

Meher Baba Australia

December 2017 – February 2018



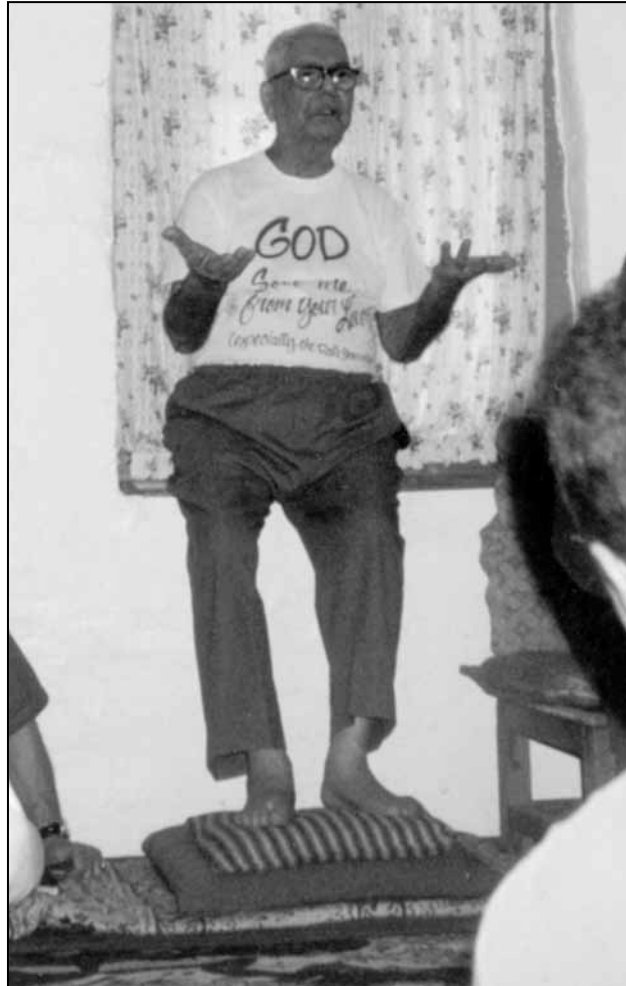
Is that so?

Eruch Jessawala

So often you have heard me say, “**Be determined to be His.**” Yet people come to me and say, “But Eruch, how can we determine to be His?” What can I say? If you are determined to be a lawyer, do you need someone to tell you how to be determined to be a lawyer? No. You simply are determined to be one, so you study and you work, and you do whatever is necessary until you get your degree and are certified as a lawyer.

If you are determined to be His, then you do whatever is necessary to become His. This doesn't have to be explained. But the mind, oh the mind, what can I tell you about the mind? You know what the mind is like. So the mind says, “But what is necessary to do to become His?” Even in the presence of Baba, people's minds would play mischief this way. Baba would tell a large gathering, “Love Me.” And someone in the crowd would stand up and ask, “But how should we love You, Baba?” Baba asked the man if he was married. He said, “Yes.” Baba said, “Does anyone have to tell you how to love your wife?” “No, Baba.” “So no one needs to tell you how to love God, you just do it.” It's that simple and that difficult.

And yet, there are hints, indications, when we are on the right track. And one of these hints that we are on our way to becoming His is when we



Eruch Jessawala talking to pilgrims in Mandali Hall, Meherabad, 1999. Photo by Morgan Bowling.

develop an unshakeable acceptance of His will. By this I don't mean mere lip service, as when people come here and they tell us, “Yes, I left my wife, but what to do, it was Baba's will.” I'm not talking about that kind of acceptance that uses Baba's will as an excuse to do whatever you secretly want to do, but a **resignation to His will so profound that it remains the same regardless of the circumstances.** Maybe this story will help drive home the point I am trying to bring to you all.

It so happened that in a certain area of the country there lived one who loved the Lord. He had settled in an isolated area some distance from the nearest village. There was a small cave in a hill a mile or so outside of the village, and that is where he stayed. You may call him a recluse if you wish, but what need did he have of other people's company when his constant companion was the Lord? But, as Ramakrishna Paramahansa said, “When the flower is ripe, the bees come of their own accord.” And so it was that the villagers started coming to visit.

You know how it is. First, probably, it was just one of the boys herding goats who happened to notice that someone was living in the cave, and he told the other boys and they told their parents, and so people started coming to see who was there,

out of curiosity and to pay their respects. For it was obvious that it must be a devotee of the Lord, for who else would choose to live in such an isolated place?

And so, bit by bit, the villagers started to go visit this recluse, and what did they find? They found him absorbed in his devotion to the Lord. So the people would humbly bow, pay their respects, and leave. But every once in a while, they might come when he was just sitting at the entrance to his cave, seemingly lost in admiration of God's creation. And they would seize this opportunity to begin

a conversation, as they were naturally curious to know where he had come from, how long he planned to stay, what sect, if any, he belonged to, whether he could give them mantras to protect their livestock, in short, the usual endless questions that worldly people have for those who have given up the world.

But no matter how hard they tried, they could not engage him in conversation.

For his response to everything and anything they said was always the same, “Is that so?” If they told him how they had come just to see him, he would look up very serenely and reply, “Is that so?” If they wept and said one of their family members was sick, he would reply just as calmly, “Is that so?” In short, to each and everything his answer was the same, a very gentle, “Is that so?”

This was a disappointment to those thirsting for gossip or words of advice or comfort and yet the villagers found that they were comforted and sustained just by sitting in his presence. They began to send him small offerings of food which they would leave outside the entrance to his cave. And sometimes they would sit there for a while, enjoying the peaceful atmosphere, before returning home. All were happy. The recluse was pleased to be left alone to his worship and adoration of his Beloved, and the villagers were happy that their area was blessed with the abode of a true lover of God.

Now, it so happened that in the village itself we find an entirely different scene. One of the unmarried girls had become



*Meher Baba with Eruch Jessawala. Photo by Meelan Studios.
Avatar's Abode Archives Collection.*

pregnant. Her mother eventually discovered this and was horrified. She began weeping and wailing at this calamity. When the father returned home in the evening, he was even more upset at this revelation and began yelling at his daughter, berating her and demanding to know who was responsible for this outrage. You see, in those days people were very strict; such a happening brought disgrace and dishonor on the whole family – even the village felt itself shamed.

The girl began to weep, but she was afraid to name the one responsible for fear that her parents would hurt him, so the more her parents demanded to know who had done it, the more she wept. Finally she blurted out, “Don’t keep saying, ‘Who is responsible?’ If you must know, you are the ones at fault. It is because of you that I am now in such a wretched state.” “Our fault! But how can that be?” “Because you are the ones who used to send me every morning with the bowl of curds for the saint living outside of town.” “So? What had that to do with . . . you mean he is the one?”

And the girl tearfully confessed that one morning after leaving the curds, the saint came out of the cave and raped her and she hadn’t dared say anything until then because she knew what high esteem he was held in by all.

Well, the parents were understandably shocked and outraged at this, and the father began cursing the scoundrel and muttering, “I knew he was up to no good.” See how the mind works. Only that morning he had sent

the saint a bowl of curds and spoken of him with the greatest reverence, but as soon as his daughter confessed that he had raped her, then suddenly he always knew that the saint was an imposter, a rascal.

So the father goes to the village elders and tells them what has happened. Most are for going to the cave immediately and thrashing the man. But a few, remembering the feeling they always had in his presence, found it difficult to believe that he could have done such a thing and insisted on confronting him first, before taking any action.

Thus, a party of the village men tramp out to the cave and call the saint out. After a while he emerges, as unconcerned and benign as ever. “You rascal,” the father shouts on seeing him. “You raped my daughter!” “Is that so?” the saint replied, as if the father had merely said, “It seems like it might rain.” The father rushed forward to strike the saint, but one of the elders held him back and addressed the saint himself. “This man’s daughter is pregnant and she claims you are the father.” “Is that so?” the saint

Continued on next page

replied with equal unconcern. "She says you raped her!" "Is that so?"

Well, this was too much for the father. "Have you no shame!" he declares. "And to pose as a lover of God, you hypocrite!" and he began beating the saint.

The other villagers are also enraged that the saint showed so little concern at such a serious accusation, and they conclude that such indifference can only reflect callous guilt, and they are also outraged that all these years they have been duped into feeling the man was a saint when in reality he was the lowest of the low, and they all take their anger out by hitting and kicking the saint. Finally, leaving him for dead, they return home, satisfied that they have done what honor demanded.

But the saint did not die. He crawled back to his cave and went on with adoration of the Lord as always. Meanwhile time passes and the daughter gives birth. The parents don't want the child, as it only reminds them of their disgrace, so the father, who has heard from the goatherders that the saint is still living in his cave, goes there and takes the baby with him.

The saint is sitting outside the cave, silently marveling at the beauty of his Beloved, when the father approaches and thrusts the baby in his hands. "Here, this is yours." "Is that so?" the saint asks, looking at the child. "This is the fruit of your evil action, now it is up to you to look after it." "Is that so?" The father stalks off, and the saint, as unruffled as ever, begins to raise the child. Some of the shepherd boys give the saint some milk which he feeds to the child, and so time passes.

Meanwhile the parents feel that the only way they can really get over their shame is to get their daughter safely married. Of

course, it is out of the question to marry her to anyone in their own village, but, by promising a large dowry, they manage to arrange for her marriage to an older man living in a nearby village. With great happiness they announce to the daughter that they have found her a husband. But, to their astonishment, the daughter starts crying. "I won't marry," she says. "What are you talking about? You have to get married. You are of age, you can't stay in our home forever, and we have a good man in the next village who is willing to marry you in spite of your past." And they began to extol the virtues of this marriage. But the more they go on, the more their daughter weeps.

She declares, "If you make me marry with any other person, I will kill myself." The parents can't understand this at all. What does she mean, "any other person"? Finally, the girl confesses, "I love another. I have loved him for years. If I marry anyone, it will be him or I won't marry. He is the one who fathered my child, and he will be my husband or nobody will."

The parents can hardly believe their ears. Immediately the father feels crushed with guilt. The saint had not been responsible for his daughter's dishonor, but he had dishonored the family by abusing the saint. With great embarrassment and shame, the father goes to the village elders and confesses to them what has happened. They are also all abashed at their former treatment of the saint, and they realize there is nothing for it but to go and beg his forgiveness. So once more the father and the village men climb the hill outside the village and stand humbly at the entrance of the cave.

They beseech the saint to come out, and soon he appears, carrying a small happy child in his arms. The father is so humiliated at this that he almost

can't say anything, but he falls at the saint's feet and finally blurts out, "Forgive me, I have done you a great wrong." "Is that so?" the saint asks mildly. "Yes, I am so sorry. My daughter has confessed. Here, this is not your child," and the father takes the infant back. "Is that so?" the saint replies. All of the villagers join in begging forgiveness and asking the saint's pardon, but all he ever says is, "Is that so?"

After confessing their errors, begging forgiveness, and leaving all the gifts and garlands they had brought, the repentant villagers tramped down the hill while the saint went back inside his cave to continue his worship of the Lord as if nothing had ever happened.

When he was given the baby and told it was his, he said, "Is that so?" When the baby was taken away and he was told it wasn't his, he said, "Is that so?" When he was abused, "Is that so?" When he was honored, "Is that so?"

And why was this? Because the saint, as a true lover of God, took all that happened as His will. As long as we are for ourselves, even if we try to love the Lord, we cannot be resigned to His will.

But if we become His, then His will becomes our pleasure and every manifestation of it is a fresh marvel of His divine attributes. If we are His, our equanimity is never disturbed because it is all His doing, and His presence sustains us.

© 1995 Avatar Meher Baba Perpetual Public Charitable Trust. Extract from 'THAT'S HOW IT WAS': Stories of Life With Meher Baba. Edited by Steve Klein

The Beloved's Tomb

Peter Rowan

My intention is to present a synoptic overview of the early tumultuous years and far reaching events of the decade which characterised the formation of Beloved Avatar Meher Baba's Tomb as we know it today.

By 1927 Meherabad was fully functioning, and in June of that year Meher Baba had a basic cabin built on Meherabad Hill of bamboo matting and tin sheets with a door and a window. The following month, at the end of July 1927, Baba ordered a pit to be dug directly under the cabin, 6ft. long 6ft. deep and 4ft. wide, the pit was then given a degree of permanence with stone and masonry work and small steps down in to it, it was then covered above by wooden planks.

Two weeks after work had been completed, Baba began staying in this crypt-like cabin where He intended spending several months in seclusion. It was generally referred to as the ditch or pit-room by the mandali.¹

Baba then began fasting, and would spend His nights on a mattress placed at the bottom of the pit, and during the day remain extremely active and energetic even though He was only drinking coffee once a day prepared by Mehera.²

I would point out, that as well as spending time in the crypt-cabin Baba was fully involved with the running

of Meherabad, the Meher Ashram Schools and the Prem Ashram.

Almost three months went by with Baba fasting and being secluded most of the time, then in November 1927 Baba had five small temporary rooms built next to His crypt-cabin which He named the *Sadhak Ashram*. Five men were instructed by Beloved Baba to occupy these rooms, meditate and not to step out of their room under any circumstance; after a few days, each of the men began to be deeply affected and have profound inner experiences.³

By the 20th December 1927 Baba

had been fasting continuously for forty days, spending the night in the crypt in seclusion and the day in the upper portion fasting on one pint of coffee per day and during the last few days fasting on water only.⁴

On the third of January 1928, many of the boys of the Prem-Ashram burst into uncontrollable weeping, it is said the sound of their cries could be heard a quarter of a mile away. These tears of love for the Beloved lasted for half an hour and didn't stop until Baba consoled the boys personally.⁵



Meher Baba with pilgrims in front of the meditation cells next to his tombshrine at Upper Meherabad. Photographer Padri. © MSI Collection.

