

OM ॐ POINT

I N T E R N A T I O N A L C I R C U L A R • I S S U E 1

IF MANDALI ADVISE YOU

by Avatar Meher Baba, March 2, 1954, Andhra, India

“If Mandali advise you, when asked by you, don’t take the advice as from me. They will definitely advise you for the best, because they have been long with me, yet do not take their advice as from me... You can trust them not to



mislead you purposely. But after asking them for advice and help, you should also think of it yourself. For after all, Mandali are not Baba... Let us be very honest, absolutely honest. Adi has been with me like the few tested Mandali for a long period, and he has been doing office work for twenty years 100%. And even then, as I said, no one of my Mandali is Baba. Everyone has got weaknesses and defects. Advice you can have from Adi, but not as from Baba through Adi.”

Note: From *The Andhra Diary*, by Kishan Singh (unpublished as of this writing, but should be available soon), pages 116 and 120-121, as shared in the book, *Life Eternal*, by Mark Murray (also unpublished) in Myrtle Beach, South Carolina.

Welcome to the first issue of the OmPoint Circular.
Very special thanks to the contributors for what they’ve shared.
Enjoy.

In This Issue:

- 2 *Article: Don’t Worry, Be Happy*
Laurent Weichberger
- 3 *Article: Day-O*
Cynthia Barrientos
75th Birthday Message
Meher Baba
- 4 *Article: The Touch of the Silent Master*
Michal Sivan
- 6 New Arrivals
- 7 A Tribute to Shar Wiseman
- 9 Book Review
Daniel Sanders
- 10 *Article: God’s Name Alone*
Marilyn L. Buehler
- 12 The Art of Marla Faith
- 17 *Article: A Spiritual Internship with Margaret Craske*
Wendy Morris
- 19 On the Horizon
Laurent Weichberger
- 20 Prayer
Lopon Tsultim Wangmo

Don't Worry, Be Happy

by Laurent Weichberger, Flagstaff, AZ, August 25, 2006

Earlier this week, my daughter, Aspen, and I rode our bicycles to her school in the morning. Immediately after the ride, still hot and sweaty, I went looking for a water fountain in the building before heading home. I spotted my fountain and on the way to it, I passed an empty school office, where a computer monitor displayed a screen saver, scrolling these words from right to left, slowly: “Don’t Worry, Be Happy.”

As we had just started at this new school, I had no idea whose office it was, and since it was empty, I decided to just go home. Then I thought to myself—I wonder if I have a Baba card around here with “Don’t Worry, Be Happy” on it, to give to this person. I wonder if they even know that Meher Baba said that, or if it is just another Bobbie-McFarrin-pop-song-fan-person. Since I was fresh out of cards, I got ahold of not one but three from my friend Dan, and decided on the version with the entire quote on the front, “Do your best. Then, don’t worry, be happy in my love. I will help you,” with a photo of Baba next to those words. On the back of the card is this amazing quote: “To penetrate into the essence of all being and significance, and to release the fragrance of that inner attainment for the guidance and benefit of others, by expressing,

in the world of forms, truth, love, purity and beauty – this is the sole game which has any intrinsic and absolute worth. All other happenings, incidents and attainments can, in themselves, have no lasting importance.” (from *Lord Meher*, p. 6398).

The very next day, when picking up Aspen from school, I decided to find the office person, and share the card. When I arrived this time the door was closed, so I found a spot on the door and stuck the card there, to be found in the morning.

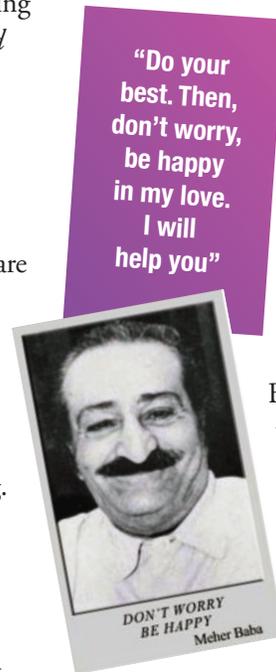
As soon as I left the building I started thinking: Wow, what if they come back and find that card, and don’t like it? What if they read the quote and don’t like that bit about “I will help you.” And what if the quote on the back is too much, and what if this and what if that... Finally, I said to myself—hey, wait a second, this whole thing started with “Don’t Worry, Be Happy” so I am not going to worry about it. I felt inspired to share Baba, without fear, and put the card there without fear, and now I should not be afraid, I did nothing wrong.

