But there is a condition," Eruch went on. "I have to wash your feet and bow down to you. Please allow me to do this, so that I may give you this gift."

Very reluctantly the man agreed. Eruch washed his feet, bowed down before him, and gave him the packet which contained quite a substantial sum. The man was rendered stunned and speechless by this whole turn of events. Immediately Eruch turned to me and said, "The work is done. Let's go now."

But before we had gone more than a few steps back down the road, the man came running after us. "Who are you?" he said. "Who has given me this gift?" "It is from my elder brother," Eruch answered. "It is an expression of love for you and your family. Don't ask any more about it."

"But did you know," the man went on, "that if you had sought for me tomorrow you would not have found me here? And do you know why not? Do you know what I was planning to do?" "What is that?" "This very day I was planning to kill myself, to commit suicide by jumping over the dam wall. I had reached such desperate straits, such a dead end in my life, that there seemed to be no other way out for me. It is thanks to you that I am living on past this day." "Don't give your

thanks to me," Eruch said. "Give your thanks to God. Great is His mercy and compassion. All praise to Him!"

With this, Eruch and I left quickly and hurried back along the road to the dam. There, as Eruch had promised, I got to enjoy a pleasant picnic and outing; and that evening we caught the bus back to Pune.

The beauty of this story is that it shows not only Baba's unfathomable compassion, for who but God could have arranged in such an indirect and understated way to bring a gift like this in the very nick of time into the hands of a man who so desperately needed it? But at the same time it depicts Eruch's extraordinary obedience and intuitive responsiveness to His wish and will. What an unobstructed channel he was for the flow of Baba's divine life! Indeed, as Baba Himself said, Eruch was "matchless."

But all this was the effect of Baba's work with him. As Meherwan so beautifully said at the beginning of his story, "what would most please Eruch would be if, when we commemorate him, what we remember is the painstaking years of effort that Baba spent in training Eruch, so as to bring him up to the standard of what we see today."

"In my 70 years association with Eruch, there was hardly a chance to be close to Eruch, since he was all the while so close to Baba. So attuned was Eruch to Baba's ways that he actually lived his life as if living out Baba's wishes and commands. Eruch was so focused on Baba that his life was truly and totally His."

Avatar Meher Baba ki Jai!

## **Tributes and Thanks For the Memories to our Dear Friend Eruch**

*Gary Kleiner, Meherabad*

Eruch Jessawala was the Perfect Slave. His Master was Meher Baba. The only way that a slave is ever willing to hear praise, is when one praises his Master. But this Perfect Slave called Eruch died a few days ago. On August 31, 2001 Eruch Jessawala was



buried at Meherabad. He put in over 63 years in the service of his Lord. More than half of those years were served after the Master Himself passed away from this world in 1969.

Some people say that Eruch joined his Master. Some say that this Perfect Slave will come back again as a Perfect Master. I don't know anything about that. All I know is that Eruch, who was a friend and mentor to me is gone, and I have a gaping hole inside of me because I miss him so much! My life and my world will never be the same!

Eruch brought comfort and security to so many of us. He was the patriarch of the Meher Baba community. We have lost our father figure and our rudder. Now we must all journey and steer on our own. We the children of Meher Baba, now have to become adults, living and loving our own lives and stories.

Eruch shared with us love, hope, strength and courage. These are priceless gifts. But these gifts are like a seed, and unless we nurture them to *life* they are wasted! What a sad story it would be, for me and for all of us, if Eruch's offerings were discarded.

I have the highest regard for Eruch and the life that he led. I do not yet have the fortitude to do what Eruch did. But I am glad that at least I have an appreciation for what he did!

Meher Baba sculpted and moulded Eruch into the archetype and prototype of the selfless beauty that it is possible to attain in our human condition. Through his surrender to his Higher Self, Eruch showed us all that it is possible for the drop to transcend itself by living a life that is completely in the service of the Ocean!

It was incredible to watch. Every moment of Eruch's life was an act of love. For a long time it was too challenging for me to witness Eruch's love game. So I would sometimes try to provoke him, by asking him if it was a wise choice on his part to surrender so completely to Meher Baba. It was a foolish argument on my part, because I personally do not know anything about surrender.

Meher Baba said that greater than love is obedience and greater than obedience is surrender. By being near Eruch, I was hoping to ignite the first spark of love inside me for Meher Baba and for God. But for me, obedience is still incomprehensible, and surrender is beyond imagination and conception!

Nearly three decades ago, I came into Eruch's camp because I saw the bonfire that was burning there. My cold and dark world needed an infusion of Light and Warmth. Eruch not only gave me that, but he also provided nourishment for my soul.

Eruch once said to me that he would be willing to trade away everything of Meher Baba's, including His Samadhi and Meherabad and Meherazad for just **one soul on fire** for Meher Baba! He added that he would like to have both, but if there was a choice of only one, he would take that soul on fire for the Lord!

That is our challenge. That is who Eruch was. He *was* that soul on fire and that is what made His Lord so pleased in him and pleased in his service. Meher Baba once said that if at all He got any pleasure from the company of people, it was the company of Eruch!

In fact during the New Life, Meher Baba said, "Eruch is the **life** of the New Life!" He was also the life and love of *my* life. And nobody wants to lose the love of their life!

Eruch is gone! But his challenge to me and all of us lives on. Do we want to live in our fear based lives, or are

we going to gamble on something bold and daring? Eruch wanted us to gamble on the **truth within us!**

What a waste it would be if the glorious example of Eruch's life did not invite any takers. But it will! One day, I believe humanity will reach a new personal best, because Eruch showed us new and unthought of possibilities of what it means to be a human being. He raised the bar of what it is to be human. And I raise a toast to that great soul for the love and selfless dedication that he shared with all of us!

As I said, the highest praise to a slave is if one praises his Master! But I hope to honor this slave and friend by showing him that his words and deeds were not wasted on me.

Eruch has fallen. And the flag that lies next to him is a challenge for all of us. We have a chance to pick up that flag and carry it into the battle of life. We have a chance to live a life that is full of **love**. Eruch would tell us that Meher Baba is "**The Being of All Beings.**" Wouldn't it be better to connect to that being instead of fighting over and about our differences.

For me, my Meher Baba story revolves around Eruch. The fact that Meher Baba caught this giant of a man is incredible. And what is even more incredible is that once caught, Eruch exercised his freedom to become His Slave! That is an enigma and a riddle rolled into a personal challenge for me.

If Meher Baba is the great fisher of souls, He finds His own way to bait and catch everyone. The hook that I have bitten into is Eruch! If at the end of that line it is Meher Baba who is reeling me in, so be it. But I bit for Eruch!







I thank Meher Baba for giving me Eruch. And one day I would like to thank Meher Baba for taking Eruch away. But today, I am still a child who has many fears to conquer. It was so comforting to have Eruch in this world, because he was the Father figure. It seemed that, since *he* was living the life, I did not have to.

Now we have to come into our own. We have to stand up for our **truth within!** We have to let our **love** and our **light** out. We have to rely less on fear. This is what our father has taught us. This is what would make our father proud.

It is now the story of our *love* and our love story that has to come to life. For me it seems like the practice session is over. Now we play for **real!** So let the games begin!

I love Eruch! And I could praise him day and night. That is easy. What is hard is living the life that he tried to inspire in me and in all of us. Ultimately it will be the quality of *love* that I am able to bring into my life that will be the testimonial and thanks for the the gift of love that Eruch presented and nurtured within me.

It is not a sad and crumbling world that we inherit. It is filled with **love!** Eruch shared that Love with us, and now we must share it with others. Eruch's way was to love the Being Of All Beings in everything and everyone that he encountered!

I miss being with you Eruch. I miss your being. There was no human being like you.

Your work is done my friend. You have showed us that the greatest game in the Universe is to try to find our Beloved as the Being Of All Beings! You have inspired an army to go out on that search!

Thank you my friend. Your life was a stepping stone and a bridge to the Beloved. Your life was a song of dedicated praise to your Lord. You have achieved Mastery In Servitude!

You are Baba's Eruch. And we can still derive warmth and light from the bonfire of your **love!**

You always said, Eruch, that we should *play* our part and not *become* our part. I would love to be able to do that, as an honoring of the love that you have shared with me, and as a kindling for the love that I have for Meher Baba, your Beloved Master!

I love you Eruch. And I give the highest praise to your Master who accepted and perfected you!

May the Glory of His Being inspire us to sing from our hearts. And may the glory of your dedication inspire us to dance to His tune, like you did!

Towards the end of your life Eruch, you would say to to us, "Forget me, just remember the Lord." But I can not forget you Eruch. You are the greatest man that I have ever met. So for me, my dear friend, that makes you the **being of all beings!!!**

### *Emma Camp*

Last night they came with news of death  
not knowing what I would say.

I wanted to say,  
"The green wind is running through the fields  
making the grass lie flat."

I wanted to say,  
"The apple blossom flakes like ash covering the orchard wall."

I wanted to say,  
"The fish float belly up in the slow stream, stepping stones to  
the dead."

They asked if I would sleep that night,  
I said I did not know.

For this loss I could not speak,  
The tongue lay idle in a great darkness,  
the heart was strangely open,  
the moon had gone, and it was then  
when I said, "He is no longer here",  
that the night put its arms around me  
and all the white stars turned bitter with grief.  
Jai Baba, Dear and Glorious Eruch.

"Baba would have loved your boldness"... you said ...and smiled.  
And I smiled back... loving you.

### *Jane Brown*

On my last visit to Meherazad, I found myself pretty much alone with Eruch in Mandali Hall. I realized that I was keeping a bit of a distance from him because I felt that he wasn't being as close to me since Bob Brown (my late husband) died. I was about to say goodbye to him when he said "I want Bob, not you!" Shocked, I responded "I can't just manifest him". He said "Yes you can. Why didn't you die and leave him behind?" He was playing with me, of course, but he struck a chord inside of me, and brought me back to a moment that I remembered for the first time since Bob had died. It was a few days before Bob passed when I realized he was going to see Baba, and the desire in me to see Baba really intensified and the sadness I felt then was that I wasn't going to be able to go with Bob to see Baba....

In that moment with Eruch, tears welled up in my eyes, my mood changed and I said...."I tried to die but I couldn't". His expression changed to a much more serious one, and he pulled me close to him with an intensity that only Eruch can. He put my head on his left shoulder, holding me tighter than I had ever been



held in my life, keeping his hand on my head, and it felt as though he were pulling me as close to Baba as he possibly could. Whatever power is his to use, I felt he was using it - to the fullest. To say the least, it was the best Eruch hug I had ever gotten and in that moment exactly what I needed most.

When leaving Meherazad last October, I was standing alone with Eruch again in Mandali Hall in front of Baba's chair. I said (feeling as if this was my last moment with him in this life and that he was soon going to Baba) "Have a nice journey". He responded with "Have a nice flight", then giggled and said "You will be flying while I will be journeying". Then he happily said "Maybe you will die in the airplane" and I said..."Good, then I can go with you!" We laughed and embraced in front of Baba's chair in Mandali Hall. A few years earlier, as I was leaving Meherazad, when I went to say goodbye to him I started crying, and he said "Leave Laughing"! I will never forget it or all the beautiful memories I have of Eruch as the stalwart Baba force egging us all on to be continuously in His presence.

### *Jim Peterson*

In 1975, for the first time since the 1969 Darshan, I went to Meherazad and found myself in Mandali Hall. For some unknown reason, Eruch, in his loving way, was focusing the force of his affections on me. Without being presumptuous, he asked me questions and then seemed to direct all his stories at me. Incredibly, I was in bliss for the first hour and a half. As many of you might remember, in those days Eruch would tell stories from early morning until lunchtime. I began to get restless and I also needed to go to the bathroom.

Finally, I could wait no longer. I got up in a semi-lull in Eruch's story and headed for the door. "Where are you going, dear Jim?" Eruch asked. "I have to piddle," I responded. "O.K." Eruch replied.

I went to piddle, but when I discovered the joy of not being the constant focus of Eruch's intense love, I decided to enjoy my "freedom" and not go back into Mandali Hall. I was thoroughly enjoying sitting in the garden and basking in Baba's radiance when a clearly agitated Rano came walking briskly over to me and said, "What are you doing?" "I'm enjoying Baba's garden," I replied. "But Eruch has been waiting and waiting for you to hear his next story," Rano said in a slightly peeved tone. "You must come back right away." I returned to the hall and Eruch was very happy to see me. He didn't scold me as Rano had, but simply continued his stories. I had learned a valuable lesson in etiquette and manners by the ever humble and loving Eruch.

### *Eric Toperman*

What can I say about you, Eruch?  
That you lived as close to God  
as an ordinary man is able to?  
That you combed his hair,  
and slept under his bed?  
That he actually enjoyed your company?  
Every word I say makes me feel as though  
I am putting some distance between us  
to gain some perspective,  
some view of your life with our Baba,

When all I want is some of that closeness  
that you and the others shared with him.

All the words we have are best left unsaid right now,  
so maybe we can get drawn by him  
a little closer,

a little closer,

no longer be drawn and quartered

by all the addictions of this world,

and start to see *his* face on all our desires,

hear *his* soft breathing

when we just want the closeness of the human form,

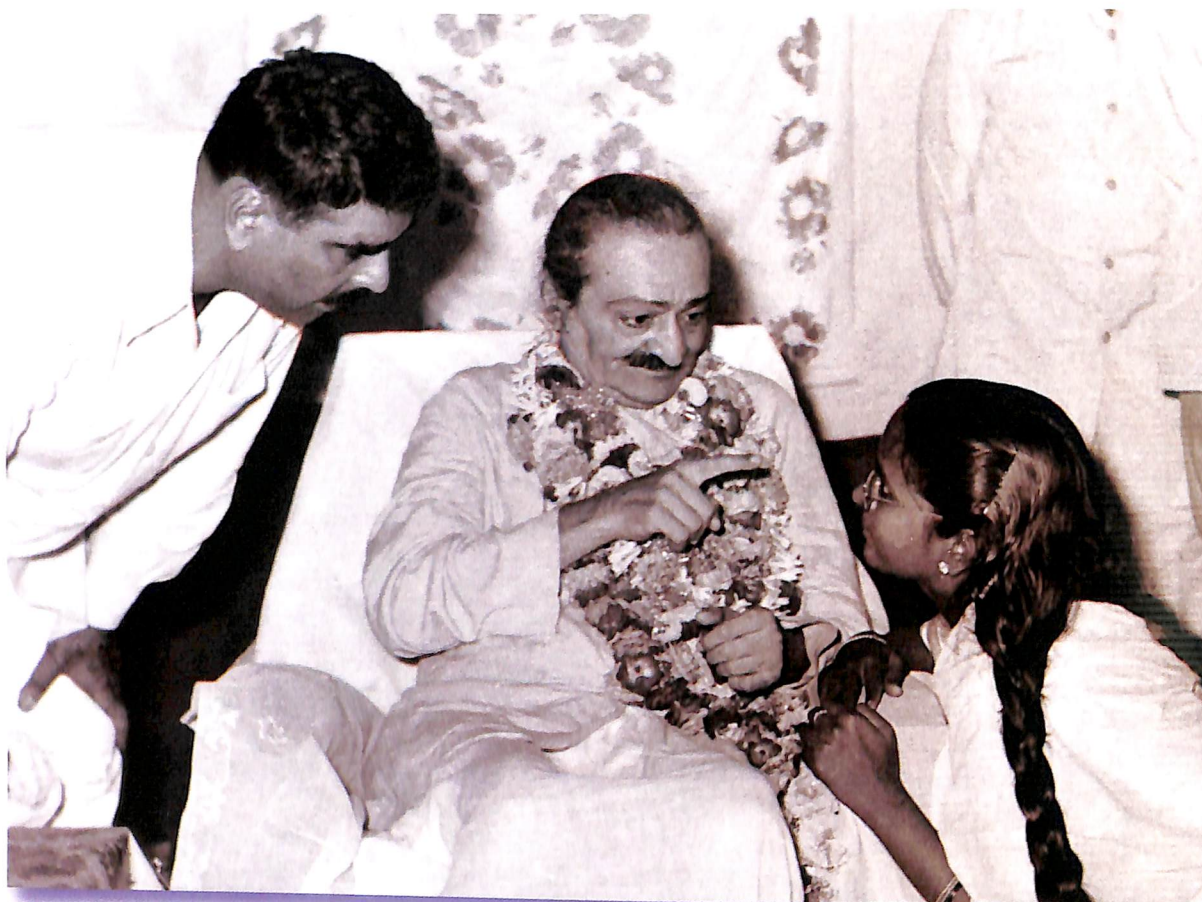
start to feel more of the real friendship he surrounds us with  
every second of every day.

### *Bill Stephens*

My most vivid memories of dear Eruch are from 1973 and early 1974. Peggy and I arrived in Ahmednagar on Christmas Eve of 1973. Our son Roger Stephens and his pal Scott O'Neil had traveled overland to India, by way of Iran and Afghanistan, and had arrived several weeks earlier. We all stayed at the East-West, a small place across from the Ahmednagar train station and rode bikes to Lower Meherabad or took a rickshaw to Meherazad. While at Meherazad on Christmas Day, Eruch drew me aside and into Mandali Hall. After we both bowed to Baba's chair, we sat down under the window, where Eruch always sat, and he began telling me stories of New Life wanderings with Baba. For the next forty-five minutes or so, he told me story after incredible story of those unique and priceless days with the Divine Beloved. I found myself thinking, "If listening to Eruch telling these tales can be so wonderful and so blissful, what must it have been like to sit in Silence with Meher Baba?"







azad. Even though there were fewer pilgrims there at that time than there is now, all of the Mandali were quite busy. At this point, Baba definitely had my heart but my mind had so many questions from years of struggling with the search for Truth and God, that it would not let go and allow my heart to enjoy the peace of Baba's grace. On that first day at Meherazad, Eruch spotted this in me and showed his compassion by engaging me in conversation and acting as if he had absolutely nothing else to do that was as important as talking with me. He drew upon his wealth of experience with Baba and gave me

Another day Eruch took a few of us—including Mark Muray, Bart Flick and Peggy and me—on a walking tour of the village of Pimpelgaon; and we posed for a picture with a group of about twenty beautiful children. We were so moved that Peggy and I later dedicated one of our children's books to the children of Pimpelgaon Village. Eruch also took us on a walk up Seclusion Hill, telling story after story along the way. A few days later he took a group of us on a visit to the "little Taj" at Aurangabad, to the Daulatabad Fort, and to the cemetery where Eruch once stopped a funeral procession and kept it waiting, while he expressed lavish sympathies for the bereaved—all to allow Meher Baba to finish undisturbed His "inner work" in the cemetery. After Daulatabad, we all visited the "womb of the saints" at Khuldabad and the incredible Ellora Caves. At every location we were rewarded by stories of what Baba did or said at that spot. Oh, Eruch! We can never thank you enough, nor can we ever forget, your incomparable stories, your loving kindnesses and your supreme dedication to our Beloved, Meher Baba.

*Dawn Dolan*

I first met Eruch in India at Meherazad in 1977. At that time, I was a product of having grown up in California during the 60's and was on a mad chase for God-realization. With all of the divergent opinions in vogue during the 60's and 70's, I found it difficult to reconcile all of conflicting beliefs about how best to live in the world as a spiritual aspirant - embrace the world as it is? - renounce the world as an unholy distraction? - change the world to a place of love, harmony and peace? - oh, what to believe and what to do?!

I had just finished reading "God Speaks" which was given to me as an introduction to Meher Baba. Shortly thereafter, I met Adi K. Irani in Los Angeles at an open meeting arranged by Filis Frederick. Baba caught me and within a few weeks time I was in India. After Baba finalized the catch in His Samadhi, I went to visit Meher-

the opportunity to get all of my questions answered. He didn't let go until my mind was totally relieved of the weight of its burden and my heart was free to just 'be' with Baba in joy and peace. Eruch's kindness and generosity were a true gift that I will never forget.

During a visit to Meherazad in 1999, Eruch came through again at just the right moment. I was standing in the front courtyard speaking with someone whose attitude and actions were painful for me to witness. Just then, Eruch appeared and joined the conversation speaking words of both kindness and of penetrating insight. His words allowed me to see a larger picture and, thereby, to let go of the pain I had been feeling. However, it wasn't until a year later that I felt the full impact of his insightfulness and was most grateful for its healing effects on my heart. Besides all this, Eruch was really fun just to hang out with!! He was definitely 'good company' and I will sorely miss him.

*Elizabeth Heaney*

As I stood at the back of Mandali Hall, looking out into the garden, despair began to rise up in me, and I became conscious of feeling lost and alone. Once again, I was adrift. Was I crazy for coming all this way for one more 'search' that wasn't going to work out? I gazed out at the beautiful flowers and tears welled in my eyes, and my heart physically hurt. I had come to India searching for some relief from the endless dark night that I had been experiencing for the last two years. After feeling a sweet closeness with God most of my life, I had fallen into a profound void with no sense of a connection to God. I didn't know much about Meher Baba when I went to India but I was desperate enough to come half way around the world to regain a relationship with God.

On this particular morning, my first visit to Meherazad, as I stood at the doorway to Mandali Hall, I heard someone say to me, "Did you happen to see this?" I looked around and Eruch was

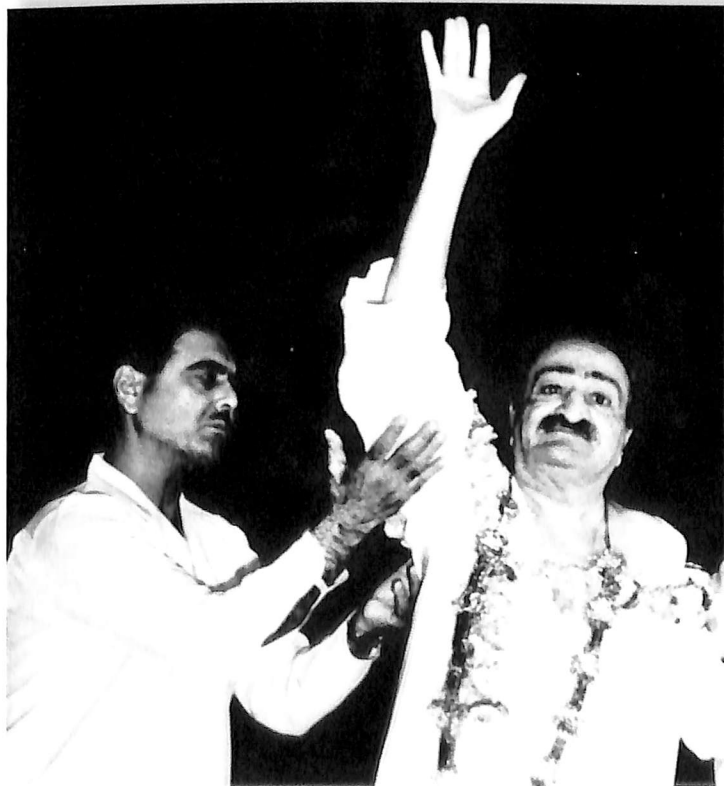


beckoning me to come back into the hall and look at a photo on the wall. "Yes," I said, "I saw that." I started to turn away. "No, come. Come here. Look here at the bottom. Did you see this down here? Did you see the date down here at the bottom?" He bent over, as if studying something at the bottom of the photo. Sighing, I walked back in and looked at the picture again. Eruch began to talk to me, pointing things out and telling me all about the picture. He talked to me and wouldn't let me get away. He showed me one picture after another, and somehow helped me fight off that wave of hopelessness that was crashing through me. Somehow, by Baba's Grace, Eruch reeled me back in from the abyss. Baba had sent his messenger, and fortunately for me, He sent the one who wouldn't let up until I came back into the Beloved's gallery. As he talked, I relaxed and began to be more and more drawn in by his comments. It was the first of many trips to Meherazad and many conversations with Eruch. I am so filled with loving gratitude for all my times with Eruch over the years... but it is that first meeting that I hold especially dear. You see, it wasn't ever about the photos; it was about rescuing a drowning soul.