Continued on next page

A few days after the outburst of weeping, an extraordinary event took place in the underground crypt which displays graphically for us the importance of these times. In the crypt, one evening it appears, our Beloved Avatar Meher Baba held a meeting with 'spiritual masters' and it was decided a world war would take place.⁶

The spiritual experiences of the men in the *Sadhak-Ashram* continued to grow in intensity over the next two weeks as did the weeping and experiences of the boys in the Prem-Ashram.⁷ One boy, Abdulla, according to Baba, was in a state not unlike a saint on the sixth plane, and was in such a delicate elevated state of consciousness that Baba had space made in His crypt-cabin for him, separating himself and Abdulla only by a curtain; Baba kept Abdulla with Him for several weeks in this manner.⁸

By the 20th February 1928 Baba had been fasting for more than one hundred days and was very weak. It was not until February 26th that Beloved Baba came out of seclusion and decided to visit the women mandali whom He had not seen for two months, to celebrate the occasion He was pulled in a flower decorated rickshaw by the Prem-Ashram boys.

As Baba's rickshaw passed by the dhuni at lower Meherabad all witnessed an extraordinary phenomenon as a flame rose with an exceedingly bright flash.



Building the dome of the Samadhi, Upper Meherabad, 1938. Photograph by Padri. © MSI Collection.



Meher Baba, most likely seated in the doorway of the crypt during a five-and-a-half-month fast and seclusion. Circa late 1927 or early 1928, Upper Meherabad. Photographer unknown. © Meher Nazar Publications.

After seeing Mehera, Baba returned to the dhuni and sat very still in the rickshaw for about fifteen minutes, He then ordered He should be taken back to His crypt-cabin to continue His seclusion and fasting on two cups of coffee per day. He also gave orders that the men staying in the *Sadhak-Ashram* should end their seclusion and fasting.

The following day Baba was extremely restless, moving up and down in the crypt-cabin, sometimes sitting, sometimes lying and turning over constantly, and changing His body position every few minutes, enigmatically, Beloved Baba conveyed to those near Him that He was dying!⁹

Baba brought these dramatic activities at Meherabad to a close to a large extent in May 1928 when He moved the whole ashram to Toka for the next six months.¹⁰

Before leaving for Toka, Beloved Baba had given orders that the cabin over the crypt should be taken down during His absence, and a new structure be built using stone.

Work on the new stone structure, which included a stone platform and a tin roof, was still in progress when Baba returned to Meherabad in December 1928. With the work finished by early 1929 Baba began staying in the stone cabin and spending nights in the crypt again.¹¹

Over the next few years Baba travelled in and out of India extensively but would return to Meherabad and occasionally retire to the crypt.



Meher Baba in the rickshaw, Baily standing in front to pull it, 19 September 1927, Meherabad. Photographer Shah. © Meher Nazar Publications.

In May 1934, when Baba was again in the crypt, a severe storm tore through Meherabad, the mandali attempted to hold the pillars down which were supporting the tin roof flapping in the wind so it wouldn't be torn away, but Baba was forced to leave the crypt and take shelter elsewhere.¹²

Beloved Baba continued travelling, and in January 1938 returned to Meherabad and discussed with the mandali plans to build some new structures on Meherabad Hill, one major item being rebuilding entirely the crypt-cabin again.

Baba had the rough stone and mortar walls torn down and replaced by dark stones from the former post-office building near the railway line which had been demolished some years before, and ordered that a dome be erected over the new structure; the procedure for the building being supervised by an engineer devotee of Beloved Baba and other professional engineers.¹³

By the early months of 1938 the building was almost complete, and concrete models of a Muslim Mosque, Hindu Temple, Christian Cross and Zoroastrian Fire Urn were fitted to the upper corners of the new structure.

It was at this stage it became apparent to the mandali that this was to be Beloved Baba's future tomb.¹⁴

With the work finished entirely by 25th August 1938, Baba had the Swiss artist Helen Dahm paint the interior of the tomb with murals, and while walking on Meherabad Hill made a sweeping gesture saying, "The whole universe is mine, but this place is especially mine."¹⁵

During the 1940s, Baba would occasionally spend nights in the crypt in seclusion, but these occasions were becoming less frequent. One such occasion, during these war years, was in November 1941 when Baba secluded himself in His tomb during certain hours with men keeping watch

Continued on next page

on all sides, with orders not to make any noise or enter a fixed boundary without permission.

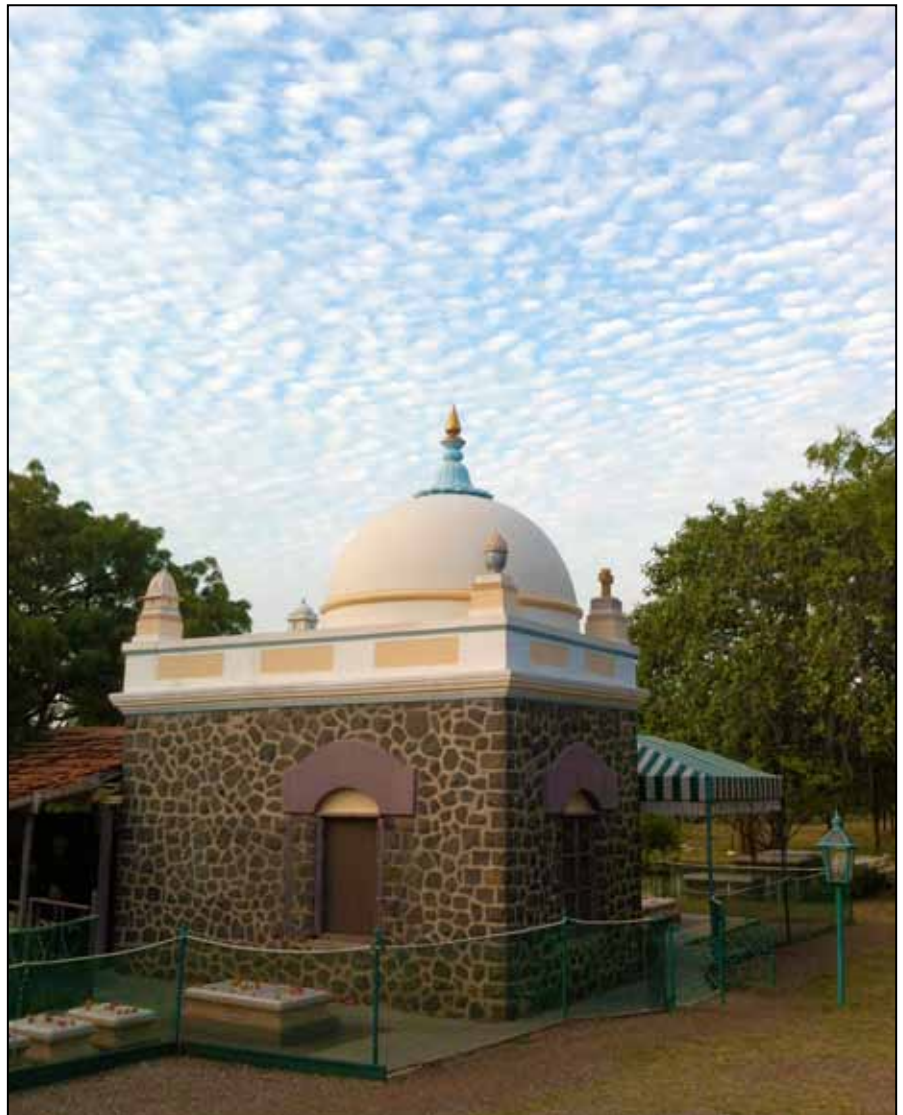
Well into the 1940s the tomb was being used to some extent as a storage place, and in May 1947, vandals broke in and strew files, books and Baba's mattress about. This happened while Baba was away from Meherabad, and drew the response from the Beloved in a letter to Pendu on 20th May 1947, "If anything like this happens again, Meherabad will be doomed!" After this incident, Baba ordered an increase in night watchmen.¹⁶

Over the intervening years, up until Avatar Meher Baba dropped His body in 1969, visitors would be shown what was to be Baba's final resting place and Baba himself would occasionally lead a visiting group up Meherabad Hill, sometimes asking them to enter the tomb or bow down at the threshold, or even occasionally asking this one or that one to spend the night in its interior.

The sanctity of the tomb had become firmly established well before 1969, and Beloved Baba's comments concerning its future were explicit as to its importance, and of the work for humanity He had accomplished there, "This place will become an important place of pilgrimage for the world. After seventy years, it will be a place of great privilege."¹⁷

Beloved Baba has told us many times that the Avatar never loses connection with creation and is always available to His lover, and where His body is there his power is.

In past years, I have spent a great deal of time in Avatar Meher Baba's tomb, and can say without equivocation that I found it to be extremely liberating and a supreme source of direct contact with the



*Meher Baba's Samadhi, Upper Meherabad, December 2014.
Photo taken by David Bowling and used with permission.*

Beloved. It is without doubt His *Turiyavastha*, the divine junction between illusion and Reality.

In 1987, eighteen years after Beloved Baba had dropped His body, one of the mandali was resting on his bed and went into a reverie of remembrance and longing for his Beloved, as the reverie deepened he found himself transported to Avatar Meher Baba's tomb and saw Baba enter the interior, as he waited, he heard deep from within the tomb a resoundingly sweet voice, which reverberated through his whole being, "I am Here, I am Here, I am Here."¹⁸

References

1. *LORD MEHER* v3 p956
2. *Ibid* p985 3. pp989-990 4. p995 5. p1003
6. p1004 7. p1010 8. p1012 9. pp1026-1029
10. p1047
11. *LORD MEHER online* p1016
12. *LORD MEHER* v5 p1869
13. *LORD MEHER online* p1933
14. *Ibid* p1934
15. *THE SAMADHI* Bal Natu. Sheriar. p39
16. *LORD MEHER online* p2578
17. *Ibid* p4334
18. *THE SAMADHI* Bal Natu. Sheriar. p31

Meher Baba: God as Man

Meher Baba's close disciple Eruch Jessawala in conversation with Naosherwan Anzar, editor and publisher of *Glow International*. This discussion took place during Anzar's stay at Meherazad in 1969, not long after Beloved Baba dropped His body. Eruch explains the deep significance of the Avatic Advent and the true meaning of the Avatar in our midst. – Ed

In the Arti (song of praise / hymn) that Francis Brabazon wrote, he used the expression '*Truth and Truth's body, divine Avatar*' which to my mind beautifully defines the Advent. Although the Sanskrit word '*Avatar*' somewhat explains the Advent as the descent of reality into illusion, to the people of this era '*Truth and Truth's Body*'

makes the whole concept of 'Reality in the midst of illusion' clearer. Truth is reality and reality is Truth; and the body that is taken on by Truth is the body we see in the Advent, the figure of Meher Baba, or Jesus Christ, or Gautama Buddha.

Each time the Advent takes place, as explained to us by Meher Baba, it was pre-ordained in the previous Advent. So what we find as Meher Baba is nothing but the projection or the unfolding of the plan that had been drawn up at the time of Mohammed.



*Meher Baba at the East-West Gathering, Poona, India, 1962.
Photographer unknown. Avatar's Abode Archives Collection.*

And all we can say, from what we have been given to understand by Meher Baba, is that the times and the circumstances suited this Advent as they did all previous Advents. The Avatar comes when the presence of reality in the midst of illusion is most necessary.

Whatever we say about the Advents and Avatars is a simple and obvious thing but we make a big issue of it. What it is, is reality descending into illusion and *functioning* as Reality. However, Reality is so spread out in

the realm of illusion, that for it to function in illusion is a rarity, and that is why the Advent is known as the 'springtide of creation'. It is the greatest act of compassion for reality to come down and function in illusion.

Now in order to function in illusion, reality adopts human form and the form is then referred to as the Advent or the Avatar. Baba has said that illusion is total darkness and Reality is total effulgence, total brilliance. And if Reality were to descend into illusion, i.e. if total light were to descend into total darkness, the darkness would be shattered. So the only way total light can be received by total

darkness is to camouflage that total light and that camouflage, is nothing but the form of the Advent, which is always in a male human form. It is so ordained. None can say for certain why it is so, or whether it is timely that the Advent has taken place for we have no capacity to sit in judgment. The Advent takes place because it was timely that it happened.

Meher Baba has given us to understand that he is the same Ancient One who comes again and again in

Continued on next page

our midst as a man amongst men, and whatever difference may exist among the appearances of the Avatar is not a difference in substance but in the mask he has to wear each time Reality descends into illusion. Only the material of the camouflage is different. Sometimes he seems to be a great warrior, sometimes a great peace-maker, sometimes he is the one who promotes brotherhood, purity and honesty, and according to circumstances, he manifests the traits which are required for the times.

This has happened millions upon millions of occasions, but we stick to a handful of Advents recorded in the past, and we try to compare them. But the only comparison that can be made is the external form that keeps changing; otherwise he is the same Ancient One who functions as Redeemer, Saviour, Messenger, and Messiah. He may be called by different names but he stations himself on all planes of consciousness. He is the Highest of the High and the lowest of the low, simultaneously. He is on all levels; all planes and his functions vary according to the circumstances and the needs of humanity.

In each Advent it is the same one Truth that becomes the message. If there were two Truths, the Truth would not stand its ground because Truth by itself is one and only one. It is spoken in different languages in different Advents and explained according to the level of consciousness that humanity possesses at each particular time, and for this the Ancient One uses metaphors and parables to fit the particular circumstances of the Advent and he also shows us different ways to live that one Truth according to the times.

The Avatar is always referred to as

‘He’ instead of ‘It’ or the ‘Reality’ and this is so because the Reality always dons the male human form. Therefore we always use the masculine gender in referring to the Avatar; we say ‘his coming again and again in our midst’.

Now what need is there for the Avatar to come so many times? It is all his ‘Divine Game’. It is the divine game of hide-and-seek that takes place wherein he continues to remain hidden. There is a continuous process of seeking and being sought, and he being infinite, the whole of existence revolves around this reality which is infinite. The game goes on and on without any end except at the time when there is total dissolution (mahapralaya), and even then it is not the end because there is no end to this beginningless beginning.