This morning, I went to the office and the card was exactly where I left it on the office door, but now the door was open. I smiled. Inside was the teacher whose office it is, and she turned and we introduced ourselves. I explained that I was the one who had left her the “Don’t Worry, Be Happy” card, and how I had seen her screen saver, etc. She said she knew only of the song, and continued, “I try to live by the words, Don’t Worry, Be Happy.”

In fact, she showed me another little sign on the wall behind me, which was a tiny blackboard with “Don’t Worry, Be Happy” in chalk letters on it. I said, “I thought you might be interested to know where the saying came from, it is from Meher Baba. Bobbie McFarrin got it from Meher Baba, and that is why I left you that card.”

At that point she got up, and took the card from its perch on her door, looked carefully at it and said, “Awesome! I will have to find a special place for this card.” We spoke about a number of other things, she showed me another spiritual saying on the wall of her office about “everyone being connected,” and then we said our goodbyes. Just before I walked out of her office, I turned my head and noticed her lean over to put the Baba card up on her bulletin board.

Jai Baba.





day-o day-ay-ay-o

by Cynthia Barrientos, July 22, 2007

“MEHER BABA’S 75th BIRTHDAY MESSAGE”¹

by Meher Baba, January 6, 1969

“To love me for what I may give you is not loving me at all. To sacrifice anything in my cause to gain something for yourself is like a blind man sacrificing his eyes for sight. I am the Divine Beloved worthy of being loved because I am Love. He who loves me because of this will be blessed with unlimited sight and will see me as I am.”



(This was the last “birthday message” given by Avatar Meher Baba to his lovers before he passed away.)

Note: 1. From *Love Alone Prevails* by Katherine Davy (Myrtle Beach: Sheriar Press, 1981), p. 686, Copyright © 1981 by Meher Spiritual Center, Inc. and by Avatar Meher Baba Perpetual Public Charitable Trust, for all quotations from Meher Baba.

What I love most about Sahavas is gathering with others at the start of the day to sing for Baba. In my experience, when two or more are gathered in His song, there is love. Occasionally, Baba makes His presence clearly known in these morning hours, with occurrences that initially surprise me. Then, I settle into the remembrance of His words, “On my part, I and my love will never leave you—here or hereafter.”¹

A playful reminder of His constant companionship occurred at the 2000 L.A. Sahavas. Having recently reached the 45 year mark in this lifetime, I made a decision to begin learning how to play piano. Playing actually came easily and there were a handful of pieces that I knew by heart. My very most favorite was that catchy Caribbean tune called “The Banana Boat Song”, also referred to as, “Day-O”. In short, the lyrics are... “Come Mr. Tally Mon, tally me banana. Daylight come and he wanna go home. Day, he say day, he say day, he say day, he say day-ay-ay-o. Daylight come and he wanna go home.”

What I love about this song is the reminder that when daylight comes, I am awake and one day closer on my journey back to Him. Even though I realize that He has never left me, I am naturally all caught up in this world of illusion. There will come a time when I return home and all there will be is Beloved Baba.

Well, I was far from an accomplished pianist, though this particular one I knew well enough to play for others. At one point the idea popped into my head to approach the old grand piano at Pilgrim Pines and play for Baba. Back and forth I went in my head (not my heart) as to whether or not it would be “appropriate” to play this piece. After all, it was not a known “Baba song”! Oh, silly me.

Finally, I decided NOT to play, since I was, 1) shy and not confident, and 2) unsure of how this piece might be received by the other folks, not being a “Baba song” and all. HA!