### *Cindy Lowe*

My remembrance of Eruch occurred in Mandali Hall during my visit to Meherazad with my husband Jeff. One day at tea time in November 1998, Eruch told us a story about Baba and Mehera during the New Life. I don't remember the story well enough to tell it but the gist of it was that Baba always did whatever Mehera wanted. When Eruch finished he said to Jeff, "Do whatever Cindy wants."

I, of course, was overjoyed with this news! But after considerable pressure from Jeff and Bill LePage, Eruch added that neither should I displease Jeff. Hastily, I reminded Eruch that on a previous visit he had told Jeff, "You must listen to Cindy! She knows more than you do about some things," My instincts told me that I should ask for these auspicious directives in writing! Without any hesitation, Davana prepared a document that said, "I, Jeff Lowe, accept the conditions as stipulated by Eruch to do whatever Cindy



wants." "And I, Cindy Lowe, will do my best to please Jeff." We both signed it as our pledge of love to each other.

In order to make it official, this document was signed by Eruch. Bill LePage and Sarah Schall also signed as witnesses and Davana Brown signed as scribe. Davana still has the original but she made us a copy that we treasure as a remembrance of a very happy time with Eruch. Our pledge to each other has helped Jeff and I live together in harmony and cooperation, remembering and honoring the spiritual commitment we made that day. "Thank you, Eruch! Your words will live in our hearts along with our fond memories of you."

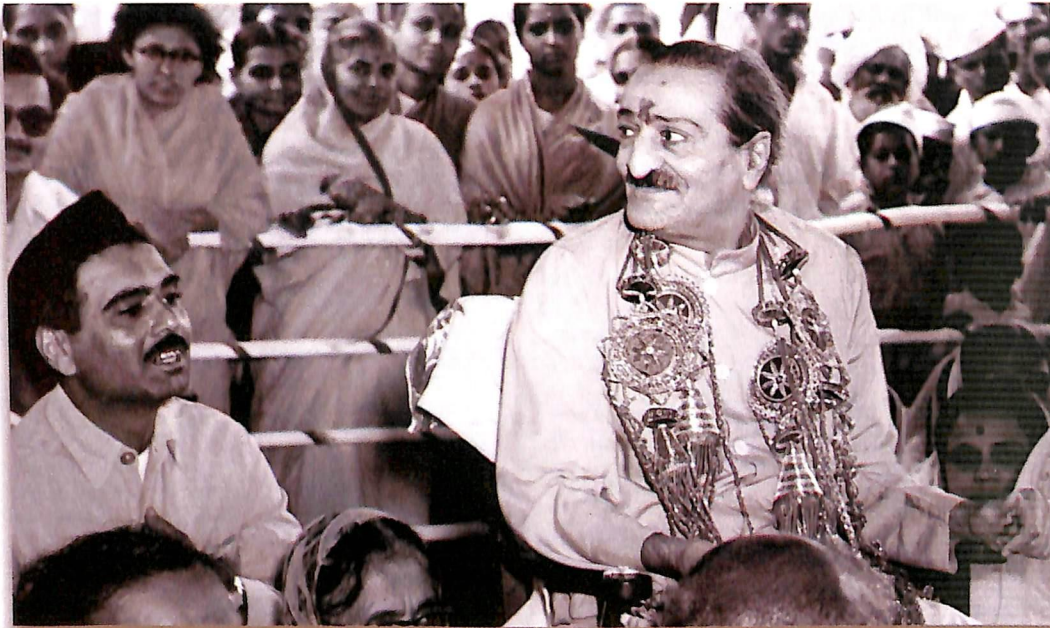
### *Chris Barker*

On April 23, 1969, having known about Baba for less than six months, I found myself in India at the Great Darshan. I felt a tremendous inner connection to Baba although I hardly knew anything about His external advent. And I had virtually no idea who His Mandali were. Because the Darshan program was in the morning, most of the afternoons were free. On one of the free afternoons, I decided to rent a bicycle and ride from the Amir Hotel to Guruprasad so that I could walk around and take pictures of the grounds and building, and possibly of the Mandali. I was almost penniless, but it hardly cost anything to rent a bike for an afternoon, so I got one and made my way through the Poona traffic to Guruprasad.

When I reached the gates, I got down, and with my bicycle leaning against the gate, I took a picture of the long driveway leading to



Guruprasad, the summer home of God. Then I walked down the drive because I thought it would be a bit sacrilegious for me to ride a bicycle on God's drive-way! When I reached the building, some-one came out to meet me and brought me up onto the verandah. To my delight, Mani appeared and I had an opportunity to spend a few glorious minutes with her. She told



me that the Darshan program for Indian people would be starting in a few minutes and that I could stay for it if I wanted to.

The Indian Darshan program was wonderful. I didn't understand a word of it, but the language of the heart was perfectly comprehensible, and I quietly wept through much of the program. Blissfully happy, I walked down the long driveway and out the gate. To my surprise, I found that my rented bike was gone! Stolen! I didn't have nearly enough money to pay for a missing bicycle, and I was mortified at the thought of having to tell anyone about this and cause them to trouble themselves because of this silly thing that I had let happen. Out of the handful of rupees that I had left to my name, I got a rickshaw ride back to the Amir. All that evening and night I tossed and turned, racking my brain trying to figure out what to do about this stolen bicycle. The next morning at the Darshan program I could hardly think about Baba because of worrying about that darn bicycle. A black cloud of gloom seemed to hang over my head. Finally, at the end of the program, after each member of the group had bowed before Baba's chair, and then left the meeting room and gone outside to stand on the cool marble floor of the verandah and chat with one another, I inched my way over to Eruch. I thought maybe, just maybe he knows something about my bicycle. It's a long shot, but I've got to ask. So I came up to him and said, "Eruch, you don't happen to know anything about the bike that I was riding yesterday..." He interrupted me and said, "Yes! Why did you leave that bike unlocked on the road? Don't you know it can get stolen that way! You have to be more careful these days!" And on he went berating me for being so silly and impractical. But I was beaming at him and laughing and crying with relief and happiness -- and also with love because I was so touched that he was treating me just as if I was a member of his family. When I nodded vigorously and apologized, he gave me a great big bear hug --and told me where I could find my bicycle. They had watched me walk in and someone had gone all the way down and got it. That's family for you! And ever since then I have loved Eruch like the perfect uncle, or older brother, that he is.

### *Etzion Becker*

While studying English for about twenty-six years, I have developed this growing feeling of discomfort, that something is missing; and I didn't understand why. It is true that the language is very rich

with words, some say half a million words. But the more I have been studying, this discomfort kept on growing, and I couldn't understand why. So recently it dawned on me, that what is missing in English (and most likely in the general vocabulary of humankind as a whole), is one word. And this word, when it came to my conscious-

ness, says it all. So I decided to coin this expression "*An Eruch*".

What is "an Eruch" and why has it been missing for so long, hence nobody **really** complained? As you well know humans advance according to the level of their complaints. So how to advance if there are no complaints? Anyway, the more I look at this term "an Eruch", it feels good to me. When I review the past history, let's say the past 2500 years, it is hard to note where there was a person who not only pleased the Lord, but more than that, made his Lord proud of him.

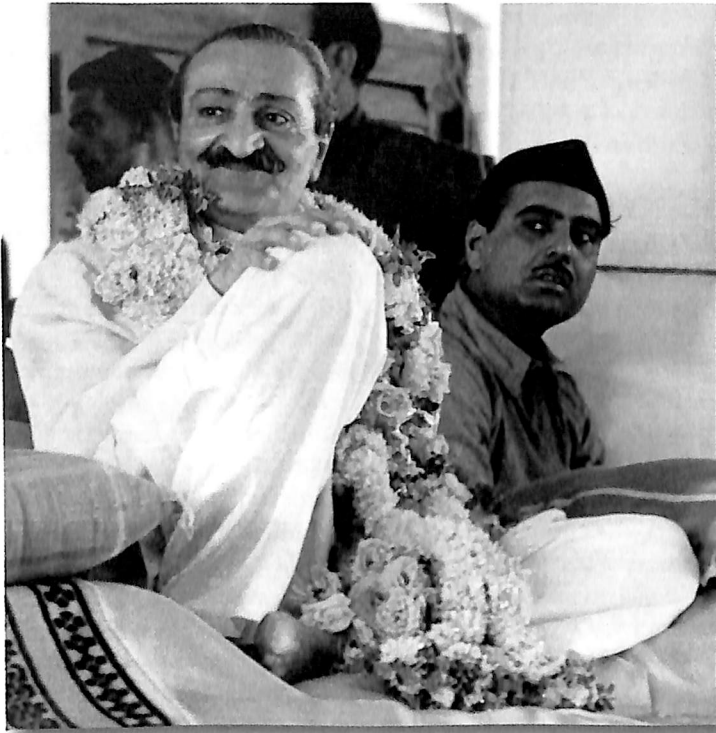
And now you can easily understand why humans were missing this one important word all these millennia - they simply have never grasped what is real work on Earth. But now the spell is broken; and now with the precedence established, we cannot escape as we usually do, and moreover, we will see to it that this was not just one occurrence in history. We will make it a routine — an Eruch: A person who renders unprecedented service for His Lord, a person whose Lord is not only pleased with him, but proud of him.

### *Judy Schoeck*

I remember once in Mandali Hall, Eruch related to the group how "Jai Baba!" came about through Keshav whom he called Pukar, which means 'to call out!'. One day, Pukar had an experience during a program where he saw Baba as Ram. He fell to the ground and said, "Jai Baba!" which when translated means 'Victorious One!' Eruch explained further saying that when we say "Jai Baba" it means to hail Baba as the Victorious One and that we are the vanquished. If we are really meaning it when we hail Baba with His Jai, we are hailing our own defeat!

On one pilgrimage, I stopped by the office as I was leaving to say adieu to Eruch. He and Davana were at the table on the covered porch behind the main office room. In our chat I mentioned that I had never worn a sari. Eruch said it's important for locals to see that Westerners come to Baba's place and that we should never feel we have to dress like Indians. I started smiling, remembering pictures I'd seen of some of Baba's early disciples, like Elizabeth, who fulfilled their duties while wearing shirtwaist dresses with oxford pumps—the Western dress of the day. After asking about 'becoming who we are', Eruch said to me, "Your duty is to fulfill your being, which is to love God, not to strive for your goal, which is to realize your true Self." As I was saying goodbye, Eruch sent me off with these





words, "Keep happy—forget about your wars—remember how fortunate you are." And I do.

#### *Nancy Shew*

I would like to share an experience that occurred when I went on a pilgrimage to Baba's tomb in February 1988. The day before I was leaving Meherabad, I was saying goodbye to Eruch outside of Mandali Hall. He came up to me, about 3 inches away, looked into my eyes, took hold of me, placing his hands on my arms right near my shoulders and said, "Come when He calls, even if we are not here!" Over the last 13 years I have shared these words with whom-ever would listen! Thanks for the opportunity to share it again.

#### *Cherie Plumlee*

Last summer I went to India for the first time in 13 years and stayed for one month. Most of my life I have felt like a vagabond looking for 'my place' in life. Feeling propelled from within, I moved from place to place never feeling settled. Not feeling comfortable anywhere, I didn't stop moving until I married. Even Walnut Creek, which I have grown to love, I have felt is only a short stopover on my way to someplace else. When I arrived in India the energy of the earth poured through me and suddenly I knew this place - Mother India. To me the earth felt precious and holy and I thought I must have lived here before—many times. I felt like a child who had returned from a long stay at boarding school in a land far away from home. It was such a joy to be back again!

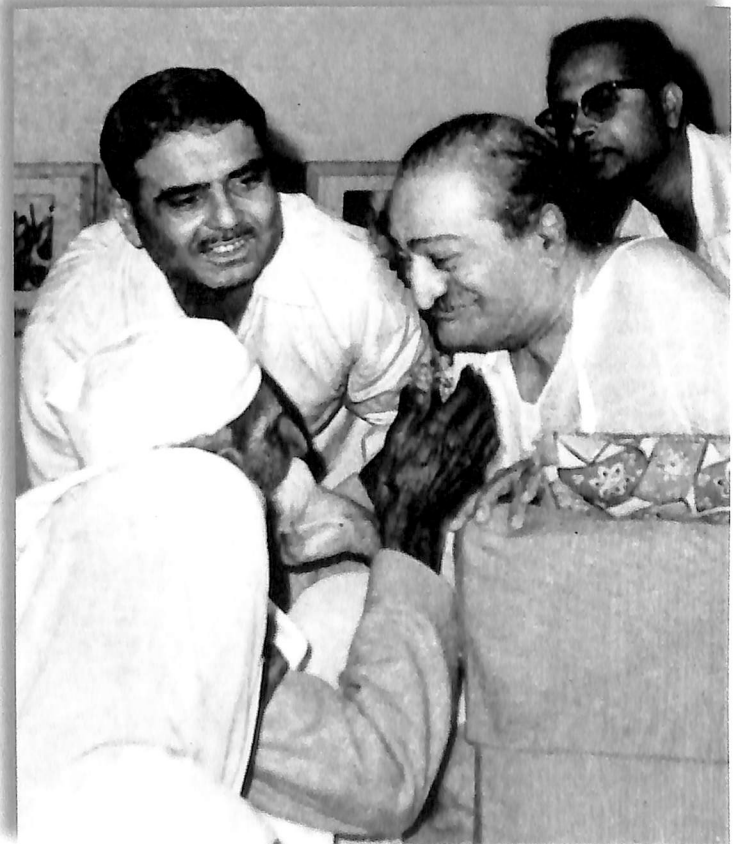
My month was filled with happiness and delight, continuous from beginning to end. The Samadhi became my focal point and from there, everyone I met and with whom I spoke, I came to care for very much. Among them were the dear Eastern men and women who attended the Artis at the Samadhi and sang their beautiful devotionals; many of the residents who amazed me with their persistent onepointed service and devotion to their Lord; and the Mandali all such radiant beings who delighted us pilgrims with stories of their lives with their Beloved.

Two days before I was ready to leave and come back to California, I visited Meherabad for the last time. I stopped to give dear Bal kisses and hugs and it was hard to part from him, but others

were in line to see him so I went into Mandali Hall and enjoyed a short program put on for the Mandali. As time went on it was getting harder to keep the tears at bay, for like many, I didn't want to leave.

As it was getting close to the time for all of us to board the bus for Meherabad, Eruch said he wanted to greet only those whom he hadn't yet met. That left me out. I was so torn about obeying his wish, but wanted so much to say good-bye to him because I felt there was a possibility that I might not ever see him again. So I kept myself occupied looking at Baba's beautiful images on the walls, part of my attention on the line moving toward Eruch. I kept saying to myself that if Baba doesn't want me to say goodbye something will happen and I won't be able to but if the end of the line comes and I'm still here, then that means I can take my chance. Finally! The last person came and went. I quickly moved up to him and smiled. Before I could say anything he said sternly, "I've greeted you already." Knowing I was being disobedient I hastened to say, "I'm leaving in two days and just wanted to say goodbye to you and to thank you." Eruch looked at me very seriously and swatted me strongly on my hip with his hand. I knew I deserved it, but was so surprised I felt tears welling up in my eyes. Pausing barely a moment his eyes smiled and touching his face against mine, he snuzzled my cheek. Then he said "That's enough." and shooed me away.

It reminded me so much of Baba stories I've read of Him with His Western lovers. One or the other would disobey him and He would chastise them thoroughly one moment, then so lovingly forgive them with a smile or sweet word the next. The Perfect Father. Eruch, such an apt pupil of the Perfect One, became a mentor and teacher of many of us wandering pilgrims himself and whenever I get homesick for India I think of all those there whom I came to love, and of Eruch and that last moment with him, and it cheers my heart. Thank you Eruch.







*Brad Kunin*

I am very fortunate to have personal memories of Eruch that span the years from 1979 to 2000. I still vividly recall two statements that Eruch made during my first visit to India in 1979. The first was, "It is all ephemeral." The truth of this becomes clearer to me as the days and years go by. The second statement was, "Be determined to be His." It is my hope and prayer that my wonderfully precious memories of times spent with Eruch at Meherazad in Mandali Hall, climbing Seclusion Hill, and through the nights of Amartithi will strengthen my determination to be His. Thank you brother.

*Sarah McNeil*

I have this lasting image of Eruch standing in the road, his hands are together, raised above his head and he is bowing. I was in the bus leaving Meherazad, sitting at the back, and had turned to look out of the rear window. It was 1988, the year of my first visit. It is hard to explain the inner shock I felt when I saw Eruch bowing to us like that. What a ramshackle collection of odd individuals we were, nearly all westerners, draped in our assorted hot weather gear.

The shock to my personal ramshackle collection of assumptions and pre-conceptions resonated for weeks and months afterwards.

Initially it felt like guilt as if his bowing to us in the bus as it left Meherazad was a sacred moment I should not have glimpsed. There was also an awesome feeling which impacted on me inside. Gradually the simple understanding emerged that Eruch was bowing to Baba in us, and with it came a new sense of being responsible for knowing who we are. Even so, after all these years have passed, the remembered picture of Eruch in the road bowing still makes my heart turn over.

*Molly Jones*

In 1991, I went to India for the first time. I was struggling to understand whether I should stay in my marriage. On my first visit to Meherazad, after sitting in Mandali Hall for a few hours, I said to Eruch that Louise Barrie had told me to talk to him. He agreed, and asked me what it was about, but I said I needed to talk to him in private. This seemed to be out of the ordinary, but when I said it really was necessary, he led me to his very small, narrow room, and we sat cross-legged facing each other on his small, narrow bed. I proceeded to tell him of my dilemma. He was taken aback that I would come to him for counsel, saying he couldn't tell me what to do since he didn't even know me or my husband. When I told him that my husband was working on a documentary about the homeless, he laughed a quiet, wry laugh, and said something about my creating more homelessness. He said, "We all have our frailties." He told me to give it one more try, and as I left he said, "You think too much. You are here to live the New Life. Stop thinking about all this while you are here." I walked out into the sunlit garden, memories rushing in, tears rising. I went to Baba's room and sat for a long while. Many times since then, when someone finds fault with another, I have shared Eruch's timeless advice. Sometimes it helps and sometimes it doesn't.

*Michal Sivan*

This story is part of my coming to Meher Baba. It was my first visit to Meher Baba's Home in February 1988. It so happened that the driver brought me from Pune straight to the Pilgrim Center in Meherabad. In the reception they told me that there was no accommodation for me. I couldn't withhold my tears. The receptionist sent me to the Trust Office, saying she couldn't accept me anyway without my registering there.

So there I was entering the Pilgrim Reservation Office at the Trust, tears running down my cheeks, though it is not characteristic of me to cry. I was received very kindly, greeted with Shalom, offered water, assured that they had received my reservation, and asked to register in the books. All this was through a nonstop veil of silent tears that just would not stop. Then they told me that Eruch was inviting me to join him for his tea break. I didn't know yet who Eruch was. I was led through the back of the buildings to his terrace and was invited to sit next to him with some others. Tea was poured, biscuits were given, and Eruch gently asked me some questions. I was trying my best to answer the questions, gulp the tea and do away with the few biscuits on my plate, all while the tears would just not stop. So I apologized, "Please excuse me. Usually I don't cry like this. I don't know what came over me. But these are not sad tears. I don't know what they are." Eruch turned to me with the softest and kindest look in his face and said, "Don't worry about those tears. We will cry with you too." I don't think he embraced me, but his whole attitude was embracing me. Here was



this man so kindly and generously joining me in the vulnerable state I was in. I don't know if these words can carry this most gentle and incredibly soft moment to the reader of these lines. I don't know if this feeling can be put into words at all, but I shall not forget the way he turned to face me, saying and conveying with those sweetly simple words so much love.

### *Narendra Prasad*

It was in January 1950, when Baba with His chosen Mandali came to live in a rather remote corner of Dehra Dun for about five months. For His and the women Mandali's stay a small tin roofed building was used. Baba Himself stayed in a very small room. The entire property along with the building was disposed of in June 1950 to a local person in Dehra Dun. A part of this property, along with the house, came up for sale in 1999. The total amount of money demanded was very staggering and the terms of sale quite demanding. In this connection, I was running from pillar to post to prevent another Guruprasad mishap. Guruprasad was Baba's Darshan place in Poona and was demolished as there was inadequate response for it to be preserved. Eruch told me "If you are sincere, Baba will help". Those immortal and morale boosting seven words did the trick to strengthen my and a few other Baba lovers commitment to see the project through to a successful completion. Thus Baba helped us preserve this wonderful, spiritual signpost of the New Life for all times to come through Eruch.