The Avatar gives us the precepts we need and if we were to follow them, there would be no need for him to repeat his appearances. However, humanity being steeped in the slumber of illusion, he comes to get us out of illusion-consciousness and help us march towards Reality-Consciousness. The grip of illusion is so tight on us that no amount of our determination to follow the path of righteousness, allows us to stay on that path. So time and again he returns to put us back on the path of righteousness from which we keep slipping.

His coming in our midst and laying down precepts to guide us, does help for the time being, but gradually the influence fades away and he has to make another appearance. This fading away of the influence is all because he likes his Divine Game. He wants to come in our midst and be with us. This is what I have been made to understand by Meher Baba.

As far as the religions we follow,

Meher Baba does not want us to give them up in order to follow him. On the contrary, he wants us to become aware of the precepts that were laid down at the time of those past Advents which brought about each particular religion.

When he was in our midst as Zoroaster, there was no such thing as Zoroastrianism. At the time of Buddha when he was in our midst, there was no such thing as Buddhism, and at the time of Jesus when he was in our midst, there was no such thing as Christianity.

These religions cropped up only after the Advents. First, there were a few followers in each Advent and with the passage of time, the followers increased in numbers and they tried to form themselves into groups with the same ideologies, holding on to the precepts laid down in that Advent and gradually they form a religion.

Religion that is man-made has nothing to do with the Advent. That being so, why is it recognized as Christianity, Buddhism, Zoroastrianism or Hinduism? It is to commemorate an Advent that mankind creates such religions and thus each religion revolves around a particular Advent.

Meher Baba never told us to leave or give up our own religion. I am a Zoroastrian by birth and he wants me to be a *true* Zoroastrian.

So if you are a Christian, he wants you to be a *true* Christian, a *true* Christian, mind you! We call ourselves Christians, Buddhists, Muslims, Zoroastrians, but are we really and truly *true* Christians, Buddhists, Muslims, Zoroastrians and Hindus? Hardly!

All the Avatar does each time he comes is to give us the same Truth. He

does not differentiate a Mohammedan from a Hindu, or a Christian from a Zoroastrian. He brings them all together and once again regenerates that Truth in their hearts. He wants everyone to become aware of their shortcomings in not having lived up to the precepts laid down in the past. So he revives some of those precepts, regenerates them and once again puts us back on the path of righteousness. We, in turn, begin to uphold what He has said and by following His precepts, cause posterity to label our activities a 'religion'.

Now whether posterity will create a new religion to commemorate Meher Baba's Advent, I cannot know, nor am I the one to say that it should start such a religion. Meher Baba himself has spoken out against any such movement.

The basis of all religions is nothing but love for God, so what is really needed is to establish that love in our hearts without formalizing it. If rites, rituals and ceremonies were to become the centre of formal expression of love for God, then it will undoubtedly be a disservice to Meher Baba who came to do away with such practices that are so widespread in all the religions.

I am sure Meher Baba lovers would not want a religion of their own but would prefer instead to embrace all the religions of the world as one religion, following the precepts of Meher Baba to live the life of Love and Truth in the name of the Lord. I am equally certain that there will be others who will continue to be bound to religion in the customary manner.

Perhaps the lovers of Meher Baba may be perceived in the future as just another sect living a different kind of life and other religious groups may view them as simply another religion.

But as long as these lovers of Baba continue devotedly to live the message of Love and Truth, they will never slip into the rut of formal religion. On the contrary, they will be serving Meher Baba as he wanted them to do.

Of course Meher Baba lovers will want to congregate together and in doing so they should bear in mind the *following guidance from him*: First and foremost, pleasing Baba by actually living his message is the paramount thing and by thus pleasing him, the heart becomes his centre and no other centre or institution can compare with that. However, if need for a centre is felt, Meher Baba has said that there are quite a number of public gardens or huge trees under which lovers can gather to talk about him, to remember him and to sing devotional songs. Such a gathering then becomes a group of similar hearts that carry love for the Lord.

Once a group is formed, the number of lovers is likely to increase and the group becomes larger. There are now many minds that have come together in closeness to the same heart where Baba's love resides and the group will need discipline, organization and so forth.

For such a situation, Baba has said, "Have your centres where you can gather as often as you wish, and a place or address where others who wish to find out about me, may come or write to, but in the gathering let there be no difference between one and another, and let it be remembered always that at these meetings, it is Baba himself who presides. In this way no one will begin to dictate, dissensions and rifts will be avoided and my message will be promoted."

The way to share this treasure of Baba then is to live such a natural

life based on Baba's message of Love and Truth that those who live a most unnatural life may sense and enquire as to the source of inspiration. They can then be told about Meher Baba, and if only a handful of lovers were to spread out in the crowd and do their natural work, that is all that would be required.

There is no need ever to worry about centres, institutions, small halls, large halls or the spreading of the message if we first love him as he should be loved. After all, who inspires people to go or not to go to a centre? It is Baba! The inspiration to have or not have a centre or hall is also through him, so if we do our part and leave it up to him, there will be no need to worry. Baba summed it up when he said, "To love me is your business, and the rest is my business!"

However, if there is an organization, it should be a formal one in order to function according to the laws of the land, but let it be a democratic one where every individual can have his say, and above all let the embodiment of Truth that the Avatar is, be the example to each one to become likewise a walking-talking church, temple, pagoda or agiary.

It is the failure to keep such things in mind that leads the very institutions which were created to commemorate the Advent, into the paradoxical ways of dissipating the message and thereby again beginning to create the conditions for another Advent.

*Published with permission. © Copyright,
GLOW INTERNATIONAL*

The Poona Story – Part II - The Descent

Sarah McNeill

Preamble: *The Poona Story* is an enlivened account of this most significant time in the history of the city of Pune, when the Avatar of the Age took on his predestined role.

Thus Part I of the book is titled 'The Advent'; Parts II and III, titled 'The Descent' and 'The Commencement' describe the immediate outcomes and the first public unfolding of this momentous happening, all set within the context of the streets and surrounding areas of Poona as it was then.

During the years preceding the birth of Meher Baba, immense new developments were taking place in all spheres of life, and in amongst all the change, pre-echoes of his life and work in the years ahead can be perceived. The backdrop of change and innovation is in fact the context of the most intensely demanding and testing time of his descent from the state of God-Realisation back to normal human consciousness; and likewise, for the unique and very brief days of the commencement of the earthly work of The Avatar. – Ed.



Intro & Extracts

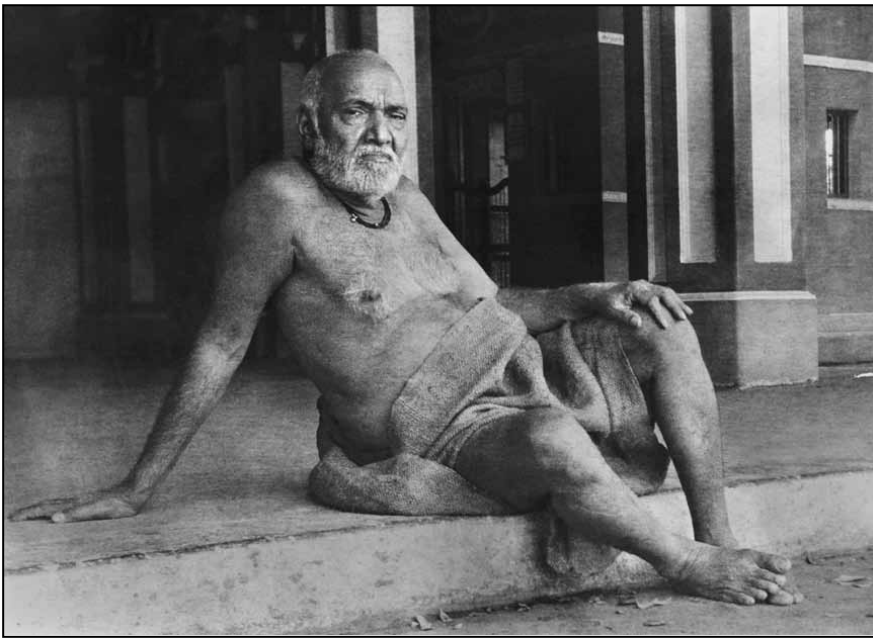
It seems that the five Perfect Masters who lived at the time of the birth of Merwan Sheriar Irani, rarely if ever actually met together. Maybe PMs don't need to meet in person even when all five are located in the same part of the world! Narayan Maharaj (1885 - 1945), a Hindu master, lived in a palace at Kedgaon near Ahmednagar, some thirty-seven miles east of Poona. While Tajuddin Baba, (1861 – 1925) made his eventual abode and dargah at Vaki Sharif near Nagpur, a distance of over four hundred miles east of Poona. Sai Baba,

(1835 – 1918), was located at Shirdi, about one hundred miles north east of Poona, and Upasni Maharaj, (1870 – 1941) at one time a close disciple of Sai Baba, made an abandoned temple at Khandoba, a few miles from Shirdi, his chosen seat, moving later to Sakori, still not far from Shirdi, and only about a hundred and ten miles from Poona. Hazrat Babajan (c.1806 – 1931), who spent countless years as a wandering fakir, made her way to the city of Poona in about 1904. She carefully chose the place that would become known as her seat under the neem tree at Char Bawdi in the Sadar Bazaar area of the Poona Cantonment. Thus, for the Avatarhood of Meher Baba, all five of the Perfect Masters were stationed in Maharashtra, one in Poona itself and the others not much further away than a day's journey by train; and each one of them on a level of being beyond the realms of any worldly religious hierarchy for these five were the rarest souls, the few who were one with the consciousness of God.

Hazrat Babajan chose Char Bawdi after lingering for some time near mosques and Muslim shrines in the old part of Poona. There were no shrines or mosques in the Sadar Bazaar quarter, only a Zoroastrian agiary and the Lal Devi synagogue to the north end and the Anglican church of St Mary to the south. But religious edifices held no interest for her. This precise locality was chosen by her as the best place to keep a close watch on her most precious treasure, *mera piarra beta*, as she would call him, 'my precious son'.

Young Merwan Irani was about ten when the white-haired fakir first made her appearance near Butler Moholla and he would probably have been going to school or running errands for his mother, usually on his bike. As he progressed from school to college, he would continue to pass through that way regularly, but to a teenage student, she would have simply been part of the neighbourhood, as unremarkable as the street sellers or any other local inhabitants. Merwan might have noticed groups gathering around her in the evenings; but he never bothered to stop or pay any attention until the day she shot a glance in his direction as he cycled across the street junction, and in that moment, held his eye. For the first time, now aged nineteen, he looked straight at her, and the saintly old lady beckoned to him. Leaving his bike, he walked across to where she sat and received the warm welcome of her embrace. The following year, 1914, Babajan gave him the kiss which precipitated his heightened state of God Realisation. That year marked the start of World War I. It marked the end of Merwan's youth, the end of his studies and the end of his everyday life at home.

It also marked the start of a seven-year process of transformation and transition meticulously detailed in *Lord Meher*. Described in those pages are the external events and signs which indicated the long drawn-out and painful process of his descent from super-consciousness back to worldly experience of the human condition. The state of God Realisation, the indescribable experience of divine bliss,



*Upasni Maharaj, Sakori. Date and photographer unknown.
© Meher Nazar Publications.*



*Hazrat Babajan, Poona. Date and photographer unknown.
© Meher Nazar Publications.*

which seemed to leave Merwan dazed and moving about like a sleep-walker, is detailed mainly through descriptions of his outward behaviour and actions. How the five Perfect Masters worked to combine their powers and bring about the manifestation of God on earth in human form is left unsaid. The unseen forces that form a priceless diamond deep underground might serve as a gross analogy of the power mustered by these five Perfect Masters to actuate the manifestation of Reality in illusion. Meher Baba, in later years, when asked about this event, simply said it was their love. Elsewhere he says that, *“In love, the physical, vital and mental energies are gathered up and made available for the cause of the Beloved, with the result that this love becomes a dynamic power. (Discourses – seventh edition. 1987. p.55)*

At this stage, during the years of his descent to normality, Merwan had three friends at his side; Khodu and Baily, childhood pals from Butler Mohalla, and later, also Behramji, the Persian newcomer Merwan had helped in learning to read and write. At first one or other of them travelled with

him on his impromptu journeys as he regained his bearings. Then he felt urged to visit local saints and holy men, and the travels became more purposeful as one by one, Merwan visited each of the Perfect Masters in different parts of Maharashtra, receiving from each of the Qutubs a sacred gift. During these months it became apparent that Merwan was suffering incessantly, sleeping little and eating hardly at all. The pain of making the required conscious readjustment to earthly existence seemed to increase steadily as the days went by. It was the impressive master, Upasni Maharaj, who became Merwan’s spiritual guide, while the young man’s chosen retreat during the evenings and into the nights was under the tree at Char Bawdi sitting with Babajan. Maharaj called him regularly to Sakori, steering Merwan as a mentor might direct a student, but with all-seeing command and daunting expectation. His instruction demanded that Merwan, take on tasks to bring about self-humiliation and debasement in order to experience in all its complexity the desperation

of the human condition. Every task demanded extreme endurance and, at the same time, required that he retain active consciousness of his Godhood. Merwan, of his own accord during times of solitude, would strike his head on the ground, against rock or stone, creating acute pain to keep himself anchored to the material world wherein he needs must live and do his work, trying at all times to keep his self-inflicted blows hidden from friends and family.