Exhaling after this decision, a woman I did not recognize immediately spoke up. In an island accent she explained something with this essence. “I’d like to sing my two favorite songs. They are not really “Baba” songs, though they are popular in my country. I offer them to Baba with love. She instantly belted out, “Day-o, day-ay-ay-ay-o. Daylight come and he wanna go home...” in her deep, rich Caribbean voice.

Tears of joy streamed down my face as she sang from her heart to Baba. I gazed into His loving and playful eyes and added this selection to my list of favorite “Baba” songs.

Note:

1. From *Lord Meher*, Vol. Nine & Ten, p. 3167, by Bhau Kalchuri (c) Copyright 1996 AMBPPCT

the touch of the silent master

by Michal Sivan, February 10, 2007, Jerusalem, Israel



Beloved Avatar Meher Baba Ki Jai.

When I came back from Meherabad in 1988, head over heels in love with Beloved Meher Baba, I was sure that whoever got in touch with Him, heard about Him, read literature about Him, or just happened to glance on His lovely form in a photograph, would surely fall in love with Him, captured by the sweeping charm of The Beloved, just like He captured my heart.

It was very surprising for me to realize that this is not the case. People were not swooning all over the place, calling “Baba, Baba, Baba” from the depths of their loving hearts. People were hardly even asking who Baba was when seeing the

BIG Baba button that I was wearing very visibly. Some did ask if this was a picture of Salvador Dali, or some other Israeli comedian. When someone did ask about Baba, they had very little attention span to even hear something to the end.

My friends got quite used to me saying Baba, or Jai Meher Baba in our conversations, or on ending a phone conversation. Some of them got so used to it that they started saying “Jai Meher Baba” by their own initiative. Baba is happily looking from every corner in my home. When at the beginning I used to have a small photo of Baba near my bedside table, it Baba-flourished to having Baba

everywhere. It was a kind of a Babadare. Do I dare to make such a Baba statement in my life? And developed to the understanding that Beloved Baba is helping me meditate on His Form and Being while going through my worldly life.

My worldly life centers around the house. This is where I have been working for some years now. I have a small kindergarten at my home, with 16 lovely little light-full kids, that I take care of with my staff, ages two to four years old. In my heart I refer to them as “my Baba’s kids”, because I feel that Baba calls them to this kindergarten. I have never advertised the kindergarten. It started as a

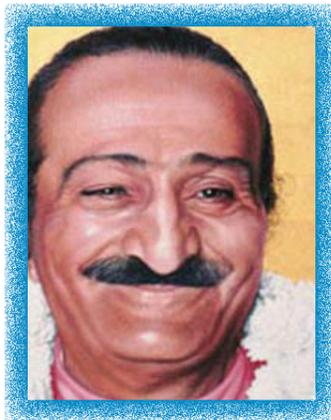
Community Center little day care place for 6 children, and after 3 years I started to work independently from the Community Center. The parents just kept coming by word of mouth, but very clearly from Baba. Many people have commented that the kids seem to be from the same family, looking and behaving in similar ways, like brothers and sisters.

When the parents first come to view the kindergarten, Baba's presence is undeniable, because of all the lovely photos on the wall, and a big Baba library, and His constant Blessed Presence at my home. Still most of them do not even ask about Him. And if they do, they hardly listen to more than a word or two about Him. Most parents are not into spirituality, and even if they are, they do not ask too much about Beloved Baba. Some parents would ask me how does being with Baba inspire me in my work with the kids, and I would answer that Baba says God is within each of us, little tots too, so I try, though don't always succeed, to remember this in all my dealings and care of them. I also say that Baba's Presence is felt in the kindergarten. They would be concerned to know if I bring into the kindergarten the Jewish holidays and celebrate them, which of course we do with much love.

Some of the kids come from religious (Jewish) families. The parents do not seem to find Baba a hindrance to placing their children at my care. There were times my kindergarten had half of the children from religious homes.