### *Marilyn McGivney*

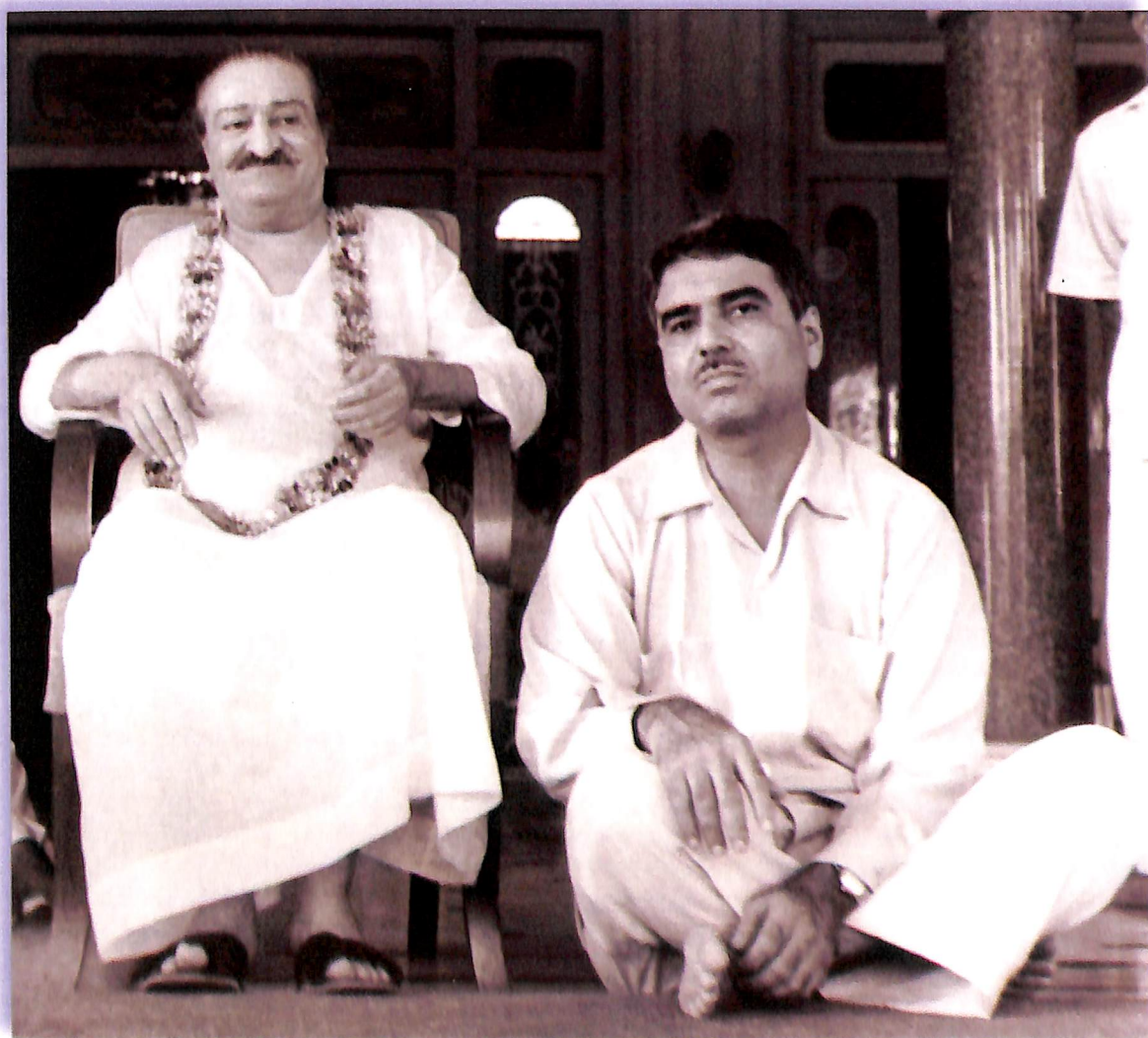
In April 1972, I was twenty-five years old and looking for God. Looking back nearly thirty years later, it is clear I had been searching for God all my life. But I did not consciously begin my search until a few weeks before I met Eruch Jessawala. In mid-February 1972, I left Tokyo bound for Europe on a journey that ended at Meherazad. I had been teaching English to Japanese businessmen for the previous nineteen months. In the time I had been in Japan, every facet of my personal identity had exploded. I no longer knew who I was or what I was doing. The final explosion was a remark by a Japanese doctor that I might die. The lyrics to a then-popular Peggy Lee song filled my thoughts: "Is this all there is?" One evening I checked myself into a Seventh Day Adventist Mission Hospital in Tokyo, and then marched out in disgust when my problem was considered less significant than

that of others. The next day I returned and was advised by an American doctor to leave Japan as soon as possible. I wasn't going to die, he told me, and there were mission hospitals throughout Asia that could treat me should anything happen. I had two choices - return home to Texas, where I no longer had a life, or journey to Europe, where I might build a new one. I left Japan the next week.

A month later in Bangkok, I discovered to my surprise that I was looking for God. My travels took me to Burma and Nepal, where I learned that the Dalai Lama took Western students at his home in Kashmir and that a monastery in Bodhgaya in Northern India also accepted Western students. Where was I to go? I couldn't decide, so I asked God to find me.

I would remain in Katmandu until He told me to go to India and I would say yes to everyone and everything that came my way, for God would be leading me. A few days later, I heard that inner voice and boarded a plane for Patna, a large city in northern India that was two hours by train from Bodhgaya.

A series of remarkable incidents led me to a hotel in Benares at daybreak the next morning, where I met a young American man, dressed in a lungi and smoking a beedi, who later that evening, after another series of remarkable incidents, told me about his master, Avatar Meher Baba. Within an hour's time, Brad Gunn had written down directions on how to get from Delhi to Ahmednagar by train and bus, where to stay in Ahmednagar, and who Jesus's apostles were this time. I was especially intrigued by the man Brad called Baba's voice, Eruch Jessawala.







Ten days later, after many more remarkable incidents, I arrived at the Dawlat Lodge, the Trust Office, and, finally, Baba's home, Meherazad, where I met these "living apostles" that Brad Gunn had written about in my notebook. Gathered on the porch outside Mandali Hall were Mani, Goher, Pendu, Aloha, Bal, and Eruch. Each embraced me and welcomed me home. But I did not feel at home. I believed Meher Baba was Avatar of the Age, but I did not love Him. How could I possibly feel at home amidst these "living apostles" of the new Christ when I felt no attachment to Him?

Later that first afternoon, Eruch invited me to sit alone with him on the porch outside Mandali Hall. Imagine the wonder I felt when Eruch told me stories of his own boyhood longing to be with Jesus Christ. Baba's Peter had experienced childhood longings for the Christ, just as I had. I was indeed home. How can I thank you, Eruch, for linking your life so fast to mine in our first hours together?

### *Laurent Weichberger*

It was the year 1989, and we were sitting in Mandali Hall with Eruch and Mani. We were discussing the different world religions, and what the followers of the various faiths are called (i.e., Muslims, Christians, Jews, etc.). Then Eruch asked those in the hall, "So, what will they call us?" meaning, what will they call the followers of Meher Baba, in the future. Will they call us Baba-lovers? People had various answers, and it was a light hearted conversation. I raised my hand, and Eruch called on me to speak. I said, "Eruch, I don't understand. After Baba's Manifestation, won't it just be "US"? Won't Baba bring all lovers of God together from all faiths?"

Mani, who had been participating more passively up until this point, jumped into the conversation saying, "In Ahmednagar, they call us 'Jai-Babas'. Isn't that funny!" and everyone laughed and then

she started to tell a story, changing the subject. When we left the hall for lunch, I walked over to a little stone water tank near Eruch's room. Eruch came out of the hall and walked over to me there saying, "Laurent, you are right about what you said in the hall. Tomorrow, I want you to repeat what you said." I agreed to do as he wished.

The very next day in Mandali Hall, there was a film scheduled, and the hall was crowded with people. Being tall, I went to the back of the hall, and just before the movie started,

Eruch said loudly, "Where is Laurent?" I managed to reply from where I was in the back that I was present, and Eruch continued, "Now say out what you said yesterday in the hall, so that everyone can hear you." I was very nervous, but somehow mustered the courage to repeat what I had said the previous day. Then he said, "Good. Now start the film." And that was that.

### *Lorraine Brown*

I was 19 when I first met Eruch. I have many wonderful memories of special moments with Eruch. This is a very early one. One time, during my first trip to India, I was kneeling down in front of Baba's Chair in Mandali Hall in Meherazad. Everyone had gone out for

lunch. It was just before Dhuni and there had been much discussion about what to give to Baba at the Dhuni. Most talked of just putting in one weakness or habit and whether it should be something big or small. Eruch had emphasized that the Dhuni wasn't something you played around with. It was powerful.

In my own mind, I'd sort of come to my own conclusion that perhaps giving stuff to the Dhuni was like giving Baba permission to work on that stuff. Because we had free will, Baba needed our permission, but I hadn't asked Eruch anything because I was rather shy back then. As I kneeled in front of Baba's chair, the question entered my head, "Would it be too presumptuous to just offer You everything?" Then, as I went to get up, Eruch came up behind me and said, "No, Lorraine, it wouldn't be presumptuous." And then he talked to me about what it meant to surrender to Baba. I never let on as to what I'd been thinking in front of Baba's chair. I was too taken aback by what had happened. Somewhere down the line, however, I realized that even though Baba might not appear to be there (as His form was gone), Eruch was still speaking for Him. With Eruch's passing, another milestone in Baba's Story has been reached.

I remembered back to a number of trips in the eighties and nineties when, while sitting in Mandali Hall, Eruch would ask me to sing one of the songs I wrote in 1984 entitled *No Easy Thing*. That's what I called it, but Eruch would always refer to it as 'the heart and mind song'. He would either have me sing it and then ask someone to read out the words, or get someone to first read out the words and then ask me to sing it. He would always get someone else to read out the words. When I once suggested that I could read out the words myself, he wouldn't let me, commenting that people would have trouble understanding my Australian accent. The last time I sang it though, I actually got to read it as well. The words are as follows:



## No Easy Thing

To find the One you love is no easy thing.  
Heart knows the Voice of Love,  
But mind is deaf to all but thinking.  
Mind says, "We must be logical about our choice my dear."  
Heart says, "Your logic is exactly what I fear."

To keep near the One you love is no easy thing.  
Heart binds itself with ropes of love -  
Which mind keeps unravelling.  
Mind says, "You can't be sure, stop binding us like this."  
Heart says, "It's your binding to falsehood that's keeping us from Bliss."

To praise the One you love is no easy thing.  
Heart would whisper words of love,  
But mind likes to hear itself sing.  
Mind says, "How well I sing the beauty of Love's ways."  
Heart says, "You must forget yourself before you can truly sing the Beloved's praise."

To be apart from the One you love is no easy thing.  
Heart drowns in tears flood,  
Mind seeks world's diversion to ease heart's sting.  
Mind says, "You see what harvest love does reap?"  
But heart has no ears, only eyes to weep.

To be a slave to the One you love is no easy thing.  
Though heart would shed its own blood,  
Mind keeps questioning.  
Mind says, "It's madness to continue on Love's way."  
But heart hears not; she's consumed in Love play.

To become one with the One you love is no easy thing.  
Though heart would abandon itself for Love,  
Fearful mind to itself will cling.  
Mind screams, "We cannot carry on this way."  
But what heart sees in Love's eyes drives all thought away.  
But what heart sees in Love's eyes drives all thought away.

**Jack McTamney**

"One day I was on break in work reading some Baba related article. I forget who was actually discussing it but in the article that



person stated (as I've seen many times elsewhere) that Baba never physically broke His silence.

This confused me as it always does when someone says that because I was sure I had read in *The Glow* that Baba **had** uttered an audible sound before He dropped His body. I read that Eruch and Francis Brabazon were there.

I decided I would clear this up for myself. In my infinite arrogance, I decided to go right to the source...I would write to Eruch and ask him directly.

After a few weeks I received a letter from India. After gently and lovingly chiding me for making an 83 year old man with poor eyesight respond to my frivolous questioning mind, Eruch in detail answered my question. This letter means so much to me (especially the chiding) that I want to share it with you all. I hope Eruch doesn't mind...

"Our dear Jack McTamney, Jai Meher Baba!

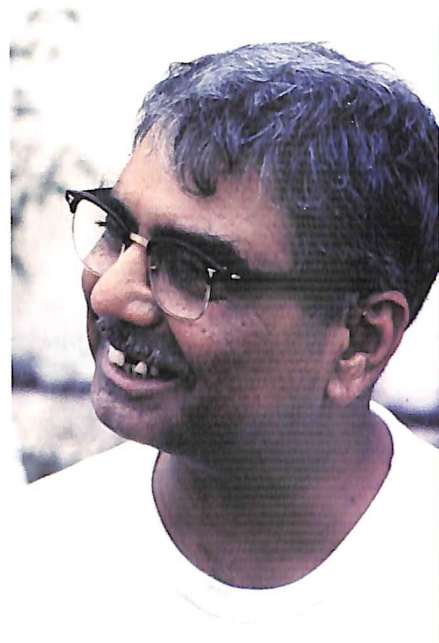
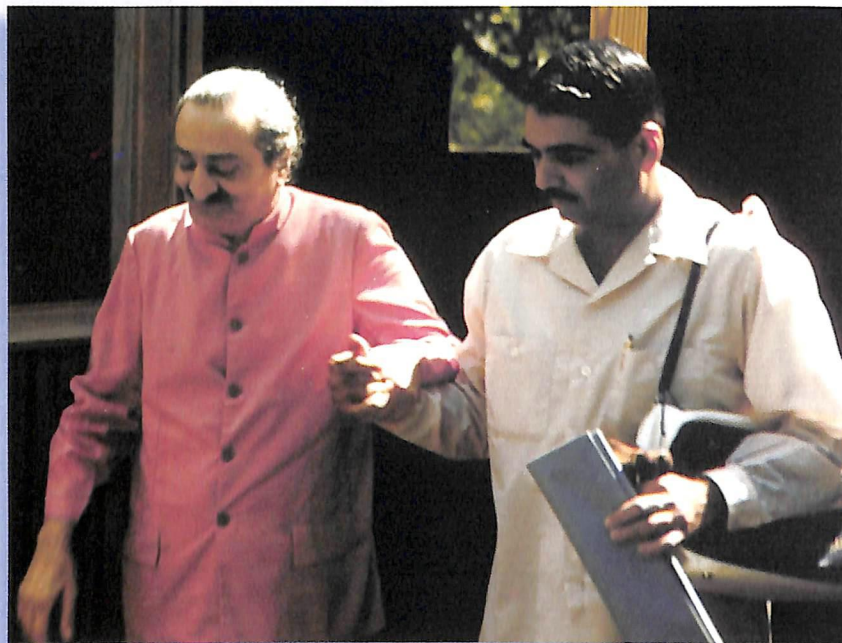
I have just received your letter of 10th July 1997 and have noted the contents.

Dear Jack, you may not be aware of my motto: A friend is he, a friend is she, who keeps the Mandali correspondence free! Please lovingly understand that due to the limitations of old age - 83 years - as well as very poor eyesight and old age health problems coupled with the intense schedule of Baba work here, I can no longer answer personal letters. However I am making an exception in your case, as you seem sincere in your desire to understand and love Beloved Avatar Meher Baba... But let me first say that Baba has warned His lovers time and again, that as long as man has a mind, there can be no end to questions;





## *Our Eruch*



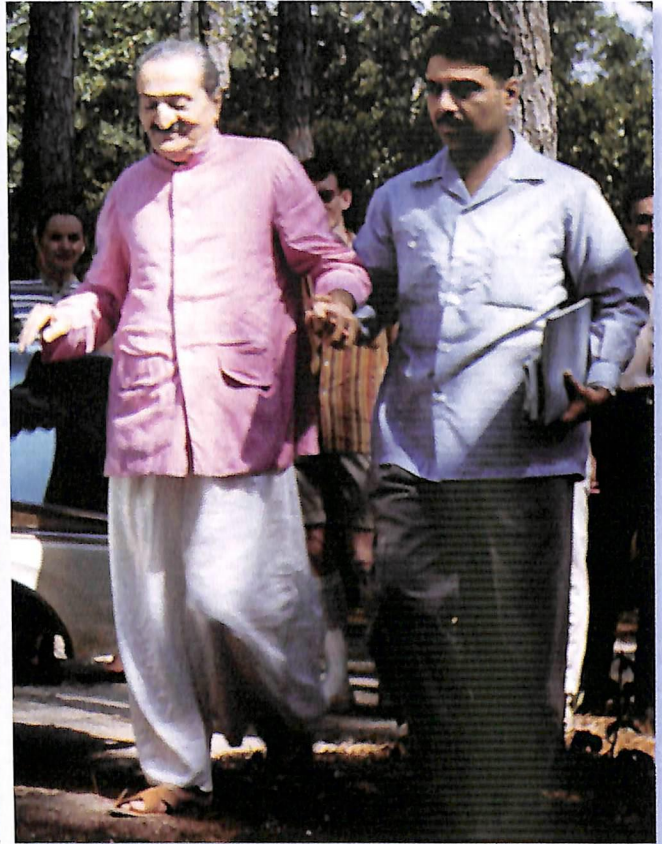
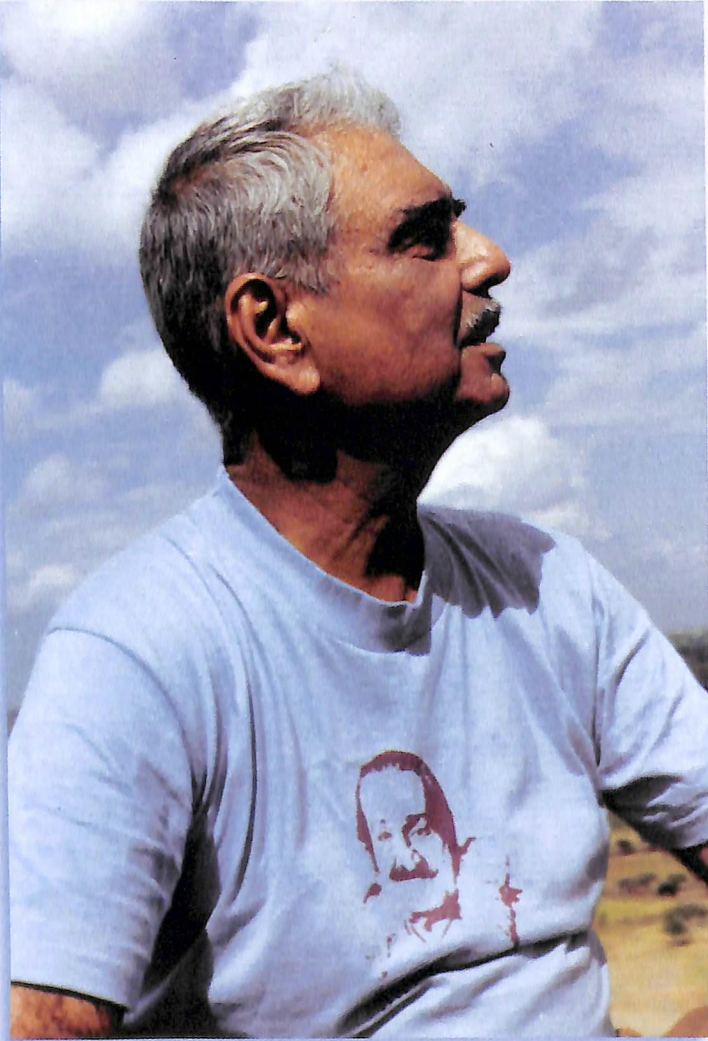
*"Who is Meher Baba? He is the One who provokes this question in you.  
The Being of all Beings." Eruch Jessawala*





*"Be determined to be His." Eruch*



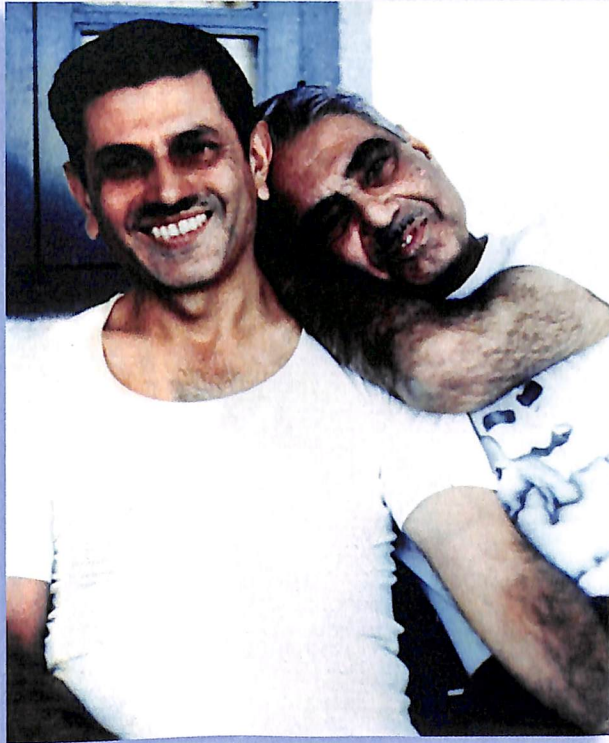


*Befitting a fortunate slave, carry out every command of the Master without any question of why or what.*

*About what you hear from the Master, never say it is wrong, because my dear,  
the fault lies in your own incapacity to understand Him.*

*I am the slave of the Master who has released me from ignorance.  
Whatever my Master does is of the highest benefit to all concerned.*

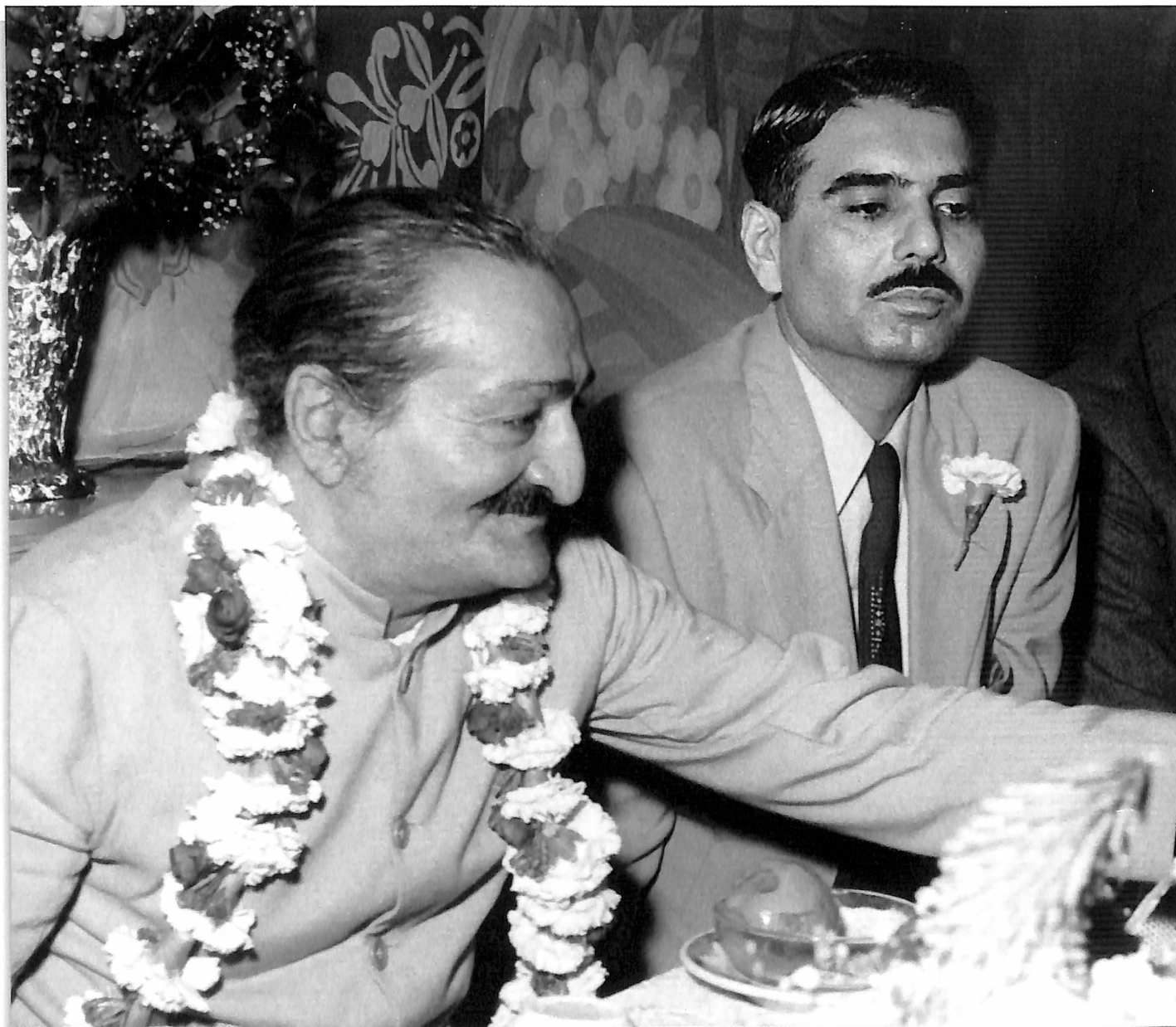




*As the great river joins the sea,  
 So to Thee have I come,  
 Rich with my long journey  
 Full with the experience of an age.  
 O Beloved,  
 As the dewdrop  
 Mingles with the honey  
 Of the flower,  
 So Thou and I have become one.  
 O my Beloved,  
 Now there is no separation,  
 No loneliness,  
 No sorrow, no struggle,  
 Where'er I go,  
 I bring the glory of Thy presence.  
 For, O Beloved  
 Thou and I are one.*

(From "My Beloved and I Are one" by Krishnamurti in *The Mystic in Love* edited by Shelley Gross, Citadel Press, New York, 1966.)