Excerpt from *The Poona Story*

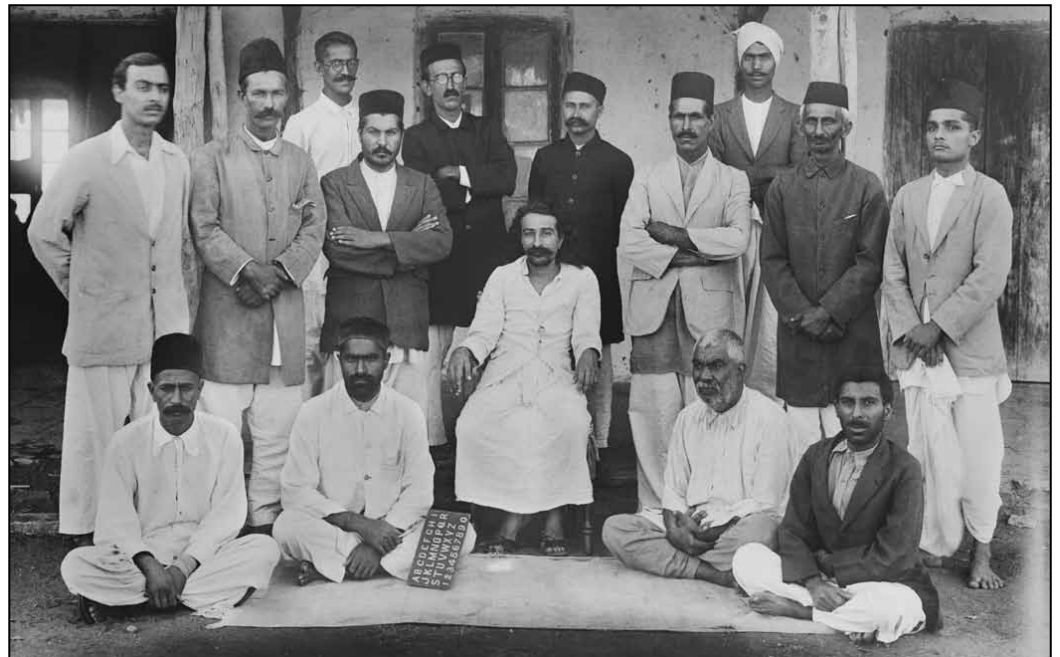
“For years this practice was part of his daily life, if not at home, then away near the Tower of Silence or in some sheltered corner of the Golibar maidan where he could continue his severe ritual unobserved. Later on, Merwan would more often go across town over to Jangli Pir, an old name meaning ‘Jungle Saint’ in reference to one of several saints or sadhus who lived many years ago in caves on the other side of the Mutha River, in the locality of Bhamburda

Continued on next page

village. There he would sit in a rough-hewn rock corner near the Pateleshwar cave temple; or he would make his way to another place further up from there, an unspecified, remote area somewhere along the Fergusson College Road where he could be in seclusion. In this way he criss-crossed the city of Poona, walking long distances in his self-imposed routine.”

By this time, Poona was far from being the famed city of the Peshwars whose fabulous wealth had, during the eighteenth century, built palatial homes, spacious courtyards and elegantly landscaped, gardens. Its past grandeur was long gone. Yet one hundred and fifty years of the Peshwars' self-aggrandisement as princes of Maharashtra had made Poona the capital of the Deccan, admired by the British newcomers who would subsequently make it their home in India. British army officers regarded with particular attention and respect the horsemanship skills of the Peshwars. Even Shivaji in the days of the seventeenth century, tutored by the Peshawa noble, Dadoji Konddev, had mastered these skills at a young age and went on to command his own body of horsemen, making them heroes of the Maratha people, feared by the Moghul forces they repeatedly scattered and defeated.

In the history of those times, Maharashtra boasted some of the finest cavalry regiments in India and in later years, the renowned Deccan Horse regiments were part of the military might thrown into the apocalyptic battlefields of World War I. There the continuing undercurrents of Avataric



Meher Baba and mandali, Lower Meherabad circa 1928. Seated: Pesu, Karim, Baba, Masaji, Homi Bhatena. Standing: Pendu, Behramji, Raosaheb, Meherwan Irani (who Pendu said was visiting for a few months; perhaps a relative of Baba's), Chanji, Gustadji, Baidul, Chhagan, Nadirsha Dastur and Vishnu. © Meher Nazar Publications.

change became all too apparent as, in 1917, Deccan Horse, thundered forwards through mud and smoke to vanquish enemy guns entrenched along a ridge somewhere near the French-Belgian border. It was the last ever great cavalry charge. There were no survivors. Cavalry became a thing of the past. Tanks were the only means to overcome guns and munitions in this new kind of warfare. Tanks and explosives were needed fast and in large quantities. Conveyor belt manufacturing developed rapidly to provide the means and from then on, as demand grew, the hard labour of armies of workers was dictated and controlled by machines in the workplace, assembly lines for mass production which could be adapted to meet any requirements.

Gradually the streets of Poona showed signs of change as military vehicles were parked along the old cavalry lines in spaces once reserved for horses, and troop movements brought new recruits into the town,

crowded onto trains from all parts of Maharashtra, recruits to be assembled and drilled in army warfare before transportation to the port of Bombay and embarkation on ships for Egypt and from there to Gallipoli and elsewhere. Troops from ten different countries poured into that theatre of war; casualties on land and at sea were unprecedented. In the end, the armies of more than thirty nations were ordered into the battlefields of World War I, ultimately known as the Great War. This was all part of the backdrop to Merwan's descent.

Moving from one severe test to the next as Upasni Maharaj watched over him, Merwan still occasionally slept at his family home. His mother, Shireen, felt she loved him more than any of her other children and naturally wanted to direct his life and supervise everything he did. For this reason, Merwan welcomed the chance to move away from the Cantonment where his father's toddy shops were located, and work with Behramji at the new

toddy shop in Kasba Peth, and during this period, many of Merwan's future companions were drawn to that special place. By 1920, Young Adi, who had come from Ahmednagar to Poona to attend college, was keen to contact Meher Baba and asked Baily where he could find him:

Quote from Adi included in *The Poona Story*

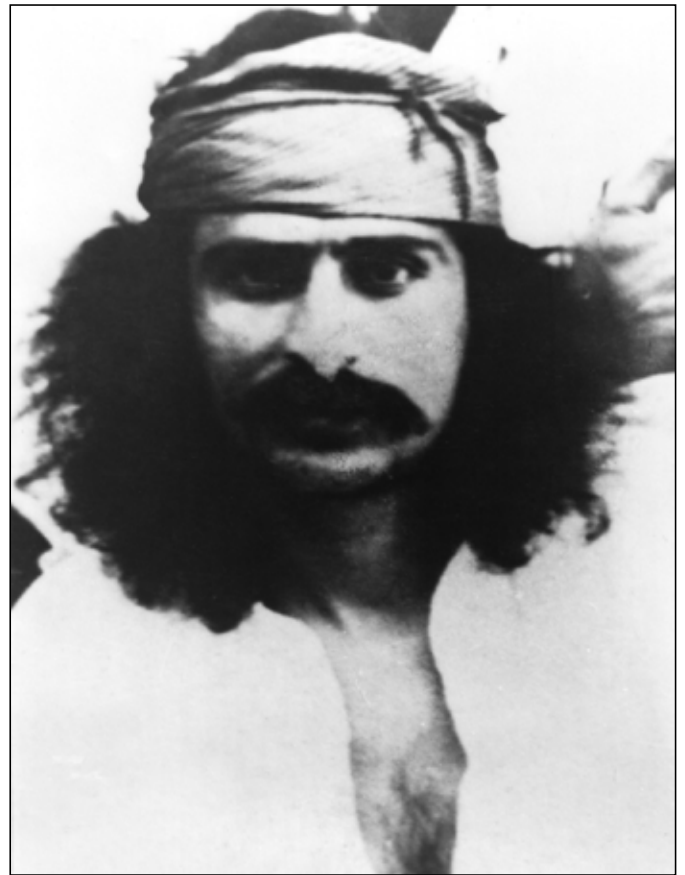
One day I met Baily who was known to Merwan long before he met me at Poona Cantonment. He informed me that Merwan was staying at Kasba Peth at one end of the city. As I did not know the way to go to Kasba Peth he gave me an indication of the roads and streets which I could hardly remember. With difficulty, one day during spare hours I managed to find Kasba Peth and there in a small one-storied building of Arjun, who was a pet disciple, I found Merwan. I was overjoyed to meet him there. (quoted from Ramjoo's Diaries, pp 372-3, citing Adi K. Irani, "My Life with Avatar Meher Baba" / Divya Vani, March 1965, pp 25-26).

Kasba Peth at this stage became an important scene of action in 'The Poona Story' and Adi's account gives further detail: *There were two buildings at Kasba Peth which Merwan often visited – the small one belonging to Arjun and another, a bigger three-storied building some blocks ahead, belonging to Sadashiv Shelke (Patel). Sadashiv is one of the oldest disciples and friends of Merwan. There was a band of about a dozen fishermen-disciples of Merwan at Kasba Peth, to which Arjun belonged and Sadashiv was head of them all. Merwan passed most of his time in the two houses, singing Hindu devotional songs and 'ghazals', playing drum, seeing*

people who came for blessing and giving occasional discourses in Hindi, Marathi, Gujarati and English. His food was meagre. Baily used to bring to Kasba Peth the evening meal composed of thick 'dal' and bread, cooked by Daula Masi, Merwan's aunt, who lived about 100 yards away from Merwan's parents' house in the cantonment part of Poona. Merwan and his disciple friends used to sit and take this meal together.

A new toddy shop in their neighbourhood drew in customers such as the local fishermen who, attracted by the presence of Merwan, soon became known as the 'Bhoi' mandali (Bhoi being the name of the fisherman caste). Local traders were also interested, and the Kasba Peth temple adjacent to the toddy shop, was opened with the help of Merwan's landlord, Sadashiv Patil, who lived with his wife in the same building as the toddy shop. Sadashiv gave his tenant the more respectful title of Merwan Seth. Others now drawn to the group around Merwan included Gustadji, sent to Poona by Maharaj, and also Ahmed Abbas (later known as Khak Saheb).

1918 was a year that marked not only the end of the Great War, but the passing of Sai Baba, and the birth of Merwan's sister Mani as well. It also marked increasing social and political change in India, with figures such as Mahatma Gandhi introducing his



Meher Baba, Bombay, 1922-23; Manzil-e-Meem. Photo supplied by Bill and Diana Le Page. Avatar's Abode Archives Collection.

concept of 'Swaraj' or community self-help. Such ideas quickly took root and, in Poona as elsewhere, one outcome was the closure of toddy shops arising from well-organised street demonstrations. The closures gave Merwan the cue for telling Shireen, in 1921, of his intention to leave home and go to Sakori. He had been called by Maharaj to spend the final months of his descent living at the master's ashram. He left no word to say how long he would be away. His mother was at first angry and then inconsolable thinking she had lost her son forever. But early in 1922, after an intensive six months, Merwan's departure from the ashram and return to Poona was signalled by Maharaj when, with hands held together in blessing, he proclaimed, "Merwan, you are Adi Shakti (the Primal Force). You are the Avatar of the Age!" (LM p.257)

Epilogue: Take Care of Your Health

Prelude: From August to November 2015, Carolyn and I were traveling across America from Maine to California in our 11 meter motorhome the 'New Life Caravan'.

While traveling along the 'Trail of Tears' from the Meher Spiritual Center in South Carolina to the Heartland Center in Prague, Oklahoma, I read Robert Dreyfuss' "*Inner Travel to Sacred Places*" his account of his life with Meher Baba and the Mandali from 1965 to 2012.

Carolyn and I were exhausted and burned-out after having sold off 95% of our belongings of our old life in Maine. And before we could move to our new life in Australia, we still had another year on the west coast in which to set up our 25 year old son in Los Angeles for the support network and services he needed. The two of us had compromised our physical, emotional and mental health during this very intense 24/7 period.

So I found myself turning back to Dreyfuss' book, in particular the epilogue "Take Care of Your Health". It is a profound piece that encapsulates Robert's understanding of how personal health and spiritual training are interconnected. And over the last year while now residing in Australia, it has become my touch stone for my healing process.

— Daniel Montague

Extract from *Inner Travel to Sacred Places* by Robert Dreyfuss

For me, health and spiritual training are interconnected. When I was with Baba in Mandali Hall in 1965, one of the questions He asked me was how my health was. He put His fingers on His pulse to indicate health. I

said, "Fine, Baba, except for some problems with my digestion." Baba made a gesture to Dr Goher, who left and came back in a minute with a pill, which she gave to Baba. It was purportedly for my digestion. Baba held it in His hand and then gave it to me to take right then and there. I've been having digestive problems ever since. That's Baba's humor.

I was fortunate enough to have ongoing correspondence with Baba in the late 1960s. In each letter, through Eruch, Baba said something to the effect of, "Baba wants you to take care of your health, to take good care of yourself."* This went on until Baba dropped His body in 1969. Most of us, when we say goodbye to one another, say, "Take care. Stay well." It was very much in that light that I understood Baba's words. It took me years to figure out that Baba wasn't just being polite. "Baba wants you to take good care of your health." It was a direct order. There was nothing ambiguous about it. He could see how I was setting myself up for the health problems that I had later in life.

How did I finally get it? I woke up one day with a big exclamation point over my head that said, "*Schmendrick!*" (That's Yiddish for "Idiot!") I wasn't following those orders. If you don't follow orders, you create problems, big problems. I had stupidly thought that lovely little phrase was "Oh, take care of yourself." It really was, "*Take care of your health.*" And I'm still learning that lesson.

It was time to get serious. Baba hadn't written to say, "I want you to go see some doctor and he'll tell you what to do." He said, "I want you to take

good care of your health."

When I was younger, I felt I had to be stronger, more daring, to prove that I could overcome my limitations. It's obvious that over the years I put my body through the wringer. My illnesses pushed me. They became springboards for the journeys and the effort needed to make them. Rather than sitting in the house as an invalid, I felt that I wanted to see the world in as many of its diverse manifestations as possible, and I not only intended to do so — I did.

But denial doesn't work. At some point in our lives we have to come to terms with who we are and what drives us. That's part of the adventure of life's journey. When I tried to go off to India in 2010, I didn't know how sick I was. I got only as far as London, where I was hospitalized for a few days and then flown back to Atlanta, where I stayed for many weeks. There I had a very close brush with death and in the process learned a profound lesson. It guided me toward the answer to my life's question, "How much is enough?" Baba gave me just enough before I finally surrendered to treatment that saved my life. If I had gone on for even another day or two without treatment, it would have been goodbye.

Now something in me cried out to transcend my concept of myself. I asked what else was worth doing? I wanted to burn up my *sanskaras* (mental impressions) so that I could please Him and go forward in my heart's quest, to make the best use of the time I was given, not only for myself, but also for others.