Baba states, "Just love Me. Don't try to understand me."

What you read in *The Glow* is similar to what I must have expressed in Mandali Hall, Meherabad, on that particular day, while describing the last days of Beloved Avatar Meher Baba's Advent as God in Human Form. But as is often the case, the written word is different from the oral expression in context.

Although to my ears, I did hear a sound akin to OOMM.. emanating from Baba, what Baba has said regarding the breaking of His silence is as follows:

"When the Word of My Love breaks out of its Silence 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."

Baba further clarified this point in telling us that:

"The moment I started observing Silence, I started simultaneously breaking My Silence in the hearts of those who are ready to receive my love."

So, dear Jack, take for example yourself; You say you are His lover. How can that follow unless and until He has broken His Silence in your heart?

We look forward to the day Beloved Baba makes it possible for you to cross His Threshold and lay your head and heart at His Feet in

Meherabad at His Samadhi and at His Home, Meherabad. Until such time, dear Jack, continue to remember Him in any and every way, even through the incessant questioning of the mind. But keep in the back of your mind, that all the questions and all the answers will inevitably lead you to more questions and more seeking of answers without bringing you any closer to your Beloved Lord. So long to love Him more and more and still yet more so that one day all your questions will dissolve in the ocean of His love.

May Beloved Avatar Meher Baba's Love-Blessings be on you evermore.

Yours brotherly, Eruch."

I feel like I put my pathetic two-cents of a question in the spiritual slot machine and hit the jack-pot!

*Mischa Rutenberg*

I had a series of significant dreams in which Meher Baba explained some things and ended with instructions for me to thank His manadali. I asked Murshid Jim about it and a little over a week later, in January, 1996, I was in India.



During my stay I was able to do everything save one. I had yet to speak privately with Eruch. I sent him a request and he responded by inviting me to go for an early morning walk with him. The next morning before sunrise I was at Meherazad and we stepped out together with Eruch's brother Merherwan and another companion (Dan Ladinsky). As we began our walk he asked "You have questions?". I replied simply... "no". Happily he said "good", and we continued. As we were walking along quietly and intimately I was looking at the path we were walking on. I looked at the way he walked and thought how this man had accompanied our Beloved on so much journeying. His every step and movement reflected this experience. Just then I noticed he had maneuvered us so that I was walking where the road was smooth and easy and he was walking where it was rough and rocky. I slipped around him and shifted places with him. He maneuvered us back to our original positions. After a while I casually walked around him once again and he grabbed me and asked what I was doing. I said, "I see what you are doing Eruch, you are making it easy for me but I feel you should have the smooth road". He said "not at all... I like the rough part to massage the soles of my feet."

"Oh what I sly one" I thought. We continued walking and the sun was rising. It was a glorious tender sweet morning. The villagers were waiting for him to pass by the road side. They greeted him with much reverence. The children and even the dogs came running up for "prasad" candy that he carried with him to give them. In his natural way he made a few inquiries and affectionate comments and we went on our way. We reached the end of the road and were walking back. As we were almost back to Meherazad I had not yet said what I needed to say to him. I did not feel that Eruch was the type of fellow that would appreciate my describing an unusual dream in which Meher Baba showed me cosmic events and ended by instructing me to go thank certain ones including him. How to say what I needed to say? I asked Baba for help and it came instantly. I said, "Eruch, everyday I get up early and join the pilgrims singing Arti at Baba's tomb and every evening I do the same."

He said "Yes...so?" I replied, "I often watch people as they are waiting to go in to greet Baba. As they approach the walls of His tomb they pat the rocks it is made of. Often they kiss these same blessed rocks that protect Him so well within." Once again Eruch said, "yes....so what?" I explained, "well when Baba's lovers caress, kiss, and thank the rocks that protect their Beloved within....the rocks say nothing they just accept it." Once again... "so?" I replied, "So...dear brother Rock...I want to thank you." Eruch broke into a big smile knowing he was caught and laughingly said, "You are most poetic this morning". He slapped my back very hard as he continued, "You are a rock!".

Then he turned me around and gave me that wonderful uniquely Eruch bear hug. Hand in hand we continued on to Meherazad. I thanked Baba for having shown me how to thank Eruch for his service on all our behalf.

### *Ellis Pines*

At the 1969 Darshan in late April, Meher Baba was present in His chair. He was present in His lovers, old and new. And He was there in the Chair on which He gave His all during the last year of His work. But for me, somehow, somewhere, He became especially present in the man at the microphone ... Eruch Jessawalla.

I was relatively new to Meher Baba, having come into His contact the previous July. I was filled with ideas and thoughts and "highs" connected with Him, the expectation of meeting Him, and then the loss of Him physically. But no matter, He was God after all. Now was the torrent of the energy of His manifestation, the birth of the New Humanity. There were ideas, thoughts and feelings, the storm and stress of turning a young life around in a new direction, even surges of ecstasy. But there was little room for quiet.

Then one afternoon, there was a gathering of the men Mandali with the men attendees of the Darshan. We were seated around the chair with Eruch at the microphone. It was an intimate gathering. Eruch began telling stories.

They were wonderful stories, which many of us have heard and read over the years. But this was the first telling for me. The one that grabbed me was the tale of Eruch on a mast tour with Meher Baba. An older man and boy climb into the train compartment with them. Baba asks Eruch to inquire of him about masts in the locale. The old man, learning that Eruch is from the 'Nagar area, berates him for thinking of masts when the Greatest of All is His neighbor. Eruch cannot disclose that Baba is sitting there, but must continue his pursuit of the inquiry. Only after the man has left,







does Baba tell him to divulge the secret. Eruch trucks to give the man a picture of the Beloved, only to be berated again for his lack of consideration in not telling him earlier.

As I sat there, listening, a tear formed on my cheek. Whatever I felt, I had to express. So when the time came to leave, I kissed Eruch and exclaimed, "I love you." He was taken back. After all, most of the time he had tried to protect Meher Baba from such wanton displays of affection. He was the background guy, attendant, assistant, right hand. There was never any doubt Who was the Star. But in that moment, I was oblivious to such things. Attacked by a hippie, Eruch naturally was "taken aback." But soon he'd come to expect just about any behavior from Baba's children.

In 1979, Eruch and I walked up the hill together one morning, just the two of us. My life was in turmoil. I felt the need for change.

As we walked, Eruch spoke of how he would carry big jugs up the hill in storms to Baba's seclusion cabin. I marveled at my own ineptness compared to someone who could really serve the Avatar's person with 100% devotion. And yet someone with all the skepticism of that "natural intelligence" to which Francis referred.

At the top of the hill, we sat, and Eruch spoke. He quoted from Kazantzakis' St. Francis, a story of Rabia and other sources. The message was simple: "No matter where I went, the task would be the same. The treasure was within me." This last part of the conversation took place as we completed our descent. We were back in the world. Soon I would be on my way, not to see him again for a number of years.

His words, however, stayed with me. But even more than that is the sense that the Rock, the Right Hand, is one who lives deeply, whose words have weight because they are the products of struggle. No wonder he loved the Kazantzakis book with its robust Francesco. The Right Hand does not shrink from life into delusional dream worlds.

Eruch notes that the Kazantzakis Francis tells Brother Leo that even the hope of union with God is yet another temptation to let go.

Or as Eruch said one day while eating a delicious birthday cake, "Who needs God realization?"

### *Winnie Barrett*

Eruch Jessawalla

That Frail Body once housed a giant  
dear brother, you waited years endless years  
to cast your eyes once more  
upon your friend who is the Lord.

meanwhile you passed the long hours  
steeped in the fragrance of the Beloved  
imbuing in us the urge to follow the scent;  
igniting in us a fathomless, bottomless, longing,  
all the while becoming dust.

now, after eternal hopeless waiting,

your Friend at last keeps His promise.  
now welcomed into love's consuming embrace  
you know the final death.

this place within my heart  
where you, beloved brother reside,  
shall ever be a part of me  
for which I gratefully thank our Lord

that spent body once held a giant  
who is now completely His.





# Eruch on Obedience

I had normally to attend to Baba's needs such as His bath, keeping His room clean and also sweeping the floors, sweeping the compound, cleaning the latrines and so on. All those sorts of things I used to do for several years. Then Baba began to use me in trying to find masts. While on tours with the men and women disciples, besides helping out in the search for masts, or the poor or the mad, or the ideal boy, he would also send me to the bazaar. Often I had to drive the car, and keep the cars clean. While I drove one car or a bus, I had to look after the other cars, keep them clean and see that they were filled with gas and oil.

I was robust, healthy and very strong. I had a lot of energy and no worries whatsoever, being with the God-Man, so I was able to do a lot of work. However, a limit was finally reached, and I thought, "Well, He's a very tough task-master!"

I still remember an incident from that period: I had decided it was useless to return from an errand early. No sooner would I return to Baba than there was always something else to do such as cycling ten to fifteen miles more, after a tiring day. On the day in question I remember that I was very tired. Of course that was a blow to my ego, because I felt that as I had good health I could do many things for Baba - that I could survive all hardships.

But my body couldn't withstand any more, and I thought "It's useless to finish the appointed task and return early. No sooner will I have done this than there will be another task for me! I completed going around the market and buying things for the group, and when I returned I was very fatigued. Then somebody came and told Baba: "At a distance of about fifteen miles there is a temple where it is said a tiger comes and sweeps the floor with his tail in reverence to the deity there. The tiger is reputed to be a mast who changes his form."

The fellow who told this tale was Elcha, we called him Baba's court jester. He used to tell these yarns to make Baba laugh, but Baba took this yarn seriously for my sake: so that Eruch should have some occupation, so that Eruch should no longer boast of his physical endurance but have the chance to forget himself completely and have no thought of himself.

Baba looked at me and said, "Why don't you go and find out about this?" I shuddered when Baba looked at me - to cycle fifteen miles on that bad road, up into the hills and then return, and already it was late afternoon. Of course, I went. To carry out Baba's every command - one has to do that. I had chosen the path of freedom in coming to Baba. I wanted to be free to try to obey Him, and so I was absolutely free in this bondage. In such a case I exercise my freedom, and in doing so I must exercise it fully, so of course I obeyed his command and went.

Excerpt from *Tales from the New Life with Meher Baba*, narrated by Eruch, Mehera, Mani and Meheru, © 1976 AMBPPCT.

## Photo captions and credits for Baba's Eruch

**Cover:** Meher Baba and Eruch in Washington, D.C., July 30, 1956; photo by Chase Studios, © Lawrence Reiter. **Page 4:** Eruch on Seclusion Hill; photo by Win Coates, © Susan White. **Page 5:** The men Mandali at Meherazad, February 1952; left to right: Gustadji, Baba, Baidul, Pendu, Eruch behind Baba; photo by Padri, © Lawrence Reiter. **Page 6:** Upper left, Baba and Eruch at the Pune Center; photo by Bhikabhai K. Panarkar, courtesy of Meelan Photo Studio. Lower right, Baba traveling in Andhra Pradesh by car, 1954. **Page 7:** Meher Baba at the Dhuni, Lower Meherabad, September 24, 1954. **Page 8:** Meher Baba and Eruch; photo by Bhikabhai K. Panarkar, courtesy of Meelan Photo Studio. **Page 9:** Eruch serving tea to Baba; photo by Bhikabhai K. Panarkar, courtesy of Meelan Photo Studio. **Page 10:** Eruch helping Baba to the car in Bombay, December 1957; © Lawrence Reiter. **Page 11:** Eruch watching Baba at the Pune darshan, May 1965; photo by Beheram, © Lawrence Reiter. **Page 12:** Lower left, Baba washing the feet of a poor woman, 1950s; photographer unknown. Upper right, Meher Baba with Fred Marks, Kushroo Quarters darshan, September 26, 1954. **Page 13:** Meher Baba at Wadia Park, September 12, 1954; photo by Nursoo, © Lawrence Reiter. **Page 14:** Young girl seeks Baba's blessings for the portrait she drew of Baba, with Eruch helping her convey her feelings to Baba; Adi looks on intently in the background; Guruprasad, May 1965; photo by Mantravadi Sriramamoorthy, © AMBPPCT. **Page 15:** Meher Baba wearing Krishna Crown at Pune, May 1964; © Lawrence Reiter. **Page 16:** Eruch serving Baba a refreshment at Guruprasad, May 1965; photo by Mantravadi Sriramamoorthy, © AMBPPCT. **Page 17:** Meher Baba acknowledging devotee while Eruch watches intently at Guruprasad, May 1954; photo by Mantravadi Sriramamoorthy, © AMBPPCT. **Page 18:** Baba speaking with devotee while Eruch watches attentively; photo by Bhikabhai K. Panarkar, courtesy of Meelan Photo Studio. **Page 19:** Beloved Baba standing to greet and bless all with Eruch assisting Him; photo by Mantravadi Sriramamoorthy, © AMBPPCT. **Page 20:** Baba and Eruch at Sakori, 1954; photo by Pandey, © Lawrence Reiter. **Page 21:** Upper left, Baba and Eruch at the Andhra darshan, February-March, 1954; photo by Narayana, © Lawrence Reiter. Lower right, a Muslim devotee is caressed by Baba as Eruch and Bhau watch happily; photo by Mantravadi Sriramamoorthy, © AMBPPCT. **Page 22:** Baba with Eruch during darshan tour in India, 1950s; photographer unknown. **Page 23:** Baba with Eruch; photo by Bhikabhai K. Panarkar, courtesy of Meelan Photo Studio. **Page 24:** Baba wearing a bib about to take food at Meherazad, 1954 or 1955; photo by Pandey, © Lawrence Reiter. **Page 25:** Lower left, Baba folding His hands to His lovers while Eruch watches attentively; photo by Mantravadi Sriramamoorthy, © AMBPPCT. Upper right, Baba washing the feet of a disciple with Eruch observing, on the road between Pune and Mahabaleshwar, January 29, 1951. **Page 26:** Upper left, Baba and Eruch in Myrtle Beach, 1958; Photo Archive, Sufism Reoriented. Upper right, Eruch at Meherazad; photo by Jim May, Photo Archive, Sufism Reoriented. Bottom, Eruch with Francis Brabazon in Mandali Hall, 1980s. **Page 27:** Top, Baba and Eruch at Guruprasad, 1965; Photo Archive, Sufism Reoriented. Left, Baba and Eruch in Myrtle Beach, 1958; photo by Harry Kenmore, Photo Archive, Sufism Reoriented. Location?, Eruch sitting on Seclusion Hill; photo by Jim May, Photo Archive, Sufism Reoriented. **Page 28:** Upper left, Eruch, 1980s; photo by Win Coates, © Susan White. Upper right, Baba and Eruch in Myrtle Beach, 1958; Photo Archive, Sufism Reoriented. Lower left, Eruch in garden at Meherazad, 1970s; photo by Lorraine Brown. Lower right, Eruch in Mandali Hall, 1994; photo by Lynne Douglas. **Page 29:** Upper left, Eruch with his brother Meherwan at Meherazad, late 1980s; photo by Ellis Pines. Upper right, Eruch in the garden at Meherazad, 1999; photo by Bif Soper. Lower left, Eruch at Meherazad in front of the Blue Bus; photo by Jim May, Photo Archive, Sufism Reoriented. **Page 30:** Baba and Eruch at Longchamps, New York, July 18, 1956; © Lawrence Reiter. **Page 31:** Baba with Eruch at Lower Meherabad, September 30, 1954; © Lawrence Reiter. **Page 32:** Baba and Eruch in Pune, 1965; photo by Bhikabhai K. Panarkar, courtesy of Meelan Photo Studio. **Page 52:** Baba dictating on the alphabet board, Wadia Park darshan, September 12, 1954; photo by Pandey, © Lawrence Reiter.





# Passings

## Diana Gets Her Wish - Finally!

Dina Snow [read the editorial first]

It is 5:30a.m. August 18<sup>th</sup>, and I have just been told my Mother has slipped peacefully into the Beloved's arms. She was 92 and had been telling Baba she was ready to go for the past five years or so, but He had His own time frame in mind. Baba said "There is no such thing as premature death. No amount of medical assistance or neglect can alter the divinely ordained moment of one's coming to Baba."\*

I had called her just the day before to tell her I would be there with her on the 18<sup>th</sup> of September. It made her very happy to know that we would again be spending time together.

However, "Man proposes—God disposes." She went the very next day, not just a month to the day before I was due to arrive there, but also on the anniversary of my late sister's birthday.

It is 6:30a.m. August 23<sup>rd</sup> and I am sitting by the river in Maroochydore, watching the sun rise behind the trees on the opposite shore. A new day dawns...

Yesterday we gave Mother the send off of her life! I'm sure she must have been very pleased with it. She had been saying for many years "I want no grieving at my funeral! Grief holds the soul back. I have lived a very full good life and I want to hear 'Hip Hip Hooray, Diana's on her way!'" when I go."

I vowed to keep a stiff upper lip and do just that.

Her dear friends at Avatar's Abode were invaluable. Bernard, Joanna and Cecily, among many others, who took such good care of her in her later years, also helped arrange the funeral before I got there. The viewing was at 11am. Christopher and I felt we had to go, for just one last look. It had been 10 months since I had last seen her. But it wasn't my Mummy I saw lying there. Her soft round face had been drained of all life, but it was definitely her thick mop of curly gray hair! I should be so lucky at the age of 92.

Chris and I followed the golden hearse to the Nambour Garden Cemetery. The crowd was waiting for us there. Six of us carried the casket and laid it on the grave. Mother would have been delighted with the flowers. There were masses of her favourite purple irises, and roses in abundance. The multi-coloured blooms were sent from her friends around the world.

\*Glimples, Vol 6 Bal Natu

**Diana Snow**

17 February 1909 - 18 August 2001



I don't think there is a soul on Avatar's Abode that hadn't been hearing for the past 10 years, "I want *The Blacksmith* sung at my funeral, so practice!" So Sam Saunders and Lorraine Brown, dutifully fulfilling a decade old promise, stood by her grave and gave a great performance of the beautiful Francis Brabazon song. Chris and I gave a brief eulogy and I read the following poem that was so kindly sent to me by an American Baba lover upon hearing of Mother's passing:

Do not stand by my grave and weep.

I am not there. I do not sleep.

I am a thousand winds that blow.

I am a diamond glint on snow.

I am the sunlight on ripened grain.

I am the gentle autumn rain.

When you awake to the morning hush,

I am the swift uplifting rush

Of quiet birds in circling flight.

I am the soft stars' shine at night.

Do not stand by my grave and cry.

I am not there. I did not die.

We followed that with the Master's Prayer, and as the casket was descending, a resounding, full throated, heart felt "Hip Hip Hooray! Diana's on her way!" rang forth. I'm sure she was smiling happily. We then sang the Australian Arti, again, written by her dear friend Francis Brabazon.

Immediately after that we all drove up to the Abode for tea, coffee, munchies and fond remembrances:

..."Diana was a firebrand!".. "a tireless worker for Baba"... "a power house of energy"... "a dynamo"... "a driver who terrified the daylights out of all of us!" When the police would no longer renew her driver's license—at 85—she was furious! She vowed she would ride her three wheeled electric chair down the main highway past the police station and thumb her nose at them! Luckily saner minds prevailed. However I did hear, to my horror, that she had rolled the chair over a number of times. She used to career around the mountain side on the dirt roads so fast that the chair would occasionally tip over. Avatar's Abode is at the top of Kiel Mountain and her home on Meher Road was just five minutes from Baba's House. Amazingly, she had never broken a bone in her body.

The history of Avatar's Abode and Diana Snow are intertwined. She was one of the original builders.

But to begin at the beginning:

She was born Delilah Marjorie Bishop in Newcastle, NSW 17<sup>th</sup> February 1909. She had an older sister and two younger brothers. Their father was killed at Lonesome Pine in the WW1 battle at Gallipoli when Delilah was 6. Their mother followed two years later of tuberculosis. Orphaned at eight, and refusing to be separated, the four were taken in by the quintessential wicked step aunt, who took all the money left to them and spent it on her own daughter. She turned the Bishop children into their servants.

The youngest boy died shortly thereafter and Dorothy, Delilah and Bill suffered through a very unpleasant life till they could all escape. Throughout high school, Delilah was always Dux (valedictorian) of her class. That did not let her escape from the continual teasing about her name: "Delilah the traitress! Look out, she's going to cut your hair!" So she finally changed her name to Diana, after the all-powerful



Roman Goddess of the Hunt. The name was well chosen, as we will see by later developments in her life.

When she was 17 or 18 she went to Teacher's College and trained to become a kindergarten teacher as she loved little children. After graduation she answered an ad for a governess for a British family in India, as that country had always had a pull for her. However the College principal felt very protective of this young orphan and so vetoed her going.

By now, Diana was a fully fledged Flapper, revelling in the Roaring 20's, out dancing every night and having a grand old time. She was a champ at the Charleston and when I was a teenager, she taught me everything I know. (I have danced it professionally to great acclaim - she was an excellent teacher!).

She married late (for the times) at 26, and I was born in Sydney when she was 30. Father was in the Air Force and away from home a lot. She turned to her girlfriends for intellectual and spiritual stimulation.

She (and I) joined the Rosicrucians in the late '40s. Lessons were sent from San Jose, California, when we were living in the country, but when we returned to the city, we attended the Sydney Chapter. I was a Colombe in the Temple, incensing, lighting the candles, etc. Mother gave me a wonderful and unusual start to life. I was raised knowing about reincarnation; seeking esoteric knowledge was a joy.

When she had gone as high as was possible in the Rosicrucian Order, she was told to go find her own Master. Oh sure! In Australia? In 1951? Well, as the old saying goes, "When the pupil is ready - the teacher will appear."

Mother heard about Francis Brabazon. She was told he was a bit of a martinet, and wouldn't let just anybody into his talks. One had to prove one was *really* interested in hearing what he had to say.

Mother went to his lecture and immediately saw the authority and authenticity of Francis.

"If this man believes Meher Baba is God, then so do I."

So, incidentally, did I. Pre-birth my soul chose to be born to this woman who would bring me to Baba, so at the age of 13 I was fully aware that Christ had come again in the form of Meher Baba. In 1952, this *did* kind of set me apart from the other children at school!

Mother was one of those rare Aquarians that was not only very artistic, but also an excellent business woman. One of the businesses she created was the renovation of quaint old houses. She and her electrician/plumber/carpenter brother would buy an old home, do it



*Diana in the '30s*

up and sell for a healthy profit, which they immediately put into a bigger and better home. Mother not only did the landscaping, drapesmaking and painting, she was very handy with a hammer and nails.

Because of this ability, when Francis was building a house for Baba - along the lines of "Build it and He will come" - Mother was only too ready, willing and able to participate in the building thereof.

Every weekend a dedicated group packed a picnic lunch and drove up to Beacon Hill. They worked on the building all day, had dinner and then Francis read to them what he had written the night before - after they had all retired for the night.

August 1956 Baba did indeed come to Australia, giving darshan in Meher House. This was the first time we had seen Him, although we had been Baba lovers since 1952. I so clearly remember looking at Mother as we stood in the doorway of the room He was in. She looked towards Him and said "Baba, this is my daughter Dina". I noticed she had tears in her eyes and I thought "Boy, she's getting emotional about this!" Neither of us were the gushy types. She told me later it was just because she was bringing me to Him.

At one time during those few days, Baba asked her "Do you love me?" Francis had stressed how important honesty was with Baba, so trying to adhere to this she replied hesitantly "I don't really know Baba. I'm *trying* to love you." Afterwards she said to Eruch "I should have said yes, shouldn't I?" "Yes," Eruch replied, "He likes to be told of your love."

Mother felt she and Eruch had a "special" relationship. She confessed to me "I love Eruch

like I feel I should love Baba..." Whenever she was in Meherazad, Eruch always saved her the seat beside him under the window in Mandali Hall. He would tell would-be sitters, "This is Diana's seat." One time Eruch complimented her on her beautiful brightly painted nails. She beamed, and was tickled to notice that the very next day Eruch had paid especial attention to his own nails. When she returned to India in 1997 after a 15-year absence, I was happy to see the two old friends still had that spark between them.

I remember one of the jobs Mother had in the '50s was the distribution of the Family Letters Mani would send her. Since there was no such thing as a Xerox machine, Mother would put 6 sheets of carbon paper into the ancient typewriter she had and proceed to type the letter over and over and mail it out to the Sydney Baba lovers. My, how we looked forward to those letters!

When I was 17, I bumped into a friend from High School - Robyn Rogers. She told me her mother had just died and she had no father. Although she had not been a close friend, Mother had met her on a number of occasions. However without asking for permission, right there on the street I asked Robyn to come live with us. Mother did not demur. There was definitely a karmic relationship there as we just unofficially adopted her and she became my sister.

In February or March of 1958 Francis had purchased an 84 acre property atop Kiel Mountain near Woombye in Queensland - the northern state of Australia. Baba said He would be there in June. Francis had 3 months to build a place suitable for the GodMan.





Mother told me everyone was on tenterhooks in Sydney, waiting for Francis to call them to come work on the building. With Francis you didn't just barge in and say "Here I am!" He was very particular as to who he allowed to share in the work. May Lundquist, Lorna Rouse and Mother were three of the first to be called. She told me Francis had said to her that he looked on Lorna as his Mehera and Diana as his Mani. Ever the practical one, she picked up hammer, nails, saw or paint-whatever was needed to get the job done.

Baba not only showered His blessings on the work in progress, He downright *poured* it on! Tropical downpours almost the entire time made the task incredibly difficult, but they were doing it for the Beloved, so there was much joy and love in between the hard times. It was all extremely rushed, but Francis was determined that the room they were building for Baba was to be perfect. Anytime one had a moment in between other jobs, they were to buff the walls. They were a rich warm reddish brown from native Australian trees, all tongue and groove, held together with brass screws from the back. They now have the patina and feel of satin. So much love went into the building of this - the room fit for the Avatar. Baba cabled that He would be arriving a week ahead of schedule - *not* what they wanted to hear. Everyone was working frantically up to the very last minute. Mother said she was sewing the little pink satin cushions for His feet at 2a.m. on the morning of His arrival.

Baba was expected to stay for a week and Mother asked me if I would like to come, but me, an insensitive 19 year old who couldn't bear to be away from the boyfriend for a week, declined her offer. To the disappointment of all who did come, Baba cut short His stay to only four days.

[The full details of the building of Avatar's Abode (as Baba had named the place) and the early days here can be read in *Practical Spirituality* and *Turning of the Key*]

Towards the end of 1958 Francis suggested to Mother that she take me to see Luisillo y su Ballet Espanol. Did Baba tell him to do that? Probably, because it changed my whole life - and Robyn's even more. We saw it and I fell in love with the dance troupe and the fabulous Spanish dancing. I went again the next night with Robyn and we decided then and there that that was what we wanted to do with our lives - be Spanish dancers!

May it be said to Mother's enormous credit that she did not try to stop us or even reason that perhaps this was not such a wise move. She gave us her blessing and off we sailed to Spain in May 1959. She told Francis what his

suggestion had wrought, and that we were hitch hiking all around Europe.

Baba told Mother she was to let Him know at all times "where the girls were". She was very happy at this order because as we changed countries with great frequency, she got to write to Him quite often.

However a year or so later, when I told her we had a contract to tour the Middle East, mentioning names like Istanbul, Bhagdad, Teheran and Beirut, she was on the next plane to Madrid! At this time there were many young girls being kidnapped and sold into slavery or to work in harems. She told the company manager she was coming with us on the tour, no salary but all expenses paid, as a chaperone and wardrobe mistress or Robyn and I would not be going. When Mother put her foot down, the earth trembled and strong men quaked! This man knew he had met his match, so the 12 of us set sail from Marseilles to Cyprus. However as we boarded the boat, we saw, to our horror, that we were to sleep in the hold on cots along with about 50 other people, men and women together.

"My girls and I will have a cabin or we will immediately disembark!" Thinking of all the choreography and costumes made, he had no option but to give in. The man spoke fluent Arabic, Spanish, Italian and French, but his English was not so good. His translation for "angry" was "nervous". I can't count the number of times we heard him say in tightly controlled anger: "Mrs. Snow-you are making me very nervous!" Robyn and I thought it hilarious and thanked God she was on our side!

After our contract expired in Beirut and the company disbanded, I told Mum I was going back to Cyprus to the American I had fallen in love with during the month we were dancing there. Mother returned to England when she saw she couldn't change my mind (I married the man six months later).

Francis Brabazon was now one of the Mandali living with Baba in the Ashram and he and Mother kept in constant touch by letter. She wrote to tell him that the ship she was returning to Australia on would be stopping in Bombay. Would it be possible to see Baba? She could then fly on to Ceylon and pick up the ship there. Never one to ask a favour of anyone, Francis resorted to another plan.

It was the usual gathering in Mandali Hall the morning after Francis received the letter from Mother. He entered with the aerogramme tucked in his breast pocket behind a handkerchief. A little while into the meeting, he started sneezing. Whisking out his hanky, he was completely "oblivious" to the aerogramme that fell on the floor at Baba's

feet. "What's that?" Baba gestured. "Oh nothing Baba" Francis replied, hastily tucking it back in his pocket. "Just a letter from Diana". "Well, read it!" Baba responded. So he did and Baba told him to cable London immediately and tell Diana that if she could be here by such and such a time she could see Him for one hour. He then instructed Katie and Arnavaz who were in Bombay at the time to meet her at the pier and bring her up to Him. They were very happy at those orders as I believe Baba had been in seclusion at that time and they had not been allowed to see Him for some time. After many trials and tribulations, they met up with Diana on the dock and rushed her into a waiting car as they were now a few hours behind schedule. God forbid you be late for a meeting with Baba! After a hair raising ride, they reached Him in time to dash her into His presence, dirty, dishevelled and all, though she was. Baba received her warmly and the hour stretched to quite a few more.

I'm not sure if it was on this occasion or one of her other visits to India, when she had the embarrassing confirmation of the Beloved's mind reading and all knowing powers:

She was sitting with the Mandali listening to His discourses when her eyes fell on Pukar. The thought crossed her mind that he looked like a big cuddly bear. Immediately Baba turned to Pukar and asked what he thought of taking Diana for his wife. Pukar blushed furiously and the others burst out laughing. Mum could tell it was something about her, but until Eruch translated for her, she was in the dark. They all got a chuckle at Baba's playful sense of humour.

In the early '70s Mother and Father left Sydney and moved up to Woombye to be close to Avatar's Abode. They bought a beautiful old farmhouse on 13 acres of land. She became very active in the day-to-day work and nurture of the Abode.

In 1976 my father, who had been ailing for the past year, died, leaving Mother free to come to America and stay with me and the children. I divorced in September of that year and we drove cross-country to settle in Los Angeles.

Mother met up with Filis Fredericks and attended meetings at her house each week. I was too busy with my own life as a newly single woman to have anything to do with Baba meetings.

When Ray Lee, a young Baba lover was leaving for India in '77, she asked if she could borrow his car while he was away. Being a generous soul, he immediately replied that she could. It was only when he was on the plane that the awful thought struck him: "What have I done? Diana is from Australia. They drive



on the other side of the road! Will I have a car when I return? Will Diana still be alive?" No worries. LA traffic was no bother for her. The woman was fearless! When she gave me the down payment to buy a house in West Los Angeles, it was adjacent to a not-so-nice neighbourhood. At night we could hear gun shots followed by the helicopters circling overhead. The first time Mother heard the gunshots, she flung open the front door, charged out onto the porch and loudly demanded "Who's there?!" I was horrified, to say the least! Another time, when I was visiting her in Australia, we went to a snake exhibition. Having assured the crowd that the snake he was holding was non-poisonous, the handler asked if anybody would like to see the snake bite. Mother immediately stuck out her finger upon which the snake clamped its jaws. "Hmmm - it smarts a bit" was her only reaction.

In the late '70s, before I got totally entrenched in LA, the children and I planned on moving back to Australia. To this end I had designed a four bedroom house and Mother had it built on a half acre of the property. Mother was one fine business woman - she later sold the house for \$95,000. It had cost her \$45,000. The profit she gave to me to buy the house in LA.

In 1981 she sold the farmhouse and all the land and bought a lot on Meher Road. There were quite a few Baba lovers who had built on this dirt road that led up to Avatar's Abode, so they petitioned the council for a name change to Meher Rd. The council acquiesced. Mother said this was the house she would have til she died, so she had it built entirely of wood—very low maintenance.

She lived very happily there, and for the next 25 years Mother divided her time between LA and Avatar's Abode, coming to stay with us over Christmas and staying for a few months before and after.

It was a beautiful arrangement, I grew so much closer to her than I had been in the previous years, seeing as I was only 19 when I had left Australia. After I married in 1961 we lived overseas all the time so unfortunately, she didn't get to spend much time with her three grandchildren. She gave her life over to Baba work, going to India whenever she could.

When she was in Los Angeles, we had a marvelous time. My teenage children held frequent parties and she was always a big hit with their friends. She had the knack of fitting into any age group and was admired, respected and loved by all who came into contact with her.

My two Afghan Hounds adored her too, and even when she was in her late '70s we would all go for a brisk mile long walk each evening.

By this time Baba had finally got me into the fold, so we were always a twosome at Baba events, with Mother attending the Board Meetings with me and putting in the wisdom of her age. She was also asked by other Baba groups to speak on Francis and the early days with Baba.



*Four Generations  
Diana, Terry, Nicole and Dina*

By the time she turned 80, she finally started to mellow. Gone was the firebrand all powerful woman, replaced by a warm accepting loving elderly lady. But still incredibly energetic! She really only started slowing down around her 85<sup>th</sup> year. "Every year is like another five" she said. "I'm ready to go, but before I do, I want to visit India one last time."

In 1997 we left LA together and headed off to Meherabad. It had been 15 years since she was last there, so it was a wonderful reunion with all the Mandali for her. It was also a time when I found out a lot more about her and Baba. Francis had told her "What the Master says to you is for your ears alone. Don't repeat it." So being ever obedient, she had never told me of any of the conversations between her and Baba. One day while talking with Arnavaz this came up in the conversation and Arnavaz said "Oh no! Share it with your daughter!" So then I heard all sorts of

wonderful things! The one interchange that stands out in my mind was when Baba arrived at Avatar's Abode and had been shown around. He said to her "I hear you did the work of eight men!"

This sums up how I feel about my Mother—one wonderfully strong woman, self confident in the extreme. There was nothing she couldn't do once she set her mind to it. She was loving, generous, intelligent, artistic, and loved Baba and her daughter above all else. Thank God she managed to instill a portion of her good qualities in me! She never needed to say "You can do anything you want, it doesn't matter that you are just a woman." (This was Australia in the '50s!) I absorbed it all by osmosis and did as I saw her do. There was simply no other way to be.

It was hard for me and the children to see this once vibrant woman slowing down, with her memory fading. She would forget people's names - forget a conversation we had just had. But that didn't stop her from saying, in 1999, I want to go to India one last time. She was 90 years old.

I arranged for her to fly from Sydney to Mumbai, while I flew from LA to Delhi, where my flight to Mumbai was cancelled. I arrived in Mumbai eight hours later. Thank Baba, Pathan, the wonderful driver Gary Kleiner had sent, was there to look after her til I finally arrived!

We were at the 30<sup>th</sup> Amartithi together, and this time, when she said her farewells to the Mandali, we knew it was definitely the final goodbye.

We arrived back in LA in time for a bang up celebration of her 90<sup>th</sup> birthday. It was a wonderful party with all her friends of 20 years there for her. Instead of returning in April, she stayed on til my birthday in May, as this year it fell on Mother's Day. I hadn't had my Mother with me for that special day in decades. I turned 60 that day, and it was the first year my daughter was a mother. We had four generations of women present that day, (even if Nicole was only nine months old!)

As we took her to the airport a few days later, we were acutely aware that it was the end of an era. Diana would not be returning to the States. We weren't comfortable with her living alone any more, and she was quite happy to move to Sundale, a very nice assisted living home in Nambour. Her friends could still stop by to take her up to the Abode and she had plenty of company there.

I came home for the Olympics in October 2000 and spent two weeks with her at her old



home on Meher Road. That was the last time I saw her.

I spoke with her by phone every week or so and Chris visited from Brisbane once or twice a month.

We could all see she was winding down, withdrawing into herself (or Baba?) and I knew I had to get over there soon. I planned for September, but Baba didn't tell me His schedule! She sounded so well and happy on the phone the day before she passed...

But it was His timing - His Master plan, so it was how it was supposed to be. I just would have liked to have been with her, to have been holding her hand. But ever the independent woman to the end - she could handle her passage on her own.

At the gathering at the Abode after the funeral, Alicia Mellowship told us of a dream she had had the night Mother passed on. Alicia had known Mother all of her 22 years, had lived close by on Meher Road.

She did not know of Mother's passing til Alice, her own mother, called and told her the news on Sunday morning; "I had a dream about Diana last night! It was wonderful!" In light of the news of her passing, the dream made sense. When I heard her dream it made everything feel right to me. I was so happy for Mother. It was a perfect end to a wonderful life lived in service to our Lord, her friends, and her family.

Avatar Meher Baba ki Jai!

#### Alicia's Dream

I was dancing...

She was dancing...

Her smile so big, as she threw her head back and laughed. We held hands and twirled. Like two small girls.

I felt so happy and content - on the verge of bursting-dancing with this happy lady engulfed by the most divine light. Not like any yellow I had seen before, nor any blue and definitely no white existed as pure as this. Almost like the light in the sky left behind by the setting sun, just after it has sunk behind the mountain.

A faceless white haired lady danced around us, she too reveling in the joy of the moment. As my dancing partner and I twirled, I said to her "We should do this again sometime!" I was having so much fun. My mind replied silently to her smile - "Oh that's right, you don't live here any more", reminded of her move off The Mountain some years before. She kept smiling as we continued our dance. Our faceless friend twirling in the background....

This was the first dream I had of Diana.

I had this dream the night Diana returned to Baba. My memory of the dream had disappeared into that place where all the other forgotten moments of sleep go. It was the next day when my Mum rang to tell me the news, that my dream and all the lovely feelings associated with it came flooding back. I don't know why Diana decided to dance with me and visit my sleeping self, but I do know that she was happy. She was partying as if tomorrow was an eternity away.

Thanks to the wonders of the Internet, notice of Diana's passing went out less than an hour after I found out. Following are some of the responses:



*Diana with Baba at the East-West Gathering, 1962.*

From Goher, Meheru and all:

"...What a pathway of love and service your Mother trod in her practical and unassuming way, always willing to help in any Baba work. She was a pillar of strength and a shining example in Meher's Seva of Love at its Best. We have the fondest memories of our time with her.

Much love from all your Meherazad family.

From Bhau

My dear sister Dina,

I received your e-mail informing me of the joining of dear mummy Diana to Beloved Baba, and as mummy has expressed her wish that when she would join Beloved Baba there should be no tears, it is therefore a lesson for His lovers how they consider death. In fact she realized the secret of death and expressed her wish so that others may not feel affected by deaths and particularly those who love Him and remain dedicated to His cause.

I know how she loved Beloved Baba and how she served His cause at Avatar's Abode silently. She will always remain in the memory of the dedicated souls and she will get the final embrace from the Beloved.

I feel happy to salute her love for the Beloved

and I will always appreciate her dedication to the cause of the Beloved. May all His dear ones rejoice in paying respect to her wish and may they realize the secret of "Smile instead of tears" at the departure of such a dear one.

I am in a farm near Paris and that is why I could not get your e-mail, but fortunately yesterday Richie Blum made some arrangement and I got it.

So my dear sister, remain dancing and in the joy that Mummy has joined the Beloved and what pleasure can be more than this, which pleasure is a part of the bliss. She has joined the Highest of the High and I feel the tears are smiling in you all.

With all love and Jai Baba to you and all dear ones in the family.

When Eruch heard the news he asked Gary Kleiner to please send me his love and Jai Baba and to tell me that "Diana beat me in the race to come HOME!!"

Gary says from himself:

"...Sorry to hear about Diana, but Man! She had a great innings! The last time I saw Diana was when she came to India at the age of 90. Due to some logistics problems, she did not meet up with Dina in Mumbai and was stranded there, with only the driver who I sent to meet her. It was a lot of confusion to deal with, but she handled it like a trooper. She had poise, and waited patiently for the situation to resolve itself. And then when she came to Meherabad, although she was one of the oldest pilgrims we have ever had here, she did not grumble or ask for any special attention, like many people half her age do. She showed me courage and acceptance and I was happy to learn and re-learn those lessons with and from her. May she be in peace. May her spirit soar, unhindered by her body. With love and care...

"...your Mother, whom I met once over 20 years ago amongst a large group of people, left such an impression that I never forgot her face or name. Jai Baba Diana!" Jen Buggia

"...just wanted you to know I met your Mother many years ago at a talk she gave. She was wonderful! Years later, when I met you, I recognised where you had gotten your spark and courage. Go Diana!

May she have a great send off in His love." Cindy Lowe

"...it is with mixed emotions that we heard of your Mother's returning to Baba. It feels sad for us knowing that we will not see her again at Avatar's Abode; knowing also that she is one of the trail blazing Baba lovers of Australia whose life was centered so totally on Baba and as such



was an inspiration to us all. But her memory still lives with us. It also feels OK because we know that she will return to Him, the Great Comforter - the Preserver and Protector of all."

#### The Keating Family

Roy and Ros Hayes who were in Saigon at the time of the funeral, phoned in this message to be read at the service:

"Our thoughts are with dear Diana today. She has truly been one of Baba's grand ladies and His stalwart. Our memories of Diana start from 1968. Picnics at her home in Sydney, her good humour and quick wit, and later - her driving!! So many memories..."

And from me - thank you so much for the outpouring of love I have received from oh so many friends around the world whose lives have been touched by this wonderful woman.

### Eric Robbins

June 28th, at 6:05p.m., Eric Robbins, long-time Baba lover and husband of Diane Levy, went to Beloved Baba.

On June 25th, Eric had a seizure and fell while undergoing treatment for panic attacks at Hillside Hospital on Long Island. He suffered a blood clot on the brain, which neurosurgery was unable to repair. His enthusiasm and dedication were always such a delightful addition to the New York Baba community and will be sorely missed. Please remember him and Diane in your prayers, and may Baba grant Eric's longing to draw ever more closer to Him Who is closer than our own breath.

### Teresa Fulgenzi

Australian Baba lovers have lost their creator of sacred drama. Teresa Fulgenzi has passed from this life after a short struggle with cancer. She died on July 27th at Avatar's Abode.

Teresa was able to make a last trip to her Master's Samadhi, where she was given knowledge of her impending end and the courage to accept it.

When Teresa produced her plays for the Anniversaries her sense of purpose and calm dedication were appreciated by all, and those who knew her will not be surprised to learn that she went to the Divine Master of our little stage with great trust and composure. She will be greatly missed by Baba lovers both here and at Meherabad. Geoff Gunther.

# Adi and Rhoda Dubash Return to Baba

Heather Nadel and Ward Parks

On the evening of August, 2001, Adi Dubash, old-time Baba stalwart and a trustee of the Avatar Meher Baba Trust, died of cancer at his home in Meherabad at the age of 81.

Just moments earlier, Adi had returned home from the hospital in Pune. Entering the house, he lovingly greeted his wife Rhoda, was helped to his bed, and immediately went to Baba. In fact, while in Pune, Adi had told those around him that he would like to breathe his last at Meherabad, in the company of his closest ones. At the time of his passing, his wife Rhoda, their son Merwan, and daughter-in-law Ruby were all at his side. In this way Beloved Baba fulfilled this last heartfelt wish of His lover.