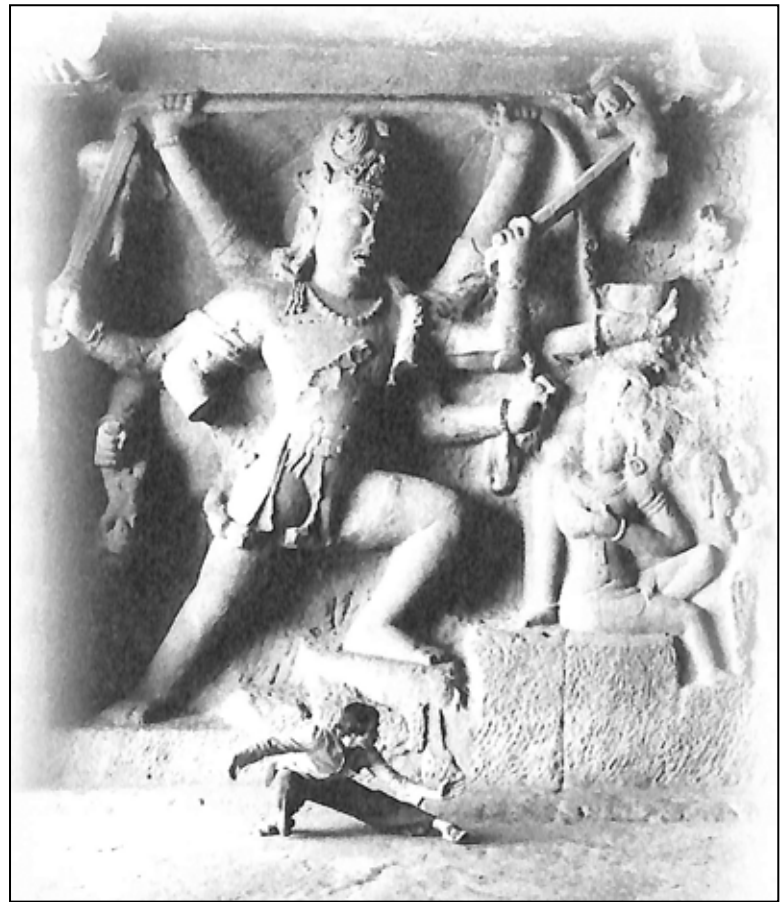
My life's question had not precluded trying to live a normal life, having a

marriage, family, children, and friends. All of these have been very important in my life. It took me until I was forty-five to have my first child and forty-seven for my second. I'm overjoyed to have had children. I can truthfully say that, next to meeting Baba, they are the most wonderful part of all that's ever happened to me. They are the force of love in my life.

Not everyone is meant to be married or have children. But I would have missed a lot if I hadn't become a family man. After my children were born, for the next twenty years I was totally theirs: keeping a good household, making enough income, and teaching them to be good people. I wanted them to have solid values, so they'd be able to make their own decisions and minimize their own suffering. To that end, they travelled with us all over the world, including ten family trips to India.

In a sense, everything is spiritual training. I can't separate what's going on physically from what's going on spiritually. I haven't transcended the body. Everything teaches us, if we're open to it. To listen within, to see the opportunities that lie in our paths, and to learn to do what will please Baba — that's spiritual training. The goal is to be in the world but not of it. And of course there's always the growing territory of age and the effect age has on aspirations, plans, and the way we see ourselves.

Spiritual training also allows us to model what life should be for young people, who are starting to encounter so-called reality much more quickly than they thought they would. Suffering is very, very important for growth to occur. It's easier to be in tune with Baba's wishes when you feel well. When you aren't well, everything is more difficult.



Robert practicing T'ai Chi in Cave29 of the Ellora Caves.

I've been close to the edge, almost to the point of saying, "Thank you, God, enough," and letting go. Being here is a real opportunity to surrender. I want to surrender. No doubt, I needed to do this and to get through all the incredibly difficult nonsense I created for myself. Well, at the age of almost seventy, I've certainly been in numerous places and circumstances that have given me all the opportunities I can stand.

One time several of us were sitting with Mani in her office at the Trust. She said, "Well, you know, dears, Baba doesn't give us too much. He gives us just enough to learn what He wants us to learn. It doesn't have to be prolonged, or particularly painful. In fact, the lessons that He gives us are just obvious, like no drugs, not dressing provocatively, being on time, and being honest and natural. And

what does Baba give us through these different means? He gives us the opportunity to please Him. That's what we're here to do. Baba protects us, so that we don't become a slave to habits. He protects us so that we can be in the world and practice not being in the world at the same time."

Baba reinforces a point by letting us continually encounter it. We can't run away. There's no escape. None. There's really no other sane choice. Or we can make false, wrong choices and create more suffering for both ourselves and those close to us. What we need to learn is how to submit, how to create a space in which we can learn slowly to be free. We need to believe that Baba will take care of us. Mani would say that the suffering He gives us is His gift. Foolish as we are, we try to push the gift away, to write "Return to

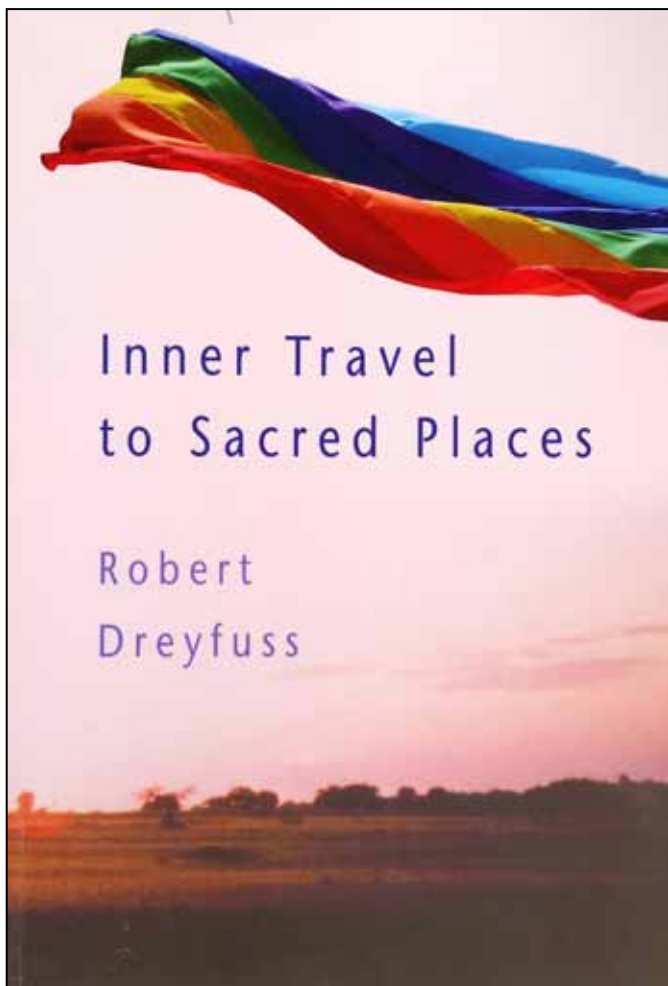
Continued on next page

Sender” on the package. Instead, we need to focus on that gift and let go of the rest of what is happening; see through the illusion by His grace and let it go.

That’s how spiritual training and health have gone hand in hand for me; they’ve never really been separate from each other. But it may take a lifetime to find all the connections, to look within deeply enough to examine the sum of our experience, to understand the role of suffering, and to find the difference between pleasing ourselves and pleasing Him.

© Robert.N.Dreyfuss Administrative Trust.

* Eruch Jessawalla, letters to Robert Dreyfuss, December 12, 1965; October 2, 1966; June 6, 1967; and July 22, 1969.



Inner Travel to Sacred Places

Available from Avatar’s Abode Bookstore

Avatar’s Abode Bookstore (non profit) retail price is
AUD \$35 (plus your choice of postage)

Contact Email: avatarsabodebookstore@gmail.com

The Divine Romance

The sojourn of the soul is a thrilling divine romance in which the lover, who in the beginning is conscious of nothing but emptiness, frustration, superficiality and the gnawing chains of bondage, gradually attains an increasingly fuller and freer expression of love, and ultimately disappears and merges in the divine Beloved to realise the unity of the Lover and the Beloved in the supreme and eternal fact of God as Infinite Love.

- Meher Baba

Remembering You

A single drop of dew
Suspended on a blade of grass,
Morning sun just caressing it
Into a rainbow of wonder.
That’s what a single moment,
Coming into the moment –
The awareness of Your Presence –
Remembering You,
Does to my heart, my soul.
And then the ray of sunlight shifts,
The drop hangs in the greyness of shadow.
That’s what happens to my heart, my soul,
When I forget You.

Lorraine Brown
October, 2017

In Memoriam Tex Hightower

Tex Hightower died just short of his 90th birthday in Myrtle Beach on Tuesday 7th November 2017.

What follows are extracts from of a talk given by Tex at Meherabad, on the 5th November, 2010. Transcription by Gusi Carpenter.



... When 1952 came around I was a working dancer in the Metropolitan Opera Ballet and Miss Craske was the assistant director of the school connected with the ballet. Baba was coming. By that time Miss Craske had collected a few people and I was expected to go and meet Baba. When I tell you I didn't want to do that, I mean **I did not want to do that**, but I felt obliged to her having had five years of listening to stories and enjoying her company, so I had to go.

But it turned out that the Metropolitan Opera was on tour the same day that Baba was seeing people in Myrtle Beach. He only had one public day, May 17th. The company was in Minneapolis and there was a contract that if you were on tour you were not allowed to go beyond a fifty mile radius of the place where you were playing. There were three women in the company and myself who were going to meet Baba. Skipper – Catherine Damon, Zebra Neven and Soura Gazman, a red head, a brunette and a blonde. To get from Minneapolis to Myrtle Beach by Greyhound bus would take a couple of days. So the only way to get there was to hire a private plane and there was no refund. It was a lot of money for us. Then we had to get permission



*Meher Baba at the Meher Spiritual Center, Myrtle Beach, South Carolina USA, May 1952.
© Meher Nazar Publications.*

to leave the company to go down there that day. We went to our immediate superior who was the choreographer and director of the dancing company and talked to him. He knew Miss Craske very well and he knew about Baba as well and he said, 'Oh no, you can't go.' So then we went to the assistant stage manager, same response, production stage manager, same answer, tour manager and we got as far as the assistant general manager, Mike Guttman. He was at least kind about it and he said, 'I'm sorry, I do not feel comfortable with this. I will not give you permission to go.' And there we were, stuck, we had paid our money and we could not go.

Then one Sunday, for some reason the girls decided they wanted to get

dressed up and we went out for dinner. As we walked backstage and turned the corner who should we run into but the general manager who never came backstage. His name was Rudolf Bing. He was so famous, he was almost a household word. He had taken over the Metropolitan Opera after it had been run by Edward Johnson. Anyway there he was with Mr Guttman, the tour manager and the whole crowd, and I don't know what got into me but I walked straight up to that man and said, 'I say, may we have a moment of your time Mr Bing?' He was Austrian and had a very heavy accent and I gave my song and dance to him and told him why we wanted to go to Myrtle Beach and he said, 'Vell of course, you must go' Just

like that!

The next day I got communication from Miss Craske that Baba had changed the day and that he was seeing people a day earlier. I knew there was no way on this earth to say 'Sorry Mr Bing, I need another day', so I called Miss Craske. By this time she was with Baba and Baba gave us permission to see him the following day, the original day and he would see us for five minutes. I got up at 4.30 in the morning because we were going to leave Minneapolis, fly to Myrtle Beach and see Baba, and then go to Wilmington, Indiana, because that day there was no performance and the company was moving there from Minneapolis so we wouldn't miss a

Continued on next page

performance. It was a reasonable time.

I got up in the morning and I have never seen before or after a fog like that. You could see the street lights as a faint little rim around the bulb. It was my job to get a cab. This was May and there was snow on the ground at five in the morning and lo and behold a cab came by. The driver said 'Where are you going?' and I said, 'Well, we have to pick up some ladies and then we're going to this little private airport.' He said, 'You're not going anywhere. I'm not going to take you, the roads are very bad, so, sorry kid,' and he drove off.

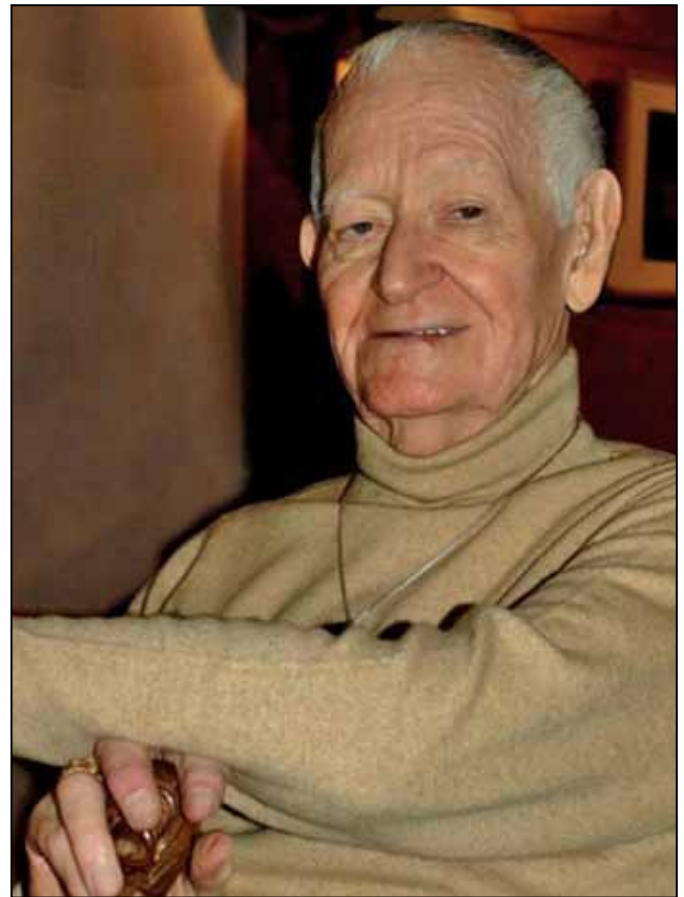
But he wasn't the only cab around. Another one came and said, 'I'm not getting any fares anyway, so I'll take you.' We picked up the girls and got to the airport by me sticking my head out the window, looking at the shoulder and driving about five miles an hour, and I'm saying, 'Left! Left! Hold it there, hold it there! Kerb coming up!' and so forth. It was a big joke.