The next day, August 5th, most of the Meherazad mandali, Adi's own family members, and Baba pilgrims from around the world gathered in Mandali Hall in lower Meherabad to pay their respects to this old servant of the Lord, wrapped in sheets and strewn with flowers from the Meherabad gardens.

Many songs were sung, and a charged feeling filled the room. At 10 a.m. the body was carried to the cremation site south of the Pilgrim Centre. After prayers and arti, it was covered in wood and set ablaze, bringing back the memories of Mani, Kaikobad, and many other of Baba's dear ones who had been cremated on this spot.

Born in 1919 and living much of his life in what is now Pakistan, Adi had a connection with Baba dating back to the 1940s, when he was introduced to Him through his cousin Minoo Kharas. In 1945 he married Rhoda, and for more than a half-century the two of them dedicated their lives to Baba's service. Through the years Adi had many opportunities to enjoy Baba's company and share in his work. He would never miss the chance to be with Baba when he could and thus, along with Rhoda, drew close in His contact.

In the early 1980s Adi and Rhoda left Pakistan and came to live at Meherabad. There, in addition to serving as a trustee for the Avatar Meher Baba Trust, Adi was a wholehearted Baba worker, managing the kitchen at Hostel D, supervising the Meherabad store, and organizing volunteers for duty at Baba's Samadhi.

Always forthright and outspoken in his strong opinions, Adi's presence often made

for lively discussions. In the last year of his life, Adi turned that same strength of character toward the task of coping with the sad prognosis of his illness. He was a model patient, stoical, never complaining; his courage in the face of his approaching departure was deeply moving. He made every possible effort to continue with his duties wherever possible and to delegate them where not. It is hard to imagine a more noble wrapping up of a life.

Only an hour after his death, as many of us observed, Adi's face took on a radiant smile - an amazing smile full of happiness. More dearly than any mirror, that happiness reflected Baba, and in it, His love for Adi, His welcome, and the joy of their long-awaited reunion.

Wednesday night September 19th, just before 9:00 p.m., Rhoda Dubash passed away in her home in Meherabad. On the 19th she suffered a stroke. Her cremation was held this morning, attended by Bhau, Meheru, Aloba, Bal, Meherwan, Falu, and many friends and companions at Meherabad.

For years Rhoda was an ardent helper at the Trust Office, doing work for both Mani and Eruch. Her love and service to her Beloved Baba are a shining example to all of us.

Many pilgrims to Meherabad will remember Rhoda for her devoted service as one of the cleaning supervisors at Baba's Samadhi, and for her skill as a loving and generous hostess for her tea parties in her home, where she and Adi would share their precious stories of life with Baba. And those who have visited at Christmas time will not forget Rhoda's inimitable rendition, every year without a gap, of "O Come All Ye Faithful", which she had sung before Baba in her earlier years. Rhoda has been called home to Him, definitely one of His Faithful! We will miss her.

Irene Holt, 20 September, 2001





# Murshid James MacKie of Sufism Reoriented

Dr. James MacKie, who succeeded Ivy Duce as the Murshid or spiritual teacher of Sufism Reoriented, the American spiritual school created by Meher Baba, passed away peacefully on June 10, 2001, in Walnut Creek, California. Murshid MacKie, 69, led the Sufis for twenty years. Under his guidance, the group's activities greatly expanded and the Sufis were able to offer their resources and expertise to Meher Baba projects around the world.

In a letter from the Meherazad family, Meheru Irani wrote, "Jim will always be remembered and appreciated for the support he has given in the Baba world." Ann Conlon, writing on behalf of the Directors of the Meher Spiritual Center at Myrtle Beach, noted, "Murshid MacKie's dedication to Meher Baba was profound, and his long service to Sufism Reoriented was an inspiration to all. He will be deeply missed and remembered with enormous respect."

Born in Salt Lake City, Utah, Dr. James MacKie had a distinguished career in psychology, education and the social sciences before learning of Meher Baba. In 1974, shortly before his 42nd birthday, he saw a photograph of Meher Baba at the home of an acquaintance. He described the effect as being struck by a bolt of lightning that filled every cell of his body with the understanding that this figure was God. He said that this encounter "totally and irrevocably dissolved the framework of my adult professional and personal life." Over the next several years, he was inundated with extraordinary internal experiences, some so forceful that they left him crippled and nearly blind for months at a time. It was clear to him that Meher Baba was directing these processes, for at their core was an overwhelmingly benevolent love.

## His Work with Murshida Duce

Among the internal directions Dr. MacKie received was to contact Murshida Ivy Duce (whom he did not know) and assist her in any way he could with her work in Sufism (of which he had never heard). [Ivy O. Duce first met Meher Baba in 1948. Baba's work with her to establish Sufism Reoriented is described in her book, *How a Master Works*, and in several volumes of *Lord Meher*.] A meeting was arranged at Murshida Duce's home in California in May 1974. Her own spiritual insight confirmed the authenticity of Dr. MacKie's experiences, the breadth of his understanding of spiritual processes, and his dedication to Meher Baba. Over the next seven years, Murshida Duce invited Dr. MacKie's increasingly close collaboration in her work as a Sufi teacher. She referred many of her own students to him for specialized consultations. She asked him to share his knowledge and experience of spiritual principles with others and even arranged for him to give a series of public seminars on spiritual topics at the University of California at Berkeley. He had never spoken openly about his experiences and only did so to honor Murshida's wish. She chose the subjects for his presentations. Together, they also wrote two small books, *Conversations*



with a Western Guru and Gurus and Psychotherapists.

During these years, Dr. MacKie was based primarily in Washington, D.C., where he worked with a small



Photo Archive, Sufism Reoriented  
Murshid MacKie 1932-2001

group of companions. Murshida Duce also had a small Sufi group there. Although Meher Baba had told her in the 1950s to establish a Sufi center in Washington, her group had few resources and was meeting in a church basement. On learning of this, Dr. MacKie and his companions acquired and remodeled a townhouse in downtown Washington which they named "Meher House" and offered to Murshida Duce as a possible residential center for her work. She accepted it, and Meher House became a model for future patterns of Sufi life. Meher House was soon supplanted by Manchester House, a larger Georgian mansion in northwest Washington. Dr. MacKie supervised the renovation and remodeling of this house, and most of the construction work was done by Sufi

volunteers over nearly 14 years.

## His Work as Murshid

Murshida Duce was charged by Meher Baba to lay the foundations for Sufism Reoriented in America. She completed her work and passed away in September, 1981, at the age of 86, naming Dr. MacKie her successor. Under his leadership, participation in Sufism increased from about 300 to nearly 500 people, most of whom live near one of the two Sufi centers: an administrative and performing arts building in California and a residential campus in Washington, D.C. Both of these centers, originally purchased by Murshida Duce, were enlarged and redesigned by Murshid MacKie to accommodate a wide range of activities associated with the shared life of a spiritual community. Murshid (as he was called) maintained living quarters at each one. In the tradition of most Sufi schools, he invited his students quite literally to share his home and his life as the setting for their spiritual study. These centers are beautifully furnished and decorated, filled with flowers and plants and images of Meher Baba, carefully maintained and kept at a high level of cleanliness by Sufi volunteers.

According to his students, the keynote of Murshid MacKie's work was joy. He inspired the Sufis to celebrate the Avatar's life and summon His Presence through the arts, as Sufi orders have always done. His Sufi gatherings were often devotional evenings of song, dance and poetry that reminded many of ecstatic *qawwali* sessions, singing God's praise till dawn. He used the arts as vessels for teaching: in the 1980s, he worked with his students to create large-scale musical celebrations of Meher Baba and His principles of life, including two oratorios, *The Elements* and *Lord of the Universe*, and a suite of dances inspired by Meher Baba's message, *The Highest of the High*. All were recorded on audio and videotape and many of these programs have been presented at Meher Baba celebrations around the world. To support such endeavors Murshid expanded the Consortium of the Arts, which offers regular classes in voice, acting and painting.



Murshid took great delight in nurturing the talents of the painters, sculptors and craftspeople among his Sufi students, encouraging them to portray Meher Baba's image in new ways. Murshid arranged for these works of art to be expertly reproduced and made available as photographs and note-cards. Much of this original artwork adorns the Sufi Centers in California and Washington, D.C., and many of these paintings were displayed in an art show at Myrtle Beach last year.

Murshid also led large groups of Sufis on a series of "pilgrimage tours" to places around the world associated with Meher Baba's life and work, beginning, of course with Baba's Samadhi at Meherabad. Murshid's last visit to India was in 1994, when he was invited to give the keynote address at the opening of the Universal Spiritual Center in Byramangala, near Bangalore.

### *Broader Service*

One of the first projects on which Murshida Duce invited Dr. MacKie's consultation was the creation of a "community school" for children based on Meher Baba's principles of education through love. This became the Meher Schools in Lafayette, California, a preschool, elementary school and aftercare program staffed and operated by Sufism Reoriented as a community service project. Most of the children enrolled do not come from Sufi families. Murshid MacKie, with a professional background in psychology and education, was able to consolidate and integrate the school's programs. He refocused the curriculum to prepare children successfully for intermediate school, and sought and received full accreditation from appropriate agencies. The school, staffed by more than 40 Sufi professionals and cleaned and maintained by more than 200 Sufi volunteers, has been in operation for more than 25 years and now serves nearly 400 children from all over the San Francisco Bay Area.

Murshid also generously offered the resources and expertise of his group to support the work of other Meher Baba groups and centers wherever he could. The Sufis helped prepare manuscripts of Bhau Kalchuri's *Lord Meher* for publication. They published Dan Ladinsky's first book of Hafiz poems, *I Heard God Laughing*. Murshid developed a Sufi film and video department whose specialists have given valuable assistance to Baba archives and filmmakers all over the world. The Sufis have also produced recordings of concerts at their center by Baba musicians such as Raphael Rudd and Raine Eastman-Gannett, in addition to their own musical work.

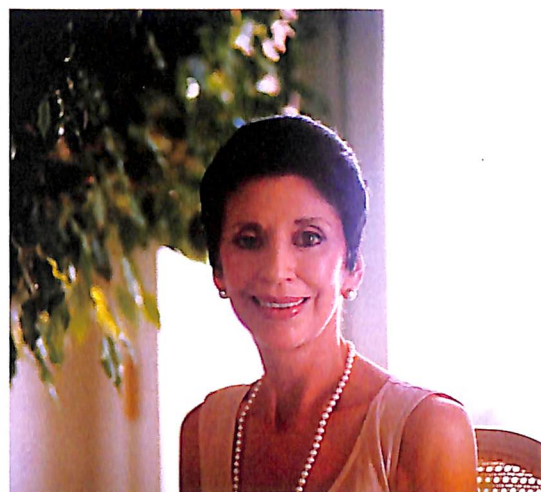
Murshid MacKie was perhaps best known as a teacher. He had a natural gift for storytelling and could illuminate the most complex and subtle ideas with colorful anecdotes from spiritual literature and from his own life and work. In his role as a Sufi Murshid, he prepared hundreds of hours of classes, many of which were recorded on videotape. Some of these presentations have been made generally available. They reveal Murshid's tremendous appreciation of the sacredness and beauty of the earth, of life in all its forms, of the grand sweep of human learning, and most especially, of the incomparable majesty and radiant loveliness of Avatar Meher Baba and the indescribable joy of His Presence.

### *The New Sufi Murshida: Carol Weyland Conner*

Shortly before Murshid MacKie passed away, he named his close associate, Dr. Carol Weyland Conner, as his successor.

Born in 1942, Murshida Weyland Conner grew up in the San Joaquin Valley of central California. She pursued a broad apprenticeship

in higher education: English literature at the University of California at Berkeley, French studies at the Sorbonne in Paris, translators' school at Heidelberg, Germany, and medieval studies at Johns Hopkins in Baltimore, before receiving her Ph.D. in



*Photo Archive, Sufism Reoriented*  
Murshida Weyland Conner

clinical psychology from Catholic University in Washington, D.C., in 1976. After teaching for several years on the faculty of the George Washington University School of Medicine, she went into private practice as a therapist, practicing for 25 years in Walnut Creek, California, and Washington, D.C.

Murshida Weyland Conner met Dr. James MacKie in the course of her graduate training in psychology in 1975, when he was still teaching in that field. He became her professional supervisor and mentor. From him, she learned of Meher Baba, of Sufism and of Murshida Duce. In 1977, she joined him and a small group on a first pilgrimage to Meher Baba's Samadhi in India. Her inner experiences there confirmed for her that Meher Baba was God, the embodiment of all the divinity and higher love she had known since childhood.

Over the following years, she joined Dr. MacKie whenever her schedule permitted. In 1979, he invited her help in creating Meher House, a residential center for Murshida Duce in Washington. As house manager and hostess, she organized and supervised the housekeeping services and meal preparation at Meher House for a year, and thus came into close contact with Murshida Duce, whom she recognized as a radiant vessel of Meher Baba's light. Murshida Duce, in turn, recognized her, and formally initiated her and Dr. MacKie as Sufi students in December 1979. The following year, she was invited to become Murshida Duce's companion, attendant and housekeeper, a position she held until Murshida Duce's passing in 1981.

She continued her close association with James MacKie throughout his tenure as Murshid. He referred students to her for specialized counseling. He invited her aid in organizing and directing many Sufi projects. During phases of work in the performing arts, she uncovered an extraordinary love and talent for dance. She developed her skills as a choreographer, director and performer in Sufi programs. Her poetry has played a central role in Sufi productions. She has also participated fully in all the tasks of shared life in the Sufi community: construction and building maintenance, food service, cleaning, gardening, office work. Murshida Conner was a resident at the Washington and Walnut Creek Centers for eight years. Murshid MacKie invited her collaboration in every phase of his work in Sufism, including his series of "pilgrimage tours" to spiritual centers associated with Meher Baba in India and Europe.

In naming Carol Weyland Conner as his successor, Murshid MacKie noted that Murshida Duce had also recognized her special qualities and identified her as a future Sufi Murshida. Murshida Conner formally assumed her duties on the summer solstice, June 21, 2001.



# “And what beautiful have you done today?”

An interview with Diana Le Page by Sandy Brown\*

Imagine if someone asked you to paint sixteen really big, full colour murals of the life of Baba and that these were to prominently feature in the new pilgrim centre at the spiritual capital of the universe. What if it was then casually hinted that ideally they would help inspire thousands of pilgrims from every conceivable walk of life for centuries to come? And what if you were to do this with your vision severely impaired and without the ability to see colour?

How do you think you would get ready for such a task? More important, how do you think Baba would get you ready?

Artist Diana Le Page has been commissioned to paint 16 murals, each approximately 3 x 1.5 meters (9 x 4 feet) in dimension, depicting the life of our Beloved Baba. These are to be hung in the Dining Hall of the new Pilgrim Centre in Meherabad. Diana is now well into the fourth mural. Although she only received the commission last November, she has been working on the concept since 7th February, 1996. It was at noon on this date when Diana was inspired with the idea of painting huge murals depicting the life of Baba. She was so moved that she recorded the idea on a piece of paper. “*Carpe Diem*” (seize the day) was written on the bottom of the page and seize it she did – slowly beginning this enormous project which she believed she would have at least 20 years to complete.

“The idea was wonderful – it really excited me. I thought, well, there’s no place to hang paintings that big in the Baba family because we’re so young in Baba history. There just aren’t any big buildings that could handle these things. But I knew it didn’t matter because my job is to do them. I’ve had certain images in my mind, certain things that I see that I like and certain photos that particularly move me. Scenes I’d really like to talk about through the painting. I thought that I had about 20 years so I wasn’t rushing.”

When she accepted this commission, Diana agreed to a deadline giving her a fraction of the time she thought she had to complete this project. How beautiful it was that Baba gave Diana the inspiration, years in

During our talk, Diana continually returned to this theme of dependence on Baba:

“We all have Baba looking after us for all our life, but we don’t know it. The more you’re with Baba, the more you’ll be able to look back into your life and see how He was always there, always with you, even though, sometimes, we were feeling so sorry for ourselves we couldn’t hear Him.”

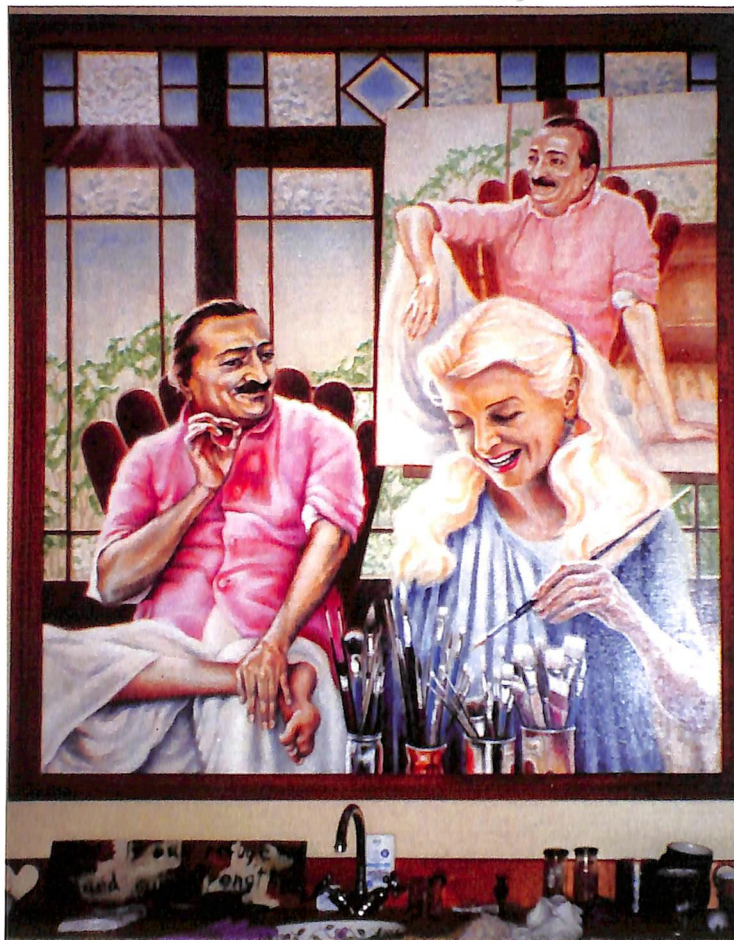
“When I first started to draw Baba years ago I was so uptight. I would get exhausted after a few hours of working because my hands were so tight. I wanted to be good so badly and I was so stressed just doing it—I loved doing it, but I didn’t realise that I didn’t have to worry and that Baba would be there. It doesn’t mean you don’t do the work, but you don’t have to worry as much as I did.”

I have always been moved by Diana’s paintings and remember being surprised to learn that she had a visual impairment. I was even more surprised to learn that, for most of her life, she had been told that she could not see colour. Naturally gifted, she chose sculpting as the medium less dependent on colour perception. This choice led her to Paris and to work in a studio firmly established in the classical tradition.

There, Diana was apprenticed to two women artists, L. Luzanowsky and D. Gamsaragan, one of whom had been the head of the studio for sculptor Antoine Bourdelle, who in turn was the head of the studio for Auguste Rodin. Here Diana was trained in different mediums, including clay portraits that were caste into bronze and sculpting directly in stone and wood. At the end of each day her mentors would ask: “And what beautiful have you done today?”

“I was encouraged to strive to give every piece, even small ones, a ‘sense of monumentality.’ I took that as meaning it should elevate something inside of you to the monumental side of our inner qualities, it should take you where you want to be.”

After many years Diana reached a point where she had taken sculpting as far as she



Meher Studio

advance, which enabled her to mentally prepare for the task. How beautiful also that He then removed the safety net of her own expectations so that she could only cling to Him for help. It is little surprise that reliance on Baba was a constant theme in my discussions with Diana who draws strength from this Rumi quote that is pinned on the wall of her studio:

“God breaks the wings of one intention and then gives you another; cuts the rope of contriving so you’ll remember your dependence. It is by failures that lovers stay aware of how they’re loved. Failure is the key to the kingdom within. Your prayers should be, “Break the legs of what I want to happen. Humiliate my desire. Eat me like candy! It’s spring and finally I have no will.”

\*Originally printed in *Meher Baba Australia*\*



wanted and decided to explore other mediums. She eventually settled on oil painting, a change that led her to explore her relationship with colour.

"I ended up with the oil paints because I loved the smell of them and I loved the depth of colour that you can get. I also wondered, if I don't see colour, why do I like it? Then it occurred to me that obviously, in all of us, there must be something that enables us to *feel* colour. I have to rely on my feelings to sense colour whereas other people just open their eyes and see it. I have to relax and let the feeling of the colour come to me. I must be relaxed to do it and if I start thinking about it I get scared and then can't. It took me a long, long time to have confidence in this because the last thing I wanted to be doing was ugly Babas. What if it looked OK to me but not to you? It was scary at first."

This reminded me that colour is light vibrating at different frequencies and I suddenly understood why Diana's paintings sometimes seem to shimmer. It makes sense that someone with heightened sensitivity to light would be able to appreciate the more subtle ways that colour and light can be sensed. As Diana continued, a whole new way of perceiving the world began opening to me.

"It's like all the arts correspond. I can remember reading Inayat Khan on music. He was saying that different musical notes hit different places on our chakra levels. I'm sure that colours do the same thing and that it all works together."



*Meher Baba's family and the Five Perfect Masters*

When offered the commission Diana was given very few parameters within which to work. Apart from the time frame, the physical dimensions, and the subject matter, the only other instructions were that "Baba should be recognisable to the man from Arangaon as well as the man from Argentina." "I didn't really find that inspiring" says Diana, "but then I realised all I had to do is to paint Baba the way I knew Mehera and Mani and Rano would like to see Baba painted. And I know that because, boy, have they drilled it into me! So that's my one real restriction."