When we got there we could see a little hut with a light, and there was a man who looked very surprised to see us. The private plane was flying from Chicago to Minneapolis and he said, 'It won't be able to get here, you understand that?' 'Well,' I said, 'Can we just sit right here?' and he made a cup of coffee and we waited and waited.

Suddenly Skipper and I said, 'I'm stir crazy. Let's take a walk.' We were walking in the fog and suddenly Skipper stopped and stared into the distance. Out of the fog this figure materialised. He walked up to me and said, 'Are you Mr Hightower?' 'Yeah, who are you?' 'I'm Warren Baie and I'm from [such and such a] company.' He'd flown in and we

hadn't even heard him. He said 'There's a problem. I flew in on instruments, but the law says if I have passengers I have to fly by landmarks.' This plane looked like a toy. We squashed three people in the back then there was the pilot and one seat in front. He said, 'However there's nothing else to do so I'll fly you to Chicago. I doubt very seriously you'll get beyond Chicago if we get there.'

In Chicago we had to change pilots and the new one said, 'I'm not taking you. I'm not taking off in this weather and I'm not going to be responsible for four people, so forget it.' So Mr Baie said, 'Well I'll take a stab at it.' This was a most exceptional man, because in this flight that's coming up, we stopped to refuel five times and he had to fly around storms. Every time we landed they said we couldn't take off, but this man was the kind of man who didn't like being told you can't do something. We got as far as Louisville and the weather was really nasty. The rain was sheeting down at an angle. He went to the control tower and after a very long time and came back and he said, 'I'm really sorry. I've done everything I can but they won't give us permission to fly, so we're stuck here.' We didn't say a word, and he looked at these three women and he turned around and went back. He came back shortly and



Tex at Meher Spiritual Center, Myrtle Beach USA; Amartithi 2013. Photo taken by Anthony Zois and used with permission.

said, 'Get in!' I knew he didn't have permission to fly.

Skipper was in the front seat, and he flew and flew and suddenly it dawned on me we were lost, and then we were out of gas. So we had to go back to Louisville. By that time it was nearly five o'clock in the afternoon and Baba had said we had to get there by five o'clock.

Mr Baie said, 'I'm paid to get you to Myrtle Beach, so shall we go on.' So we took off. The golden sun came out, there was dew on the trees, we were about twenty feet above the trees and it was clear sailing from there on, but it was after five o'clock.

We got to a little tiny private airport where I was to call a Mrs Houston who ran a Tennessee Williams Hotel called Lafayette Manor. She was hysterical. 'Where are you? Where were you? Are

you all there? You are to come here and spend the night, then Baba will send someone to pick you up and he will see you at seven o'clock tomorrow morning.' That would be Sunday!

Sarosh came at seven to drive us to the Center. In those days from Myrtle Beach proper to the Center there was absolutely nothing, just nature, not a building in sight. We drove past the entrance – it was just a green gate – and missed it and had to turn around and come back.

Well I'm not prone to mystical experiences but strange things happen when you are connected with Baba. We drove through the gate and everything was silent. I've never experienced silence as a presence, I mean a heavy powerful presence of silence. No sound of the car on the gravel, no birds singing.

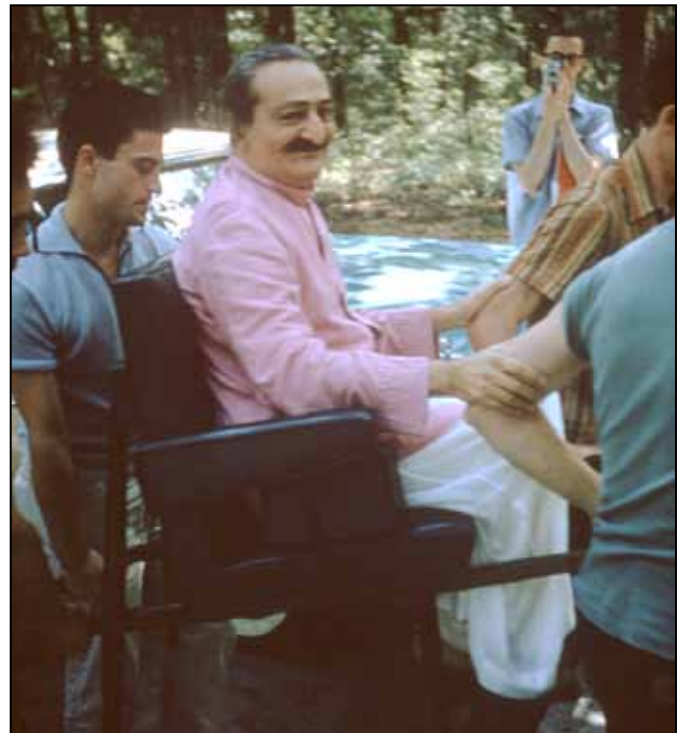
That's the only time I met Sarosh. By then Miss Craske and several of the other disciples had left for California, they were driving ahead and I believe Baba was to follow the next day or the day after. We drove up and Rano met us. I opened the car and met her face to breast bone and she was very full of vinegar. 'You could have sent a telegram.' Actually, I did send a telegram from Chicago, but the only address I had was a post office box, so I didn't know if the telegram would be delivered and I said 'We will be arriving later than expected due to inclement weather'!

It was ten or twenty years later that I learned that that day Baba made everybody's life miserable. Kitty told me that in those days he was staying in the Log Cabin, that's the one across the water. He said, 'They may be hungry so you are to go to the kitchen and make some sandwiches.' Then he called Sarosh and said 'Maybe you



Meher Spiritual Center 1958; Margaret Craske Dancers. Tex at top left, Margaret in front of Baba. This image is from a Sufi film of Meher Baba's 1956 visit to the States. Image captured and enhanced by Anthony Zois and used with permission.

had better get those sandwiches and take them to the airport.' Then he called Elizabeth. 'Elizabeth, you are an aviatrix. Tell me, is this weather very bad for flying?' She said, 'Baba it couldn't be worse.' He said, 'You go and check on the weather in the other parts of the country.' Elizabeth knew someone in the National Weather Bureau in Washington, so she made a personal call and he told her that it was the worst weather in twenty seven years on the Eastern seaboard. Baba said to her when she told him, 'Do you think they've gone down?' 'I really don't know Baba.' 'Well tell me, if you were flying do you think they would go



The dancers carry Meher Baba's chair at Meher Spiritual Center, Myrtle Beach SC USA, May 1958. © Meher Nazar Publications.

down?' She replied, 'They could have.'

Then he called Kitty and said, 'Those sandwiches are stale. Go and make another lot.' She asked Sarosh what he had done with the other lot. He had brought them back.' 'Well get

Continued on next page

rid of them and take the others,' she said. I don't know what he did to Rano, but everyone was really teed off with four dancers who should have been there two days earlier!

After Rano gave us the chilly welcome we went around the corner and I heard this voice, this very beautiful voice up and down the scale, coming towards us. Kitty met me at the door. I'd never seen this woman before and she'd never seen me and she said, 'It doesn't matter how you take Baba, just take him!'

In those days, those of you that know the Center, that brick patio that was between the kitchen and the addition – the addition wasn't there, and there was a little bench, and this bench had a clear view of the entrance to the Lagoon cabin. Zebra, Soura, Skipper and me in that order were sitting on the bench.

Zebra went in. I don't know how long she was there. All of a sudden she exploded out of that door sobbing and she went running off into the woods! Well Zebra's the emotional type. Then it was Soura's turn. Soura was a big statuesque blond, very beautiful bone structure. I'm watching with more interest this time. She goes in and the same thing, she went wandering off in the woods.

Then Skipper whom I knew the very best and whom I met the very first day I came to New York, I thought she was the most sophisticated of the bunch so I was very interested in what would happen. And she comes out [of the Lagoon Cabin] and she walks straight into a tree! You have to remember I didn't want to be there in the first place. I was only going through this as a courtesy to my respect for Miss Craske. I didn't want to have anything to do with it. Anyway then my turn

came and Delia came and she was crying. I thought, 'Oh for God's sakes!' And I just sat there, so she extended her hand, and took my arm and tugged and finally I got up and shuffled over to the Lagoon Cabin. The minute we turned that little corner in the path to face the screen door I saw something white behind the screen door, just a flash, and I said 'That's Baba' and I dropped my head, and stumbled up that path.

I knew that Baba was standing there and I could not lift my eyes. I don't have mystical experiences, but this happened. I can't describe it other than it was a physical feeling. I was absolutely encased in clay like a mummy, then the case began to crack around my toes. I could hear it. It crawled up to my knees and torso and head and when it got to my ears it fell in two pieces. And when that happened I had the strength to lift my eyes and I saw Baba for the first time. And I can say this, even though I don't know what experiences you have had, you have never seen anything that beautiful. He was the most beautiful creature on this planet. No doubt, hands down. He was standing in a white sadhra, his hair was down. I don't know what size he was, he could have been twelve feet tall or a midget, and I stood and looked into Baba's eyes. His eyes went on and on and on. I've never seen eyes like that and my memory is that they were chocolate brown and he was kind of honey coloured and it was like there was a light under his skin – I don't mean he glowed in the dark, there was light coming from within him, and he had this beautiful smile. Then he opened his arms and I took two or three steps and I fell into his arms and he embraced me. I can't tell you,

I'm sorry, there's no way of describing what happened when he embraced me because the flow of love was so incredibly immense. I didn't have any idea there was a love like that. It was unique, everything about Baba was unique. And I was absolutely blown away. I do remember the first thing he said after the embrace. 'Baba is happy. And I thought what incredible generosity. There he was, he had given me all that love and that made him happy. Something very special. Then he sat me down on a little bench and he pulled up a little bench in front of me and we were knee to knee. And he said, 'I was in the plane with you yesterday. You must take me back with you.' He said some other things. He said, 'You cannot know how much I love you.'

That's the only time I saw Baba in really good health.

Then he looked at Delia who was sobbing and said, 'What are you crying for!'

That's the only time I saw him with the alphabet board. Rano was reading it, so Rano and Delia were in the room. Then he sent me away and I went wandering off down to the lake and I wandered all the way and finally after some time, I don't know how long, a rather exasperated Sarosh caught up with me and said, 'Baba wants to see you.' He'd been looking for me for ten minutes and somebody else had been trying to round up the girls because Baba wanted to see everybody. We sat on the bench and Baba walked in front of Zebra. And he stood there for a long time, then he moved in front of Soura and then Skipper and then me and just looked. He was on the opposite wall and he strode from wall to wall. He had the most extraordinary walk you have ever

seen. You know that film from Nasik in 1937 and he's walking across the field at the end, well that gives you an idea. And he had his hands behind his back and his fingers were dancing the way they did. Anybody else and it would have been a nervous kind of thing, but with Baba those movements were an expression of the most powerful vitality you've ever seen. I don't know what he was doing. I was entranced to see the perfect rhythm of his walk. He said something to us. I don't remember, it's shameful, then he sent us away. But we had been there a lot more than five minutes. It was a beautiful sunny day by then.

We went and met Mr Baie and the minute we took off the weather changed and we were grounded in Louisville and they would not allow us to take off.

We had a performance that night where I partnered a ballerina and each of the girls led a group of other girls, they were like soloists each one of them. Finally we rented a car and Mr Baie said to me, 'I can drive and I'm paid to get you back, so why don't I drive?' I was glad because the weather was so bad. But that guy thought he was flying a plane! And what happened, we get stuck behind an army convoy driving at fifteen miles an hour. Anyway from Louisville to Bloomingdale took us ten or twelve hours. We got there at the end of the second act, and my understudy dropped the ballerina. I wish I'd seen it!

Celebrating the 60th Anniversary of Meher Baba's 1958 stay at Avatar's Abode

In 1958 Beloved Baba stayed for four days at Avatar's Abode and planted the seed of His love there. We plan to celebrate the Anniversary of that stay over seven days in 2018 from **Tuesday 5th of June till Monday 11th June 2018**.

Approximately 70 people from overseas have indicated an expression of interest in attending.

Accommodation

If you are planning on joining in the celebrations, it is not too soon to explore your accommodation options.

The Anniversary Planning Committee has booked out the Sunshine Coast Motor Lodge, primarily for overseas guests, however it is possible a room or two may become available closer to the Anniversary.

Expressions of interest from overseas visitors

Information regarding expressions of interest from overseas visitors can be found on the Avatar's Abode website's 'The Anniversary' page https://avatarsabode.com.au/anniversary_at_avatars_abode.html.

Invitation and registration

The Anniversary Planning Committee anticipates circulating an Invitation to the 2018 Anniversary in January 2018. This will have details of how to register your upcoming attendance.

Registration beforehand will be much appreciated because the resources of Avatar's Abode will be at their limits for what is shaping up to be the biggest celebration ever.

Updates will appear in the Meher Baba Australia quarterly newsletters and will also be progressively entered on the Avatar's Abode website.

Contact info

The anniversary email address is aa2018anniversary@westnet.com.au

*Bernard Bruford and Denis Carmody
Co-chairs of the 2018 Anniversary Planning Committee.*

P.S: Before the Anniversary, Charmaine Foley is privately organising a **tour of Meher Baba places of interest** in Sydney (including Meher House) and also Melbourne, including general sightseeing. At this stage Charmaine envisages 8-12 days, and possibly also including Canberra. Although this is mainly for our interested overseas guests, everyone is very welcome to participate. If you wish to be kept informed please contact Charmaine direct – email chsfoley@gmail.com or phone 0411 880 375.



*Inside Meher Baba's Samadhi at Upper Meherabad, circa 1970s.
Photographer unknown.*

A prayer for remembrance

Daniel Montague

In May of 2015, Meherwan Jessawala sent to the west his last message about the importance of repeating our Beloved Baba's name.

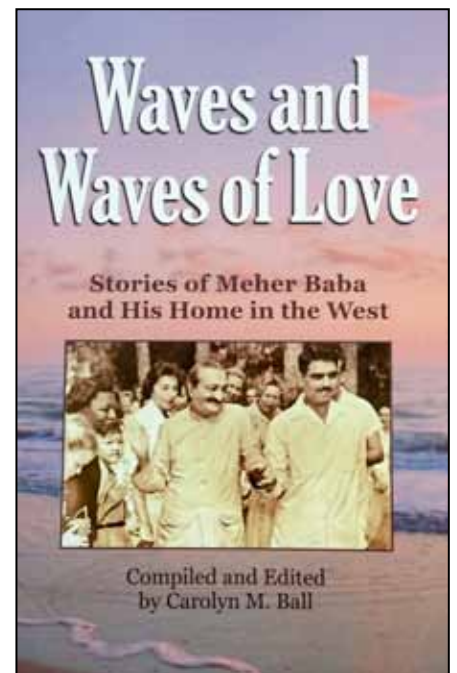
When Meherwan died in July of that year, the message seemed to take on an added importance, especially for me.

Meherwan always emphasized the twofold effect of the constant repeating of "Baba": the purification of the heart and the protection from the allurements of Maya.

I find comfort and security and a sense of his presence while repeating His name, and when I notice that I'm not taking His name, I thank Baba for the reminder and I say a prayer to my Beloved:

"Beloved Baba, help me to take and repeat Your name constantly and continuously, and to always keep Your loving presence with my heart. Jai Baba."

And while going to bed and each time during the night when I awake, I add to the end of this prayer, "...while I am sleeping and in my dreams. Jai Baba."



Waves and Waves of Love

Compiled and edited by Carolyn Ball.

The history of the Meher Spiritual Center told through wonderful stories from the 1940s to the present.

Available from Avatar's Abode Bookstore AUD \$40 plus postage.

Contact Email

avatarsabodebookstore@gmail.com

For purchases in USA please contact sheriarbooks.org



Avatar Meher Baba 2018 Calendar

Designed and printed in USA
14 month calendar (2 bonus months)

Pick up at Avatar's Abode Bookstore
AUD \$17

Have it posted to you AUD \$22.50

Contact Email

avatarsabodebookstore@gmail.com

Fortunate to Love Him

Stories of My Life with Meher Baba

Khorshed K. Irani

Meher Baba was the central focus of Khorshed K. Irani's life from the moment she met Him when she was twelve years old. It is her connection with Meher Baba and who He is, that gives her life a very special significance.

Khorshed Irani was one of Meher Baba's earliest and closest women disciples. She was born on May 2, 1910 and she loved Baba from the moment she first saw Him on May 9, 1922.

Khorshed devoted her entire life, from that moment on, in love and service to her Beloved Baba, until she passed away on August 4, 1999.

Baba often visited Khorshed and her parents in their family home in Bombay during the early 1920s, and Baba instructed the three of them to come to Him every day, to be with Him at Manzil-e-Meem. Khorshed had the joy of hearing Baba speak and sing for more than three years before He began His Silence. She was one of the only mandali at the end of the 20th century who could remember Meher Baba's indescribably beautiful voice.

In August 1923, Baba introduced Khorshed to Mehera J. Irani, His Beloved, and they immediately became best friends. Baba told them that, not only were they best friends in this life, but they had been with Him as best friends in many lives before. Baba told them that in this Advent of the Avatar, Mehera is playing the role that Radha played as Krishna's Beloved, and that Khorshed is playing the role of Radha's best friend, Chandrika. Beginning

in 1924, Mehera and Khorshed lived with Baba as close companions under His orders.

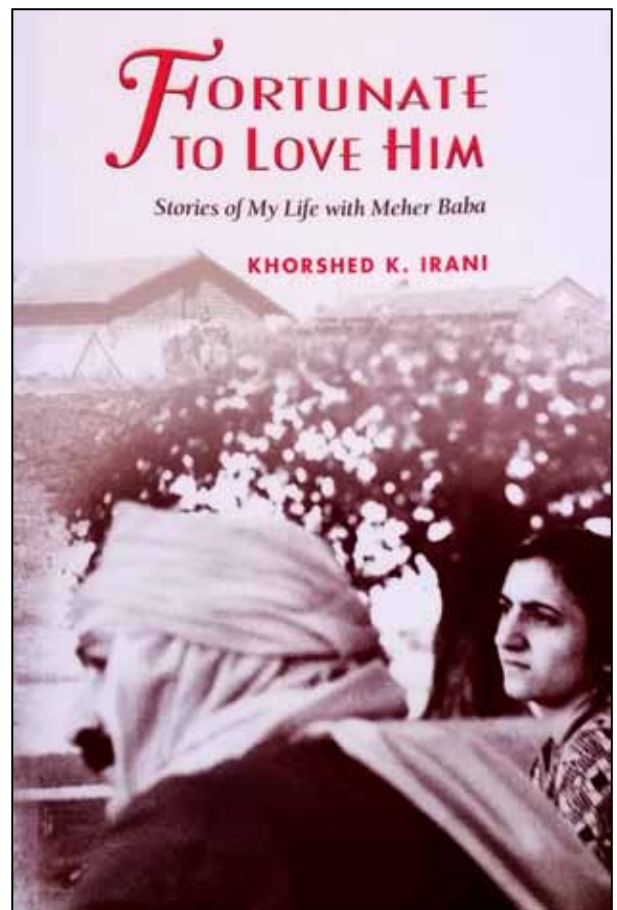
Khorshed's stories are about an incredible life – one that was dedicated in love to God as Meher Baba.

Her life with the Avatar was extraordinary and filled with intense challenges and hardships. As Khorshed said, "Our life with Baba had everything – fun, trouble, and love."

Although Khorshed's family were wealthy and could have provided her with the many pleasures of this world, she traded them all without a second thought, in order to be with her Lord. Her single-pointed love, dedication, and obedience to Meher Baba, through thick and thin, as well as her inner strength and motivation to be near Him, distinguishes Khorshed as one of the great souls who served the Avatar of the Age.

Fortunate to Love Him was compiled from video and audio recordings of Khorshed telling her life stories during the 1970s, 80s and 90s. Secondary sources included notes from interviews with Khorshed, as well as her personal diary translated from Gujarati. Also personal letters sent to Khorshed and her family by Baba, throughout the years.

The process used to create this book was involved. One example: English



was not Khorshed's first language ... it was her fourth. A substantial amount of work and time was required to edit, capture and present her delightful, interesting, humorous and expressive way of telling her stories.

To bring this book to press has required the meticulous and loving efforts of many people. Impossible to be exact, however the amount of more than 30 and less than 50, sounds pretty right.

Included are over 170 photographs (some very rare) illustrating this most precious life lived for her Beloved.

Fortunate to Love Him

Available from Avatar's Abode Bookstore AUD \$70 plus postage.

Contact Email

avatarsabodebookstore@gmail.com

For US, UK and Europe etc, see sheriabooks.org

The parable of the milkmaid

Often told by Sri Ramakrishna Paramhansa (1836-1886)

A milkmaid used to supply milk to a Brahmin priest living on the other side of a river.

Owing to the irregularities of the boat service, the milkmaid could not supply him milk punctually every day.

Once, being rebuked for arriving late, the poor woman said, "What can I do? I start early from the house, but have to wait for a long time at the river bank for the boatman and the passenger."

The priest exclaimed, "Woman! There are people who cross the ocean of life by uttering the 'name' of God, and you can't cross this little river?"

The simple-hearted woman became very glad at heart on learning this easy means of crossing the river.

From the following day, she started to supply the milk early in the morning, as she was supposed to. One day the Brahmin priest said to the woman, "How is it that you are no longer late now-a-days?"

The milkmaid replied, "I cross the river by uttering the name of the Lord as you told me to do, and now don't need a boat or a boatman."

The priest could not believe this.

He said, "Can you show me how you cross the river?" The woman took him with her and began to walk over the water.

Looking behind, the woman saw the priest in a sad plight and said, "Sir, how is it, Sir, that you are uttering the name of the God with your mouth, but at the same time with your hands you are lifting the hem of your robe and trying to keep the cloth untouched by water? You do not fully rely on Him."

Sri Ramakrishna Paramahansa concluded the story by instilling some wisdom into the hearts and minds of his disciples, "Entire resignation and absolute faith in God are at the root of all miraculous deeds."

Sri Ramakrishna Paramahansa once said "Do not force your demands on God, he is in no way a stranger to you, he is your eternal companion."



Photograph of Ramakrishna, taken on 10 December 1881 at the studio of "The Bengal Photographers" in Radhabazar, Calcutta (Kolkata).

Borrowed Time

Time passes
like a slow leak
in one of the back
tyres of your car.

You know it's
happening
but you're not
conscious of it.

Until one day
when you go to leave
you get no further
than your driveway.

And perhaps alone
and looking in your
rear vision mirror
you'll come to see

that all your desires
are just like all the cars
rushing past
on borrowed time.

Ross Keating

Lime Pickle

To love is to go
over into love.

Just like a piece
of lime in a pickle jar
is consumed in
a spicy vinegar.

To love is to know
there is no return.

Just like a piece
of lime in a pickle jar
remains forever
a culinary star.

To love is to give
real flavour to life.

Just like a piece
of lime from a pickle jar
can make a dull meal
a delicious bazaar.

Ross Keating

Glow International goes digital

Get Your First Issue FREE

***Glow International* quarterly print edition still available globally via post.
Our new Digital *Glow International* quarterly, available via email
(everywhere except to USA and India)**

Dear Friends,

As Beloved Archives celebrates 50 years of publishing GLOW INTERNATIONAL, our thoughts go back to that very special day in December 1968 when Naosherwan Anzar sat on the edge of Beloved Meher Baba's bed massaging Baba's legs as they discussed the future of His quarterly journal and the spreading of the Avatar's Message of Love, Truth and Spiritual Unity.

For over 50 years, GLOW INTERNATIONAL has continued to bring Meher Baba's teachings to seekers worldwide to enable spiritual development and growth.

For each quarterly issue of Glow we search through Beloved Archives, a vast repository of rare material on Meher Baba's life, work and teachings, and feature unpublished discourses with rare photographs with one goal in mind: to make a difference in the lives of our readers and help them improve the quality of their lives.

Despite escalating mailing costs, over the years, we have managed to maintain a steady stable subscription cost for our print edition that comes to you each quarter .

The print edition cost is \$60 for a year (4 issues) and \$110 for 2 years (8 issues). We are very glad to have our worldwide subscribers of our print edition.

Recently subscribers have also requested a digital option for various reasons ... e.g. Digital is more affordable, content is very mobile, can

be read on a tablet or pad etc. Some clients would like both 'print and digital' and some clients would like just digital.

The print subscription is for global. But the digital option is not offered for everywhere ... digital edition is not offered for USA or India.

As soon as the Glow International is printed, the digital version will follow (n.b. Digital not offered to USA or India). Subscribers of all areas other than USA and India, will receive a PDF of the entire magazine via email.

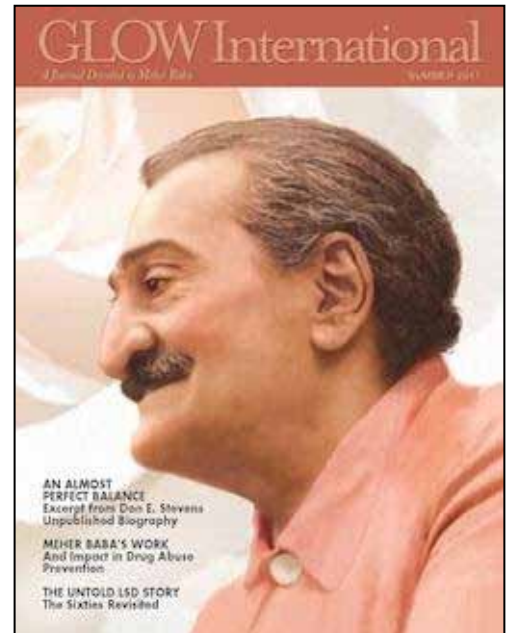
Subscription for the quarterly Digital Edition for a year (4 issues) is US\$30 and for 2 years (8 issues) the subscription cost is US\$50.

Beloved Archives is a not-for-profit corporation in USA and it is your continued support, your assistance and your love that helps us bring out four issues each year.

We trust that you will continue to subscribe to the print or digital edition or both editions of GLOW INTERNATIONAL, the only journal launched under Meher Baba's direct guidance in 1966.

Bank draft or credit card

You can mail your subscriptions by Bank Draft to: Beloved Archives, 116 Youngs Road, Hamilton, NJ 08619 or you can pay for BOTH your print and digital subscriptions by PayPal or any major credit card. Please send your credit card number, expiration date, CVV code (the 3 or 4 digit verification



code) and zip code if you decide to pay by Credit Card. Once we process your Credit Card, we do not keep your information, unless you ask us to.

Thank you.

Yours lovingly,

Naosherwan Anzar

Editor & Publisher, Glow International

POSTSCRIPT: Digital subscription is offered in all foreign countries EXCEPT the United States and India.

Please do not duplicate or share your digital copy with anyone. It is a trust reposed in you.

BELOVED ARCHIVES
GLOW INTERNATIONAL
Naosherwan 'Nosh' Nalavala
116 Youngs Road,
Hamilton, NJ 08619
Tel: 609.529.6129
Email: meherbaba@aol.com
Web: www.belovedarchives.org



Accommodation for pilgrims on Avatar's Abode

Mehera Moroney on behalf of the Avatar's Abode Trust

There are four options of accommodation for overnight and short stay pilgrimage visits at Avatar's Abode – Francis' Cabin, Judith's Cottage, the Pilgrims Quarters (PQ) and the Original Farmhouse.