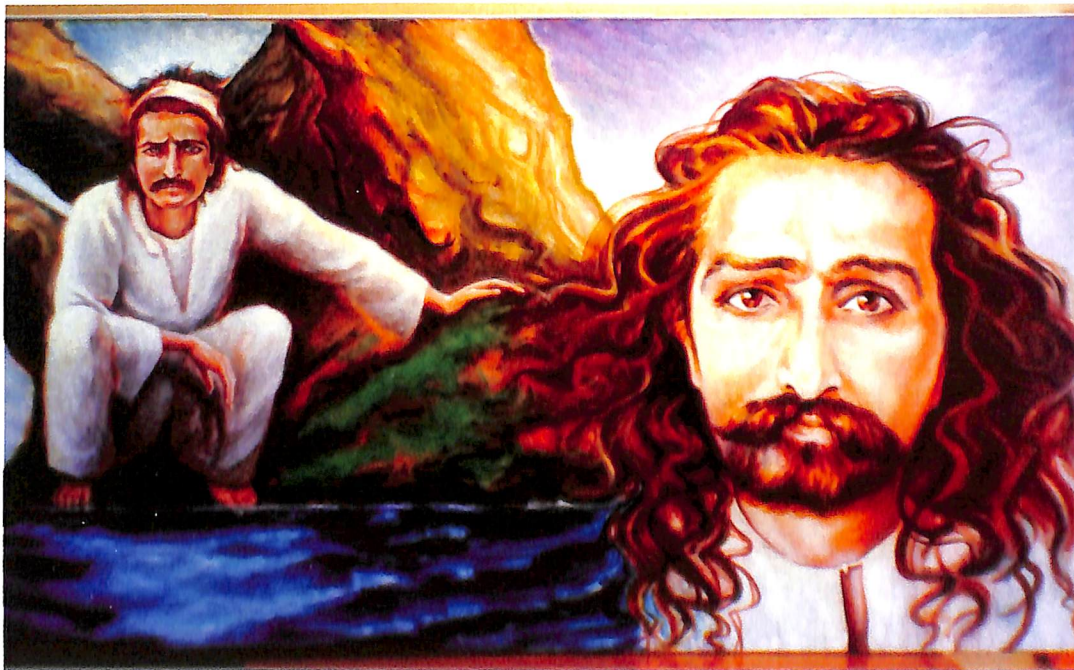
Since showing her first drawings in 1971, Diana has had ongoing assistance from many of Baba's close ones, particularly the women mandali. Stories about their input have helped to give me an idea of lessons of

confidence and trust Baba has given Diana over the years. "It's not like you instantly walk into this and think 'I can do this.' It takes a long time of working on it. You don't realise immediately how much Baba helps you. Rano was very exacting about the drawings and I can remember her telling me that I didn't have Baba's ears quite right and how unusual they were... Later Mehera asked me why I asked Rano what she thought. ... It was as though I wasn't remembering who Mehera was! The Beloved's Beloved! Why didn't I just go to her for heaven's sake? Then Mehera turned around and looked at me and said 'But Diana—can't you see if His ears aren't right?' What was so good about that is that it gave me the confidence in myself. I thought – well, actually I can, but I'm so unsure of myself that I feel like I've got to ask you!

Once I made a little card of Baba for Mehera for her birthday. Mehera said to me, "Look, I'm not smiling enough in this Diana. I was always smiling when I was with Baba." Forget what the photograph looks like, she obviously just doesn't want to be drawn not smiling!

Mehera wrote to me on January 4, 1983: 'The picture of Beloved and myself on the newsletter was very beautiful. Baba looked so debonair and handsome and I felt Him very close to me as I gazed on the photo. It is truly inspired by your love for the Beloved. Everyone admired it very much.'

But then one month later, on February 5, 1983 another letter arrived with the inevitable critique: 'One



*The Ancient One*





*Charcoal studies of Baba and Mehera*

thing I would like to mention in the picture you did of Baba and me [is] that it was in the early days when I was young, there were no lines, that is deep lines on my face running down from the nostril to the lips and you have given me a sad expression as though I look drawn and tired by these deep lines. If you look carefully as the original photograph there is a soft smiling happy expression on my face because I was content to be with Baba. I hope you do not mind me being frank with you. I just wanted to draw your attention to this.'

Mani once told me that Mehera didn't have wrinkles. But you look at the photos and think she does, she's a human being. I felt that what Mani meant was that when you make a painting of Mehera it should be about her pure love. If there's anything in that painting that gets in the way of that, don't put it in the painting! It's a more intuitive interpretation but I think that's what they were trying to communicate.

Another example came from a slide show that I was doing at one of the Anniversaries. I was explaining how I received a lot of critique from the Mandali and at that point Meheru walked into the slide show for just five minutes. The minute the next slide went on, Meheru started giving me a critique. 'Diana, that hand isn't right, His skin was much softer than that' and so on. And then she left.

Mani was the one who really supported me in this effort and really helped me with the colour and gave me the confidence I needed. I wrote to her before she died to thank her for her help because I wanted to make sure I'd said something. This is an extract from her response to that. It's dated August 2, 1995: 'Dearest Diana, you should have seen the glow on my face when I saw the cover of *The Glow* bearing your beautiful painting of Beloved Baba, talking in elegant gestures making one forget they were not actual photographs of Him. And the same day when your card arrived referring to my help with it the glow dropped deep into my heart. It is very sweet of you Diana but the actual fact is that you are a very, very good artist and I am a very

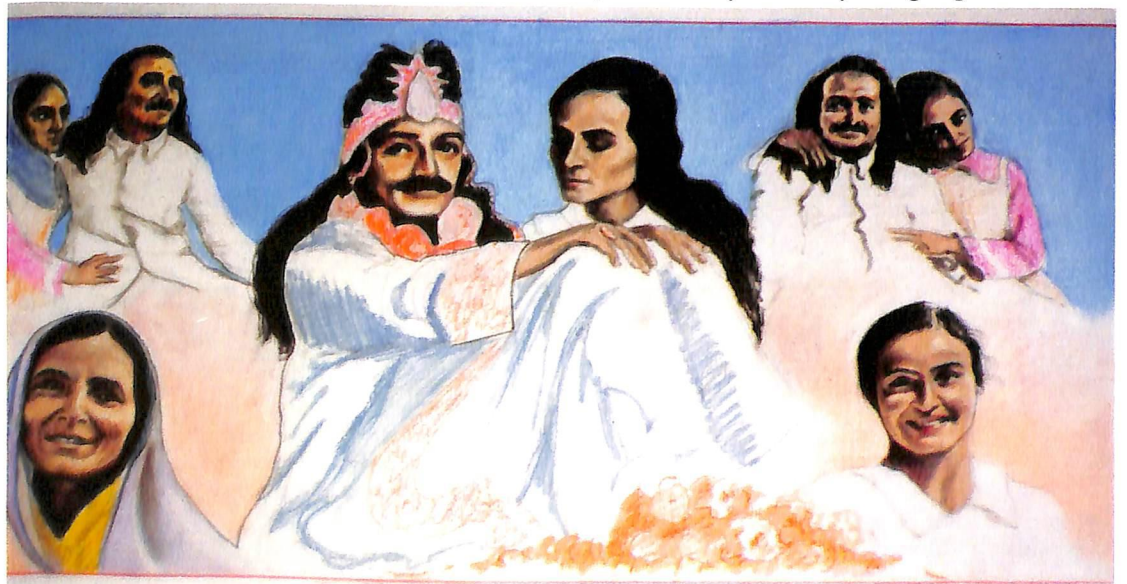
good critic so the twain did meet in the master piece you created of our creator.'

That was so sweet, so special. Every time I came to India I always showed Mani what I was working on and I'd always get her critique. One of the main things, one of the incredible things she did, and what I was thanking her particularly for in that letter, was her critique of all those little 18 gestures in the painting. I had all the original drawings that I took to India. She put them all lined up along the floor in Mandali Hall. It took about two and a half hours. Everybody else was just sitting there listening. She went through each one and showed me what was not quite right, what was right and how she worked with Rano and her paintings and drawings in the

same way. She just was a terrific critic."

I was in India last November at the same time as Diana when this commission was offered to her. Now it's April and Diana is already well underway with the second mural. She had no time to lose – each mural has been allocated three months as the whole project must be ready within five years. I asked Diana how she maintains her momentum:

"Painting for me is a concentration that, for me, helps me to get closer to Baba and I love it. I'm totally addicted to it. It's no burden to me to come in here and work every day. That doesn't mean every day that things come out terrifically. I do have bad days but if you do it every day, then a bad day doesn't matter because you know you're going to be in there



*Study for painting of Baba and Mehera*



tomorrow, it will come, Baba will help you. It's just like in life every day isn't brilliant."

When I saw the first mural on an earlier visit it was just as Diana was adding the finishing touches. It literally took my breath away. In the centre of the painting is the young Merwan whom Babajan called her "Beloved Son who would one day rock the world." In his recent book, Diana's husband, Bill, uses rich prose to describe Baba in this period. The following passage helped to inspire the first mural: "As the sun bursts over the horizon in life, giving vigour, so my imagination and narrow empathy reach out to the lean intense figure of Meher Baba of the very early years, flinging disciples twice His own weight around like rag dolls, yet causing no injuries. Banging His head on stone so hard that His teeth were permanently loosened. Oh the glory, the intensity, the electrifying grandeur of the lean frame and face and unruly locks of hair."

Similarly, Bill's prose also gave Diana the idea of using the theme of a "sun filled day" to link the murals together thematically.

"When He was gone the period of His stay seems to have been but the time space of a gloriously sun filled day. Although the phases and activities of His life were very complex and often overlapping to continue this figure of a sun filled day, it appears to me that His ministry falls into five main periods. Daybreak and early morning, mid morning, high noon, mid afternoon, late afternoon and evening."



*Charcoal study for painting*

Diana showed me photos of preliminary sketches of the murals. These are a master plan and help her see how the murals all work together. Diana has these small and detailed photos stuck to paper between line drawings of the archways of the new Dining Hall. Although only sketches, each picture already shimmers with the beauty of His Divine Form, most with at least two, three, or four pictures of Baba. As she laid them before me, these small photographs, the promise of what is to come, I was overcome and started crying. Diana explained:

"The murals are not going to be the kind of paintings that represent a true history or are illustrative of historic events so much. Mainly, however, they will be a chance to communicate my feelings for Baba

and talk about how beautiful He is, how loving He is and how gorgeous He is. I'll use certain historical events to bring forth aspects that I think are accessible to me. Another concern was to make sure that the number of serious paintings is balanced by the number of those in lighter moods. I didn't want anything too dominant and, of course, wanted to make sure that each had the feeling of His presence as much as I possibly could."

Baba's pre-sense already radiates from the first three completed murals. When all sixteen are finished, the entire work will be nothing short of a masterpiece. As Diana has explained, she was trained to strive to make her art something that would elevate something inside of us, inspire the monumental side of our inner qualities and take us where we want to be. Where better than remembering our Beloved Baba? In this project, Baba is being presented so tenderly and beautifully so that, by looking at these images, our longing to be with Him more and more will be felt anew.

Another quote that Diana has on her wall is one that she reads out aloud when she needs to refocus or when she just needs a lift. This is something that Baba wrote about artists. Early in the morning, the day after we'd completed the interview, Diana called me to stress that, although we'd been talking about art, it doesn't matter what work we do if we do it for Baba and to try to always remember Him, He will help and guide us.

"One can express all of one's spiritual qualities through art, but one must put all of one's heart into it. Art is one of the sources through which the soul expresses itself and inspires others. But to express art thoroughly, one must have his inner emotions thoroughly opened. I love artists, for through art, one can express oneself beautifully. When inspired with love, art leads to higher realms." – Avatar Meher Baba



*Charcoal study for painting*



# From Meherabad

## In His Sahavas

Sandy Brown, Australia

*"Forget everything else but  
My Sahavas and concentrate  
all your attention on Me. I  
am the Ancient One."*

Meher Baba

It is a joy to be able to report that the first Meherabad Young Adult Sahavas, June 22 to July 2nd, was a wonderful success, full of Baba's love and many blessings. About 85 participants aged between 19 and 35 from the East and the West had a chance to live and work together, and shared deeply in Baba's love over the full ten-day program. Thanks to the Meherabad and Meherazad community's support of the Sahavas, participants were able to experience Meherabad in a unique way. Many service projects were organized, which offered the opportunity for all to take part in the life of Meherabad in ways not normally available, enabling us to assist in projects such as tree planting, white-washing old Mandali Hall, cleaning Baba's Table House and Jhopdi, and sewing special tomb covers for Silence Day. It was a privilege to take part in serving in these small ways. There were many talks about life with Beloved Baba from the Mandali and other special guests, and a visit to Meherazad on its opening day. Afternoons were filled with art projects, music and dance workshops, sports activities, and preparing for the Celebration concert at the end of the program. Many lovely singing, dancing, and musical numbers were performed and a hilarious play where sahavasees acted as masts reenacting the different stories of Baba contacting the five Perfect Masters. The Celebration concert showed the unity of feeling that had come about between the Eastern and Western participants, and as the curtain opened for each act, it felt as if a fresh wave of Baba's love flooded over the audience.

A tremendous opportunity was given for surrender and service when an epidemic of gastroenteritis affected many of the participants, particularly the Westerners. Ironically, when talking to many people about the high point of the Sahavas the response often relates to the depth of connection to Baba and other participants that people felt during their illness. Many people who were bed-ridden for

several days and prevented from taking part in the events found themselves surrendering to Baba and feeling very overwhelmed by a strong sense of His closeness. Those who weren't affected, also had their planned schedules interrupted by the demands of caring for those who were, and by the need to help the medical staff ensure that every precaution was taken to prevent the spread of the sickness. One of the organizers talked about how this made the concept of service very real. Whereas all the service projects that had been organized had been called service, they were really a privilege for the participants. But trying to serve 35 or so ill people stretched everyone outside of their usual comfort zones. One participant commented that until this occurred she had thought the Sahavas was going to be about feeling great, bonding with people and having a good time. When she became ill, it became much more about surrendering to Baba's will and being with Him.

On the last night, in a closing ceremony in Old Mandali Hall, sahavasees shared their experiences. The feeling of love, acceptance and unity was very profound. While lining up for darshan at Baba's chair, His love and presence seemed to be felt very intensely throughout the group. Many felt that we had been given a rare privilege of sharing deeply in Baba's Sahavas and that this would enable us to return to our homes and continue to experience and share His Love in this way with others.

## Meher Baba's Message to Youth

It is the privilege of youths to be full of energy and hope. Not being caught up in any grooves, their dreams about the future have the advantage of being inspired by an unfettered imagination. In the glow of a newborn love, or in the warmth of newly caught enthusiasm, they are quick to respond to the call for action and self-sacrifice. Life would be poorer without these qualities, which are predominantly present in youths. But if the youths are to derive the full benefit of the qualities with which they are abundantly endowed, they must also try to acquire some other qualities which are rare in young people.

Hope should be fortified by a courage that can accept failure with equanimity; enthusi-

asm should be harnessed by the wisdom that knows how to wait for the fruit of action with patience. Idealistic dreams about the future should be counterbalanced by a sense of the realities of the present. The glow of love should allow itself to be illumined by a free and unhampered play of reason.

It is easy for youths to be so intent on realizing the ideal, that they become bitter against the present and past, but it is well to cultivate the spirit of idealizing the real and being appreciative of the heritage of the past. The world, as it is, may not seem to follow the pattern youths adore, but they must never forget that it is always good enough to merit their most loving attention. In their desire to improve the world, let them not surrender their right to be happy by becoming bitter.

Youths love freedom and, as such, they have a natural impulse to rebel against all authority and bondage. All this is well and good. But let them make a real effort to keep free from the many illusions to which young people are particularly susceptible. True self-expression does not necessarily imply irreverence for others; true criticism does not necessarily imply hostility or separateness. Freedom without responsibility is a doubtful boon. Freedom is worth having only where there is self-restraint and willingness to cooperate with others.

Youths are always willing to act and take risks. Let them freely yield to this fearless and imperative urge of life within them. But while releasing action, let them take every care that it is creative and not merely destructive. Let their watchwords always be Love and Service."

*Lord Meher, Vol. 8. Page 2813. © AMBPPCT*

## Special Notice

Shelley Marrich

22 June 2001

Greetings from Meherazad where, I am happy to report, the summer heat has given way to an early monsoon. The dry, intense heat has been replaced by cloudy skies, cooler temperatures and over 4 inches of rain at Meherazad-and not a moment too soon! Maharashtra has been suffering from a terrible drought which has left many nearby villagers and farmers without water for drinking or for their crops. And since mid-May, when the water level in our well suddenly dropped and did not recuperate, even Meherazad has been on water restrictions. By Baba's Grace the rain will continue and relieve the poor villagers who now have to walk miles just to procure drinking water.



Last month, after Bhauji's return to 'Nagar from his heart surgery, he had a very happy reunion with all the Mandali at Meherazad, sharing with them his travails as well as his beautiful experiences with Baba. Because of Bhauji's weakened condition, Dr. Goher had asked him to visit for only 30 minutes. But his happiness was such that Bhauji stayed much longer and did not seem tired at all by the effort. Bhauji again visited Meherazad on June 10th after his recent discharge from the Poona hospital where he was admitted for a bowel obstruction. His endurance, stamina and faith in Baba throughout each physical trial are truly inspiring. Bhauji is amazing!

On May 20th, the anniversary of dearest Mehera's reunion with her Beloved Baba, many of the Mandali travelled to Meherabad for arti and prayers in the Samadhi. Those whose health requires they avoid the heat, went early in the morning when they had a quiet time with Baba, offering garlands and reciting the prayers. As they adorned Mehera's and Mani's shrines with garlands and rose petals, they remembered the hearts of Baba's lovers around the world who would wish to share this moment with them. The remaining Mandali attended with their own heartfelt offerings at the usual women's arti time and stayed for the singing - a beautiful blending of voices from the East and the West in praise and remembrance of Meher Baba and His beloved Mehera.

Meherazad's Pilgrim Season begins in two weeks and already the massive Spring cleaning is under way. Each room is emptied of its contents, cleaned from ceiling to floor, pillow and chair covers are washed and stitched, photos are removed from the walls and thoroughly cleaned, furniture is dusted (and oiled if needed), the gardens are readied and the Mandali put away their summer clothes, making room for their fancier frocks and trousers. This is also a time when we reevaluate the Meherazad schedule for the coming season. Last year the Mandali found it necessary to keep Saturdays closed to visitors and this extra day off was literally a God-send for them all. Although they hesitate to make additional changes this year, they feel it is necessary to shorten Thursday from a 1:30p.m. departure time to 12:30p.m. This means that the bus will arrive at Meherazad at 11:00a.m. on Thursday mornings and leave by 12:30p.m. so that the pilgrims will eat their lunch at Meherabad.

Because of the decreasing capacity of the Mandali, Dr. Goher once again requests that all pilgrims, without exception, abide by the Meherazad schedule which is printed below.

In this way you will be helping the Mandali by allowing them the much-needed time off to rest and recuperate so that they may give more fully of themselves on the pilgrim days. Dr. Goher also wishes to remind everyone who comes to Meherabad on pilgrimage, that if they should become ill during their stay, they should NOT visit Meherazad until the attending Meherabad doctor has given them permission. The Mandali are especially vulnerable to the colds and flus which get passed around the Pilgrim Centre and the hostels in great numbers. Even a simple cold takes them weeks to get over. We know no one would wish to pass on an illness to any of the Mandali and by following Dr. Goher's guidelines, you will help to insure that all the Mandali remain healthy throughout the Pilgrim Season.

### *Meherazad Schedule Change*

<b>Sunday</b>	<b>10:45a.m. - 12:30p.m.</b>
Monday	CLOSED
<b>Tuesday</b>	<b>11:00a.m. - 1:30p.m.</b>
Wednesday	CLOSED
<b>Thursday</b>	<b>11:00a.m. - 12:30a.m.</b>
Friday	CLOSED
Saturday	CLOSED



## A Note from Our Trust-walli

Lynne Berry

If you've been thinking that some time you'd like to make a love-donation to the Trust, today may be the perfect time.

The Avatar Meher Baba Trust runs a first-rate school, provides medical care for villagers and maintains Baba's tombshrine and Trust properties. There are also beneficiaries of the trust whose living expenses are covered by donations from Baba-lovers. All of these worthy projects were specified by Baba Himself, in the Trust Deed. Many of the Trust's charitable projects and outreach projects are carried out by Eastern and Western volunteers.

Some projects, however, require the assistance of paid Indian workers, and as India raises its standard of living, the cost of materials and labor is on the rise also.

More love-donations are also needed for the ongoing archives project; preservation of the precious articles used and touched by Baba that mean so much to all of us.

If this appeals to you, please make your check payable to Friends of Meher Baba Trust, and send it to: Lynne Berry, 267 Hanover Drive, Costa Mesa, CA 92626





# Los Angeles Sahavas: 2001—A Grace Odyssey

Meher Baba drew us together again in His silent love so we could share in His grace, shining bright as the sun. Sahavas, the give and take of divine love, began with a lively round of “Who Wants To Be God-Realized?” with Jeff Maguire as the moderator.

Leatrice Johnston, daughter of Darwin and Jeanne Shaw, gave the first talk, *By The Grace of God*. Leatrice first met Baba on May 10, 1952, at the Meher Center in Myrtle Beach. She said, “Embraced by divine love, beyond words, so natural, coming Home—this is the way it is supposed to be.” On that visit, with her last embrace with Baba, she caught a glimpse into Baba’s right eye—she saw a dazzling light, formless and boundless with unending beauty, a moment in eternity. Throughout her life, Baba has revealed His constant help and has demonstrated that strength comes from complete dependence on Him.

The evening featured a performance from musical guest Cindy Lowe. Cindy came into Baba’s orbit in the early 1960s. The concert fea-



Cindy Lowe and her “Greek Chorus”,  
left to right: Elaine Munson, Bill Herza and  
Winifred Kershaw

tured the haunting melodies and beautiful words that so delighted Mani. Nancy Wall, Billy Goodrum, Bree Rael, Elaine Munson, Bill Herza, Winifred Kershaw, Rob Thornburn and Deborah Ash provided backup vocals and instrumentation.

The following morning, Meher Baba’s niece, Shireen Bonner, spoke of *My Childhood With Baba*. Shireen, who was raised in London, is the daughter of Franey and Baba’s brother Adi. She met Baba on three occasions, the first as a baby (Baba held her in His arms), the second at age seven, when they became comrades in play, and the last at age 11, in late December 1968, for her brother Dara and Amrit’s wedding. Shireen was taken aback at how much her companion of 4 years earlier had aged, yet she still found her way to His room to play. One time, quite seriously, Baba asked her which was more important, to obey Him or to be happy. She said to obey. He

Barbara Roberts, Colorado

replied no—to be happy was most important. She thought “Great!” Since her concept of God was that of a magician, this fit in perfectly because she’d get everything she wanted. Shireen realized later that what Baba was really saying was to choose happiness despite what may happen to you.

Franey Irani, Shireen’s mother had the topic *My Connection With The Avatar*. She grew up in Ahmednagar surrounded by Baba lovers, in what is now the Trust compound. As a toddler, she asked her mother, “Why doesn’t Baba touch the ground?” To her, He appeared to float. In 1947, she and Adi Junior were married before Baba. Adi was a widower with a three year old child, Dara. Her first journey after she was married was in 1952 to London with Adi, at Baba’s request, to join Him after His U.S. tour. They had just arrived when they received word of His accident, and so after a brief excursion to Paris they went back to India. After this taste of life outside India, Franey yearned to return. In 1956, the couple did so, but they faced obstacles and some discrimination because they were Indian. Franey now lives in Santa Fe, New Mexico, with Shireen, Shireen’s husband Jay, and their daughter Mehera. Franey concluded her talk with the reassurance that Baba is with everyone who thinks of Him and who doesn’t worry. He is looking after all of us.

Tex Hightower, one of Margaret Craske’s dancers, gave a talk titled *My Meeting With Meher Baba*. He spoke of how he made his first harrowing journey to see Meher Baba only because he had such love and respect for Miss Craske. “She could charm the skin off a snake!” He and three other dancers flew in a tiny chartered plane hampered by fog, snow, pelting rain, vicious storms, detours, backtracking, getting lost, but guided by an undeterred pilot who simply stated, “I am paid to get you to your destination.”

The next morning, Tex entered the Lagoon Cabin just as a politeness to Miss Craske. As he

stepped over the threshold, he had the sensation of being inside a clay mummy case that had just cracked open. He stepped out and into Baba’s open arms. He discovered he did indeed have love for Baba, a love he had not known existed. He realized that everything that happens to us is exactly the way it is supposed to be.

In this music-filled Sahavas, we heard grand tunes from musical guests Rob Thornburn, Billy Goodrum and friends. Both are talented musicians. In his set, Rob performed his incredible song *His Heart’s Your Home*; Billy sang a song he wrote for Bhau called the *Nagpur Blues*.

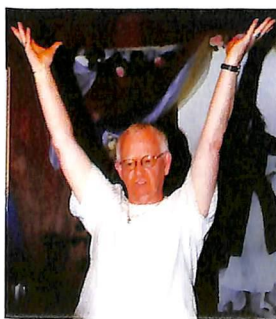
The next morning, one of the Prem Ashram boys, Esfandiyar Vesali, gave another glowing talk on Love: “We have to have longing. We have to love Baba more than our own families, more than the rest of the world. We must allow for the experience that we love God more than everything else. On the Path of Love, love leads the way. It is not a preconceived Way. If you want God-Realization, don’t become an intoxicated mast—you will just benefit yourself. Follow Baba and you will benefit humanity.”

The next offering was a delightful performance of music and poetry by Michael Da Costa, who lives in England: “Ego, smego, manonash pie; oh my, oh my, we’re all going to die.” (Ego II) and “From A to Z—S: Seven & Superstition. I put all my money on the 7th horse on the 7th day and the 7th hour and the 7th month, and it came in 7th.”



Michael Da Costa

The incomparable Baba artist Diane Cobb, whom Baba named 3B (Baba’s Beautiful Baby), first met Him in 1956 when He stayed with her family in San Francisco. Baba told her over and over how beautiful she was and what a great lover of God she was. He instructed her to “always remember Me like this” (kingly). After He dropped His body, she initially resisted drawing Baba, but she was led to do just that. Her life’s work is now to paint Baba and to teach art to others.



Tex Hightower



Leatrice



Freny Irani





*Diane Cobb conducting an art workshop.*

She observed that Baba had a powerfully beautiful face which changed from moment to moment, constantly fresh. The two sides of His face are different. His right eye is the eye of power and His left eye is the eye of love. 3B said that Baba loves any attempt by anyone to depict Him. All visions are equally valid, including living your life for Him and seeing Him in others—a real skill that leaves painting in the dust.

The Sahavas' concluding activity was a panel on "What is Grace?" Leatrice: "Baba's grace is showering on us all the time and we need to be open."

Michael Da Costa: "Paraphrased from *Beams* and Baba, Grace is a shot of the eternal in an otherwise rigid determinism."

Adele Wolkin: "Grace is compassion. Baba never denies His grace where there is a sincere heart. Baba is Grace Personified. Baba takes on the effects of our karma, which is grace. Ultimate grace is the annihilation of the mind."

Tex: From a cable from Baba, "I am always with you always. Don't worry."

We then departed in His love, already looking forward to next year's Sahavas.



## Audio Tape Lending Library

Do you ever find yourself in a 'dry spell' spiritually? Would you rather have something inspiring to listen to than negative news, weather and traffic reports during your travels? Do you need an interesting theme for your Baba meetings? The audio library has many interesting and intellectually stimulating discourses on life with Baba.

We have over 150 titles just waiting to be delved into by inquiring minds. What unsuspecting treasures to behold! Don't waste your time on this tired old world any longer. Make your choice to move into the cosmic Baba linkup.

For catalog or info write to Lynne Berry, 267 Hanover Drive, Costa Mesa, CA 92626. She is ready to assist you.

# Announcements

## From Australia

The "East Farm", a property adjoining Avatar's Abode—33 acres, dam, bush (Australian for trees, scrub, grasses, etc.) and 2 houses—is for sale. The owners (who are not Baba lovers) are open to the property being bought by a group of buyers. Interested parties can contact Bev and Robert Chapman: mobile phone **0412-363-604** (for outside Australia **011-61412-363-604**). Email address is **clappo@austarnet.com.au**. The asking price is around \$160,000 US (\$329,000 Australian). An incredible deal! It's rare to be able to purchase land actually adjoining Avatar's Abode. Francis Brabazon used to visit here and the original owners (Hazel and Norman Shipway) met Baba. Baba is supposed to have said that Baba lovers would always be living down here, and so many Baba lovers have over the past 40 years.

## From Israel

Because of the generosity of His many lovers, our latest fund-raising efforts were successful and our work for Beloved Baba in Israel is progressing nicely. After some careful consideration, we decided to establish a desktop publishing enterprise and have most recently printed the Discourses and several Baba booklets. We are now editing *God Speaks*, which Michal Sivan translated into Hebrew, and it should be ready for printing soon. Subsequently, we plan to publish a collection of Eruch stories and Etzion will be telling the story of how Baba has been working in Israel. Our fund-raising efforts continue with the guidance of Ruth Carrie Ben Shammai who worked under Baba's directives. It is because of your loving generosity that our work in Israel continues to grow and flourish. To support the Beloved's work in Israel, please send donation to: **Max Seibert at 6118 Woodmont Ave. Cincinnati, OH 45213-1714.**

## Baba Talk

There is a community of the spirit. Join it, and feel the delight of walking in the noisy street, and being the noise." —Rumi

*[That is the most apt and totally perfect description of this Baba talk list I have ever read! from the amazing Rumi! Wow!]*

### The Baba-List:

BABA@JWS.ECC.EDU is for Meher Baba-related news and announcements including news from India, bookstore sales, book and music releases, and meetings. You may also make requests for source material, location of quotes, addresses, phone numbers, contacts, etc. Replies should be handled by personal email, except for corrections and relevant follow-up information. General discussion about articles on the BABA list should be posted to the BABA-TALK list.

To subscribe or unsubscribe: send an email to <listserv@jws.ecc.edu>. Place in the body of the message, not the subject field, SUB BABA (then) your full name or SIGNOFF BABA (then) your full name.

### The Baba-Talk list:

BABA-TALK@JWS.ECC.EDU is for the in-depth discussion of all subjects related to Meher Baba. Please do not post the same message to both lists.

To subscribe or unsubscribe to Baba-Talk: follow the same procedure as above then type in SUB BABA-TALK your full name or SIGNOFF BABA-TALK and your full name.

Archives of the lists are available at: [jws.ecc.edu/archives/](http://jws.ecc.edu/archives/).

Meher Baba web site information: [AvatarMeherBaba.org/](http://AvatarMeherBaba.org/).

*Would you like more copies of this special issue?*

*This full color memorial issue is made possible in large part by the extreme generosity of Balaji, Master Printer of Hyderabad.*

*If you would like to buy extra copies for friends who do not subscribe to the Love StreetLampPost, or to keep for posterity after your regular copy gets totally dogeared, we have them for \$5 each.*



# A Wondrous Day—Renovation Begins at Meherabode

Harry Thomas, Los Angeles

Our glorious Groundbreaking Day occurred on Sunday, July 29<sup>th</sup>, at the Avatar Meher Baba Center of Southern

California. The day began with a picnic where, settled beside our Center's big Indian pine tree, with blankets spread, people socialized, thoroughly enjoying each other's company. A variety of games, prizes and activities

amused the young. Potluck, offering a dazzling variety of choices, was spread out in the eating area near the pond. The ping pong table provided entertainment, frisbees laced the air, and Fred and Gigi had Gatsby, their dog, with them. All in all, it was a wonderful day.

At the appropriate time, Lois joyously summoned everyone to the groundbreaking area. Charley set up his video camera and we prepared to break the ground. Outside of the kitchen and meeting hall, in a rather large backyard area, the ground breaking ceremony occurred.

Lois Jones, Kemal Taba and Mike Ramsden were fittingly attired for the occasion wearing a white hard hat with a small "Don't Worry Be Happy" Baba card perched above the visor. They held new shovels that sported a gold bow on the handle. Facing the crowd they awaited the official start of the occasion.

The ceremony began around 4:30p.m. with Shani Verchick reading two quotes from *Gift of Love*. She had related to me earlier that she didn't know which of Baba's words she should read. While in the Dome (our special prayer and devotion shrine), she randomly opened the book to the section that she would read. "Gatherings and meetings in My name should be a chance for the expression of My love, to give them any other importance is to misunderstand My cause." From this same volume, she read another quote of Baba's: "Those who truly love Me are My centers in the world. Let each Baba lover, wherever he or she may be, be 'Baba's Center' personified; radiating the

eternal message of Love Divine, living a life of love, sacrifice and honesty."

Lois then read Bhau's words, which he composed especially for this momentous event. The gist of Bhau's thoroughly appreciated message was a congratulatory sentiment for all the steps that brought the LA

Center to this phase of its development. More important, Bhau encouraged us to look upon the renovation of our Center as an outward expression of our continuing task to renovate our inner selves. This ongoing renovation

would strengthen our relationship with Beloved Baba and simultaneously, create a more loving space within, enabling us to operate more harmoniously amongst ourselves. Lynn Maguire read a message from our dear sister Adele who, due to her being a guest at the Portland Sahavas, wasn't able to participate in this special event. She wished us all well, expressed her heartfelt regret for not attending personally, and reminded us to remain

close to Baba in all these renovation efforts. We all knew that Adele, such a vital component to our Center, was there in spirit.

With Adele's message read, the music began. Chris and Pris Haffenden played a lively tune that was the perfect accompaniment to the festive occasion.

The great moment arrived, and with raised shovels, (and of course multiple cameras clicking away) Lois, Kemal and Michael – Broke the Ground! This immediately elicited exuberant cries and exclamations of "Avatar Meher Baba Ki Jai."



Fred Stankus and Gigi Driessen with Gatsby 3 share a moment with Joyce Stermer



Shani Verchick reads from the Discourses



The Still Yet More Chamber Players



Lois Jones, Kemal Taba and Mike Ramsten break the earth.

There was no shortage of volunteers as nearly everyone joyfully got into the act. The groundbreaking routine required you to procure your shovelful of dirt, then empty it into the nearby wheelbarrow. Dana Lee, however, realized that Baba's 7-colored flag wasn't there. Dashing into the building, she triumphantly returned with Baba's Beautiful Banner (another 3B). The groundbreaking continued, but now with the rainbow flag of Baba's love flying above us.

More and more hands held shovels and tossed dirt into the wheelbarrow. The feelings of good cheer remained as all persevered in the celebratory spirit of initiating Meherabode into a whole new chapter. Many cameras recorded this momentous event for posterity.

As I mused within, these words entered my awareness, "Oh Beloved Baba, what do you have planned for this Magnificent Center in the middle of four major cultural groups? What plans are in store for this Oasis of Love in the heart of the city of Los Angeles?"

Afterwards, I spoke to Kemal Taba, one half of the construction firm of FM Castle, which will be responsible for the renovation project. His partner, Fred Anvari, was unable to attend the groundbreaking. Kemal informed me that renovation is scheduled to begin sometime in August and their projections are to have the job completed within five months.

And so it begins! Jai, Jai and a joyous Jai Baba!





# Bittersweet Timing

Heather Nadel, Sept 13, 2001

News of the horrific events of 11th September in America reached Meherabad in what is evening time here in India. Shock, horror and many repetitions of Beloved Baba's Name filled the Pilgrim Centre as people gathered around radios to follow the news.

As Baba would have it, the next day, Wednesday 12th September, was the day scheduled for Katie, one of the women mandali from Meherazad, to come to Baba's Samadhi and offer her new cookbook at His feet. We had planned to follow with a little tea party down the Hill for Katie and her book helpers.

Needless to say, Wednesday morning no one was in the mood for a party. But nonetheless we all meet Katie at the appointed time.

She arrived from Meherazad about 10:30 a.m., distressed and pale. We learned that the mandali had all spent the evening before watching the news on TV, and afterwards dear Goher went into Baba's room and prayed, "Baba, save America" over and over. Katie said no one slept much; they were all too sad. As she had left for Meherabad that morning, the women had given her a rose "to offer for America" at Baba's feet.

We walked with her into the Samadhi and immediately Katie, with tears in her eyes and in the simplest, most touching words, began to pray to Him for those who had died in the attacks. Then she offered a huge rose flower garland on the Samadhi, not for the book as planned, but for the victims. (The cookbook did eventually get placed at His feet, almost as an afterthought!) Then she sat down inside, and we sat. After a few silent minutes with Baba, Katie suddenly asked, "May I sing?" "Oh yes, Katie!" we said. Then she said, "I want to sing the Seven Names of God for those who passed away."

And so she started to sing: "Hari, Paramatma, Allah, Ahuramazd, God, Yezdan, Hu", the song composed by Baba which she had sung every morning on the Hill over 60 years ago with Mehera, Mani and all the other ashram women. Sung in her strong, rich voice, the beautiful ancient Names rose and filled the Samadhi, reverberating on and on, lifting darkness, reaffirming Reality, there at the feet of God, the all-Merciful, all-Compassionate, all-Knowing. It was with lighter spirits that Katie and the group trooped down the Hill afterwards for tea.

# Dear Ones of our Baba Family in America

Meheru, September 21

The news we read and listen to on radio and TV is just filled with the horrendous attack on the Twin Towers of the World Trade Center and on the Pentagon. It was with shock and disbelief that we rushed to watch the News and see for ourselves the terrible images—unbelievable, unimagined—that kept unfolding on the TV screen. How could this be happening? How could this happen anywhere in the world, let alone in America? How could people be so unfeeling—the ones who instigated it and the ones who died executing it, in the mistaken belief that in dying they themselves were carrying out the most noble deed of their lives for religion, for God.

And yet God showed us a different side of humanity that was so uplifting to the spirit—of people in the hundreds rushing to help, trying to save their fellow man and many dying in the act. This play of opposites showed almost simultaneously how God does not stop our actions, whether good or bad, but allows us to make the choice.

Some time ago I heard on the radio a story where a wrongdoer was getting away with his foul deeds, seemingly unpunished, and another man, questioning this, heard these words: "God is a silent voice within. He will not impose good. He will not eradicate evil. He wants us to win. God is hope. He is the colours of the rainbow."

It was so touching and heartwarming to witness on TV the church services and how people of all different faiths came together to pray for America. Baba's words came to us: "I intend to bring together all religions of the world like beads on one string."

For us fortunate ones who know of and love Baba - God has a form. He has substance, and He has shown us how to act and live. His life has been one of sacrifice and love. A love that, like the sun, is there for each and every one. Be firm in your love for Baba and never ever feel He is not there for you, nor for anyone who turns to Him in their need. Even if you feel it is your darkest hour, He is there with you sharing in the darkness. Be brave and strong and shine for Him - hold His banner high with the colours of the rainbow.

We at Meherazad are keeping up with world events, thinking of you all, and happy to learn that all our Baba family is safe. We are also thinking of other people of the world

who have been oppressed and terrorized, living under terrible conditions. We know that Baba would not allow these events to happen unless they were necessary and meant to happen. I remember standing outside Baba's Room that night after hearing the news from New York City, looking up at the sky and praying - "Oh, Baba, you are all kindness and mercy - may we always be in Your care and in Your hands." And as we are, so is the whole world - may the whole of Creation be in His care. Beloved Baba had a very soft spot for Americans because of the bigness of their hearts. We pray that you may all come out stronger than before in yourselves and in your love for Baba. Let forgiveness rather than hate rule our lives and prevail everywhere. In each one's inner victory is His Victory.

All your Meherazad family remember you and send much much love to you.

Avatar Meher Baba ki Jai!

*(continued from the Editorial page 2)*

through the help of Maya or the cosmic power which creates and sustains the illusory world of duality. The purpose served by Maya in the Divine game is twofold: (1) it can be instrumental in entrapping the soul in the mazes of illusion and (2) it can also be instrumental in freeing the soul from the clutches of spiritual ignorance and bondage.

Maya should not be ignored; it must be handled with detachment and understanding. Wars are the working of Maya; they are spiritually disastrous or otherwise, according to whether they are inspired by attachment or detachment from the creations of Maya...."

*Treasures*, ed. Jane Barry Haynes, pp. 215, 217, 218 Copyright 1980 AMBPCT

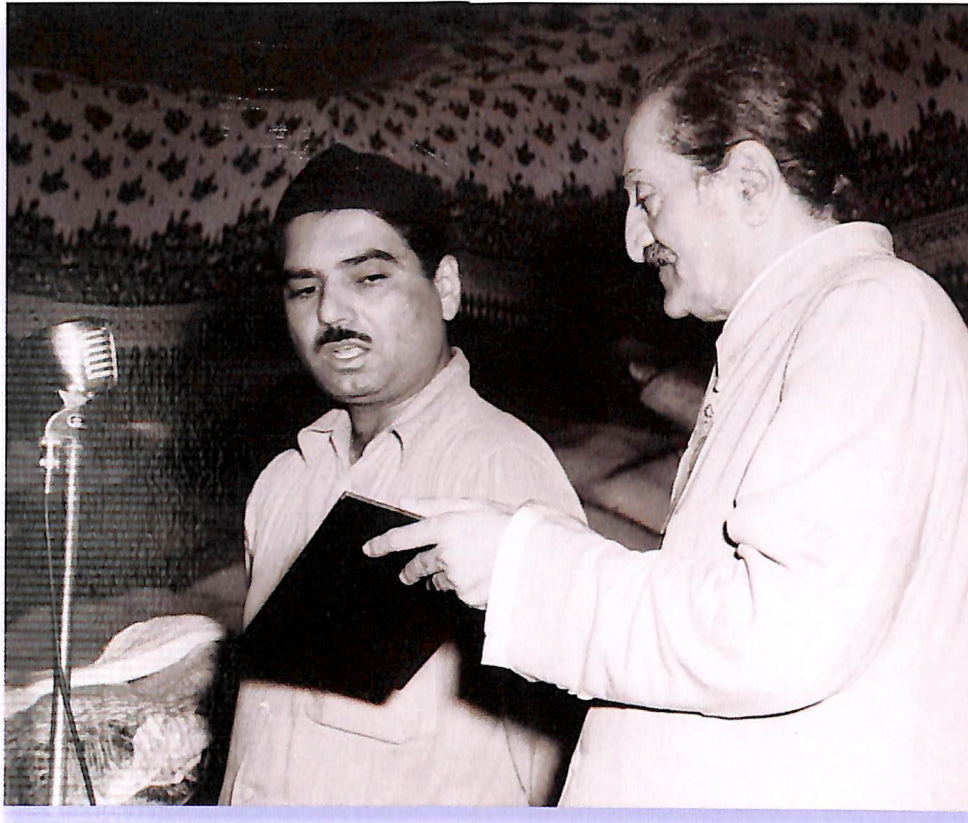
## Addendum to Meher Baba in China:

During the two days Baba was in Shanghai (June 22 and 23 of 1932), Baba is reportedly to have visited the Bund (now called Zhongshan Road), the Racecourse (now the People's Library), Yu Garden, Temple of Jade Buddha (in Chinese called Yufosi), Longhua Temple, Nanjing (Nanking) Road, and Chongqing (Chungking) Road. On the 24th, Baba went to Nanjing and visited Zhongshan Hill (Sun Yat-sen's Mausoleum). The lake mentioned may have been "Xuanwu Lake", near Zhongshanling.

—Tian Gunther, Australia







## Violence and Non-violence

**N**on-violence, pure and simple, means love infinite. It is the goal of life. When pure and infinite love is reached, the aspirant becomes one with God. To reach this goal, there must be intense longing, and the aspirant who has this longing must begin by practicing the "non-violence of the brave." This applies to those who, though not one with all through realization, consider none to be their enemy and try to win over even the aggressor through love. They give up their lives through love, not through fear.

"Non-violence of the brave" is practicable for those who have the intense longing to attain the supreme state. This longing is not to be found in the majority. If, therefore, it is intended to lead the majority to "non-violence," it is necessary first to prepare them for the "non-violence of the brave." To achieve this in a practical way, it is necessary to make them follow, in the beginning, the principle of "non-violent violence"; that is violence done solely for defending the weak, without any selfish motive. In times of war, when the masses are not even in the mood to listen to advice about having intense longing to attain the supreme goal of life, the only practical way to lead them toward the goal is to begin by inculcating in them the principle of "non-violent violence"

and then gradually introducing the "non-violence of the brave." Otherwise, non-violence would not only fail but there would be serious danger of the fatal "non-violence of the coward" – that is, non-resistance to aggression because of fear.

The masses may also be led to the "non-violence of the brave" by following the principles of "selfless violence" instead of those of "non-violent violence." This selfless violence is violence done in self-defense when attacked treacherously. No other motive should be allowed to justify the violence. Thus, for example, if a woman is threatened with violation and one defends her by resorting to violence, one can be said to have followed the principles of "selfless violence." Similarly, when the motherland is being attacked by enemies, the nation's effort in defending the motherland is "selfless violence."

"Non-violence of the coward" is fatal; so also is "selfish violence," i.e., violence for selfish motives by individuals or a nation to gain power or for other selfish ends. "Non-violent violence" cannot be described as love, but as duty – duty done selflessly for others according to Karma Yoga, which is eventually linked up with unlimited love – but motivated by human love.

We must live for God and die for God. War is a necessary evil; it is in God's plan to awaken humanity to higher values. If humanity fails to profit by the lessons of war, it suffers in vain. War teaches that even the man in the street can rise to the greatest heights of sacrifice for the sake of a selfless cause. It also teaches that wealth, possessions, power, fame, family and even life on earth are devoid of lasting value. The incidents of war can, through the lessons they bring, win man for God and initiate him into a new life inspired by lasting values.

In war, people make unlimited sacrifices and endure untold sufferings for the sake of their country or in the interests of political aims; they are capable of the same sacrifices and endurance for God. All religions have unequivocally claimed man for life in the Truth, and it is sheer folly to fight in the name of any religion. It is time for a fresh vision of the Truth that all life is one, that only God is real, and that God is all that matters. God is worth dying for. He is also worth living for. All else is vain and empty, the pursuit of illusory values.

*God to Man and Man to God*, a condensed version of the Discourses into one volume at Baba's request by Charles Purdom.