Recently the Avatar's Abode Trust has made a concerted effort to update these accommodations with repairs done, updated furniture and renovations carried out to make the spaces safe and comfortable in a manner that maintains the individual atmosphere of each accommodation location.

All accommodations have their own parking, all are self-contained with simple, functional kitchens with new freestanding ovens and simple bathrooms. They all have laundry facilities. Baby cot available. There is limited wheelchair access in the accommodations.

Francis' Cabin is located near the main entrance to Avatar's Abode. This small cabin was built in 1979 by local builder Owen Jensen for Baba's Poet Francis Brabazon. This cabin was also used for Reg Paffle after Francis passed.

There is simple but comfortable furniture in the cabin and a new vanity has been installed in the bathroom. This cabin sleeps four comfortably.

Judith's Cottage is located just behind the Farmhouse. Judith Garbett loved her little cottage and garden and the beautiful view. There is still some of the original furnishings in this delightful cottage. With some simple updates this cottage is a lovely and restful space.

The PQ is located below the main grassy area quite near The Shed and the Kitchen Storage building. There are three bedrooms with a number of sleeping combinations available. There is a share bathroom and communal kitchen, dining and lounge facilities. The PQ sleeps nine comfortably.

The Original Farmhouse has recently undergone a large renovation. It was, as its name suggests, the original farmhouse on the property when Francis Brabazon purchased the property. It was located near to the current location of Baba's House but was relocated down the hill to the North East of the property. The Rouse family lived there as per Meher Baba's instructions, until the passing of Robert Rouse.

The Farmhouse has three bedrooms. It has a new kitchen and bathroom and a wonderful deck to enjoy. It has been decorated with some of Robert Rouse's artworks. It is high-set and not suitable at this time for wheelchair access.

Suggested accommodation donations

Correct at time of publication but may be revised in the future:

Francis' Cabin and Judith's Cottage

- \$40 for an adult single per night;
- \$60 adult double per night.

Pilgrims Quarters (PQ) (limited availability)

- \$30 for an adult single per night;
- \$40 adult double per night.

Original Farmhouse (2 nights minimum)

- \$50 for an adult single per night;
- \$75 adult double per night.

7 nights as 6 nights donation.

Those under 17 years of age, accompanied by an adult, are free of charge.

For more information about visiting Avatar's Abode go to https://avatarsabode.com.au/visit_avatars_abode.html



Francis' Cabin kitchen and dining.



Francis' Cabin dining and lounge.



Judith's Cottage kitchen.



Judith's Cottage lounge.



PQ kitchen.



PQ dining and lounge.



The Farmhouse – looking out to the deck and view.



The Farmhouse lounge.

The photos on this page were taken by Daniel Montague.

Archives volunteers say hello

The many recent months I've spent working on the Publications side of the Archives has been one of the most fulfilling times of my life. Not just the satisfaction of watching critical preservation/conservation work going ahead by leaps and bounds; but perhaps even more the wonderful camaraderie with both Davids, my wife Tricia, Geoffrey Gunther and Steven Hein.

And the laughter maybe best of all!

Seriously folks – there are great opportunities to help with all of the Archival areas on the Abode. Publications / Relics and Artefacts / unpublished documents relating to Baba, the Mandali, the Baron ... Francis and the Abode etc / Audio and video.

Self satisfaction, camaraderie with other BLs, lovely laughter – what else could you want?

So come on people, check us Archivists out and get started on a valuable Volunteer journey.

Jim Migdoll



I recently volunteered to assist with archival work at Avatar's Abode and so on Wednesday mornings, with Eve Plant and Carolyn Montague, guided by David Bowling, I have been learning how to interleave, rehouse and / or scan documents. It's a pleasant, easy task and it's enjoyable working with Carolyn and Eve. There's transcribing work to do which I'd also be happy to assist with.

Jai Baba,

Glenda Hobson



My husband Daniel and I moved to Avatar's Abode from the States in September of 2016. We were welcomed with many open and loving arms to our Beloved's home and knew instantly that this was our home as well. We both decided to share our lifetime of varied skills by volunteering on the Abode.

I was informed about the ongoing Archive work and realized this would be a wonderful way for me to get involved. I had never done anything like this before, but I found that much of what is being done is an exact fit to my skillsets.

For 6 months I have been involved in this very exciting and powerful work of handling these most precious documents, artefacts and relics. I'm still awed by all the treasures we continue to uncover of which we have firsthand access to read and handle. I'm constantly awed and feel extremely blessed to be in such close proximity to our Beloved Baba's life on earth and those of His precious Mandali through these archives.

Avatar Meher Baba Ki Jai!

Carolyn Montague



WE NEED YOU

The more effort we put into our lives—our work and our relationships, the more joy we can find. Working on the management of the archives gives us an opportunity to work in a peaceful environment with a common aim.

I feel we humans are 'wired' to community – finding the greatest sense of fulfilment from being able to help or support, give to, and receive from, each other.

Working on the ARCHIVE PROJECT is an opportunity to not only explore a 'treasure chest' of materials to feed / inform future Baba Lovers but to offer us the experience of community.

One of our team described the wonderful sense of 'conviviality' amongst us.

Come join us. We need you

Eve Plant



ARCHIVES OPPORTUNITY

Since Robert and Lorna Rouse casually asked me to please 'clean Baba's Room' while they were away on holidays over 20 years ago, I have had the privilege of regular close involvement with Baba's House and the care of various items which have been displayed there.

The visit by the delightful Sue Chapman from the UK in 2016 really opened my mind and heart to a whole other level of the responsibility for such care and keeping. Around the world people are taking the preservation and protection of Meher Baba's clothing, and of articles used by Him, to a new level – supported by advances in technology and the sharing of information globally in a collaborative and generous manner.

David Bowling has enticed a wonderful group of dedicated folk to gather at Avatar's Abode on a regular basis around the archiving tasks. We have learned a great deal about current global best practice in archiving and conservation / preservation of items of historical interest, and thought a good deal about how best to address the tasks at Avatar's Abode. (Not for the

Continued on next page

Meher Baba Australia

Steven Hein, MBA Editor

What is 'Meher Baba Australia'?

It is a volunteer run, non-profit initiative that publishes a newsletter that aims to connect the community of lovers of Beloved Meher Baba. Interested in participating? Contact Steven Hein, Editor.

Frequency - four issues a year

March, June, September, December.

Cost?

There is no charge as such. We do ask readers to subscribe, to actively choose to receive / keep receiving the journal.

How do we cover printing & postage costs?

We welcome donations. Occasionally, if costs go up and funds run low, we even invite and encourage donations.

Actual costs of a hardcopy issue?

To produce, print and post within Australia, each issue costs us approx \$7.50 AU. For the 4 issues that's about \$30 AU a year. International postage costs a bit more.

The digital email PDF version?

We also have the low cost PDF version we distribute by email. Many of our subscribers receive both email and hardcopy versions.

How do we ask you to renew each year?

It will be an email request or a coloured slip inside your MBA hardcopy. Your response helps us keep your (confidential) info and address on our mailing list up to date.

Editorial policy

The MBA editorial policy is pretty simple – MBA will not publish content that is divisive, political, disruptive and disrespectful. The editor reserves the right to edit all articles for length and content prior to publication.

MBA contacts

Editor: stevenhein101@gmail.com
Mailing List / Subscriptions: David Bowling
meherbabaaustralia@gmail.com

Donations can be made via PayPal at
avatarsabode.com.au/donations.html



Avatar Meher Baba, 1954 Andhra, India.

Or by direct bank deposit or Electronic Funds Transfer to

Account name: Meher Baba Australia
BSB: 064424

Account number: 10379525

Please include your initial and last name for reference.

Suggested annual donation

Digital PDF via email (Annual) – Global
\$5.00 AU

Hardcopy (Annual) – Australia \$30 AU

Hardcopy (Annual) – Overseas \$40 AU.

Archives volunteers say hello – continued from previous page

first time, since archival consultants have visited and offered advice since 1992, and a dedicated few have enacted aspects of the advice as they have been able, but not previously with such enthusiasm and increased capacity of time, facility, materials and knowledge).

There is a pleasantly collegial feeling among the 'archive team' as we address various tasks. For myself, Carolyn Montague, Kaye Lindsay, Sim Symons and David Hobson the focus of our activities together is the items in the room where Meher Baba stayed while at Avatar's Abode, and those currently on display in the Baba's House archive room (open on special events and other occasions and by arrangement*) and others stored in the archive room in the reception building for optimal preservation.

During 2018 visitors are likely to notice some changes as we improve the storage and display and security of things such as the sandals worn by Meher Baba, and the pink coat which has hung for many years in a display cabinet in Baba's House. Precious items are being mounted on support boards, and labelling and documentation (carefully commenced many years ago by Ray Kerkhove and Grania Kelly) is being updated.

And if you'd like to be a part of the group working together on these changes, we would welcome expressions of interest for adding to our volunteer team – from folk around the region of Avatar's Abode, or also from people who will be visiting and perhaps have an interest in spending some of their pilgrimage working on such tasks, if the timing allows. [I had

the delightful opportunity to do some work in Meherabad during my last short visit, which was such fun. And coincidentally other members of my family had been there recently, and I just 'happened' to take over from some tasks they had begun. How sweet His little notes of His Presence in every detail of our lives. 😊]

* If you are interested to take a tour of the archive display in Baba's House, please contact myself or others in the working group to arrange a time.

Contact: Jeanette Isaacs-Young
0438 562 118 (text best) or
(07) 5472 4136 (message bank)
jeanette@lifestreamassociates.com.au

Jeanette Isaacs-Young



Meher Baba Australia

December 2017 to February 2018

Editor: Steven Hein

Design, Layout and Digital Image Cleanup: Liz Gaskin

Proof Reading: Steven Hein. Contact editor if you can help too stevenhein101@gmail.com.

Mailing List and Subscriptions: David Bowling.

Email meherbabaustralia@gmail.com for information.

Front Cover: Meher Baba, 11 January 1927, Shah Photo Studios, Ahmednagar. Photographer G M Shah. Supplied by Bill and Diana Le Page. Avatar's Abode Archives Collection.

Next Issue: Please email submissions for the next *Meher Baba Australia* to stevenhein101@gmail.com or mail to MBA, PO Box 335, Woombye, QLD 4559, Australia.

Deadline Next Issue: 14th January 2018.

Photos to be minimum of 1MB, preferably over 2MB. *PLEASE NOTE that the editor reserves the right to edit all published articles for length and content prior to publication.*

Sydney Meher Baba Community

(Please note that all dates and details below are subject to change, however all effort will be made to ensure late-breaking updates are provided by email and/or Facebook)

Monthly Meetings at Meher House are held on the last Sunday of every month. Prayers and Arti, open discussions about Baba, occasional guests, vegetarian potluck meal. Contact: Kevin Mossberger M: 0412 559 402.

Kirtan Singing at Meher House – Devotional Kirtan singing held monthly. Contact Sage Andreasen for further information. M: 0401 456 839
E: sagerepeti@hotmail.com

Monday Night Discourse Meetings – For enquiries please contact Kris Wyld mobile 0407 481 323 or truestories@ozemail.com.au.

The Meher Baba Sydney community is always searching for volunteers to serve in Baba's cause and love and in a variety of ways. A wonderful opportunity for old-timers, newcomers, young and old! For further information contact Kevin Mossberger on 0412 559 402.

Melbourne Meetings

The best contact for Melbourne activities and meetings is Jasmine Ilas. Give her a call on her mobile 0438 300 193. Please leave voicemail if she can't take your call.

Meher Baba Gatherings in WA

Phone Paul Morris 0429 310 169 or Julie Morris 0428 250 294.

What's on at Avatar's Abode

Mehera's Birthday

Friday 22nd December 2017 3pm – 5pm Afternoon tea at the Meeting Hall followed by Songs and Stories. Please bring your favourite Mehera stories and songs and a plate to share. Coordinator: Leigh Rowan 5442 3228.

Christmas Day

Monday 25th December 2017 1pm Arti followed by Christmas Lunch. All welcome! Bring Christmas food to share. Coordinator TBA.

Amartithi

Meher Baba dropped His physical form on 31st January 1969.

Sunday 28th January 10am Coffee in kitchen. 11am Program in Baba's House. Noon – Silence. 12.15pm Arti.

12.30pm Potluck lunch in kitchen. Bring lunch to share.

Wednesday 31st January Noon – Silence. 12.15pm Arti.

Coordinator: Lorraine Brown 5446 8005.

Avatar Meher Baba's Birthday

Avatar Meher Baba was born at 5am on 25th February 1894.

Sunday 25th February 5am Arti and singing in Baba's House. 5.30am Light breakfast at kitchen. Breakfast contributions welcomed. 7am Birthday Party Games. 9am Coffee and café entertainment. 11.30am lunch provided by Amir for purchase RSVP. 1pm Films in Baba's House. Coordinator: Sunday morning breakfast Bernard Bruford 5442 1487. Coordinator: Program TBA.

Monday Morning Meetings at Avatar's Abode

10–11.30am in the Meeting Hall. For information: Lorraine 5446 8005 or babakalyan55@gmail.com. All are welcome to join with stories, readings, poetry, songs and a cuppa.

Wednesday Meher Baba's Works Reading Group

Now at 4.30pm – 5.30pm in the Bookstore.
Contact Wilma Pearson phone 0404 775 789 or (07) 5473 9947, email wilmapearson@aapt.net.au.

Friday Mornings 10:30am in the Bookstore

The explorers of God's words continue to study and discuss Meher Baba's revelations of who and what we all are. The Bookstore is located behind the Reception Centre at Avatar's Abode. Coordinators are Geoff Gunther (07) 5442 2467 or Steven Hein 0412 080 424.

Saturday Nights at the Abode Film nights the first Saturday of the month at 7pm. Contact: David and Glenda Hobson on (07) 5442 1220 or Jim Frisino on 0417 112 668.

New Zealand

Travellers to New Zealand who want to meet Baba lovers there are invited to contact Jill Hobbs, 19 Brassey Rd, Wanganui. Ph (06) 347 2974, email jillhobbs1954@gmail.com