I usually do not mention Baba in my daily care of the children, and in the topics we present to them during the year. But on major Baba occasions and celebrations like Mehera's birthday, Baba's Amartithi, Baba's birthday and Silence Day, I would mention Baba and give the kids a Prasad Baba sweet that was placed on Baba's Samadhi from one of my visits,

... if people ask me who this man in the picture is, I have the opportunity to say: "Avatar Meher Baba"



saying to them: Jai Meher Baba. I inform the parents of this on our 'Parents' Board', and till now did not have anyone object to this.

Of course, if people—parents and staff—ask me who this man in the pictures is, I have the opportunity to say: "Avatar Meher Baba". To which the immediate reaction is: "Who?", giving me another opportunity to say

Baba's name: "Avatar Meher Baba". And Baba said that this suffices. All we really have to do is say out His name, and Baba will take it from the ear to the heart. If they ask me about Him further, I usually ask Beloved Baba in my heart to give me a fitting answer to that person's inner understanding, for I certainly don't know where that person is at, and what is fitting for them. And, as already mentioned, a short answer suffices, and the person does not proceed to ask any more.

This used to be very surprising for me at the beginning of my love story with Beloved Baba, or rather the continuation of my love story with Beloved Meher Baba from past lives. This is because Baba's Mandali continuously say that whoever came to Baba at these times, has had a meaningful connection with Baba going way back. But now, as several years have passed since I first came to Baba in this lifetime, I got used to this, and have even learned to treasure it. To be with Beloved in a very intimate and personal way, having Baba to myself in this quiet way. Developing my own way of relating and answering to Beloved Meher Baba's relationship with me.

I got used to celebrating Mehera's and Baba's Birthdays with friends and families who were not Baba lovers themselves. We used to have lovely celebrations, with Baba's Wine of Joy and Love elating all our hearts. All would enjoy, and I felt Beloved Baba enjoying the gathering too.

There were a few people who were close to Baba. Etzion Becker whose book *The Story of Ali* brought me to Baba. He is a Baba veteran who met Carrie Ben-Shamai, and received all her Baba library and correspondence when she went to an old age home. There was Hanna who came with me to Meherabad in 1995, and Jessica who kept coming to the small Baba meeting I had at my home every week, and some others who came from time to time. And Miriam, who used to see Baba sitting on a tree, smiling, when I used to be in deep inner turmoil. Though she actually got to see Him and feel His humor still she used to say: "I am not a Baba Lover. It is Baba who loves me". She would remind me of what Eruch used to say: "Rather than be a seeker, be the sought!"

I was in contact with other people who visited Meherabad, Meherazad, and Meher-Nazar through the years, but they proved to be mixed in their allegiance, not wholeheartedly Baba's.

And I had treasured visits of Baba Lovers from abroad at my home.

On my last visit in Meherabad, October 2006, with my friend Miriam (who passed away into Beloved Baba's waiting hands two months later) I

met in Meher Pilgrim Retreat five lovely Israeli young people. We had a lovely time at the Israeli dining hall table (right next to the Iranian table), after being with Beloved Baba during the day. We stayed in contact when we all came back, and now we meet and celebrate together Baba celebrations. It is so very special to celebrate and do Arti with conscious Baba

Lovers (and such light-full hearted lovers at that). It is a great Baba gift to me and a source of much joy.

But yet the wondrous experience of being in the

Company of our Silent Beloved, and seeing Him touching lightly, gently and silently all the hearts of the parents, children and staff coming to the kindergarten throughout the years has been a very deep experience for me. Our Lord and Master surely does not need help in reaching our thirsty hearts. It is enough for each of us to reflect how Beloved Meher Baba touched and started awakening our hearts. But it is a great privilege to be able to be present and glimpse when Beloved Meher Baba works in His silent ways.

I wonder where and how all these many souls touched by Baba's Love will awaken and flower in His Garden.

In Baba's Love, Michal

... Eruch used to say:
"rather than be a seeker, be the sought!"



New Arrivals!



Rebecca (Legum) Edwards had her first baby, **Henry Douglas Edwards V**, born May 1 in Georgia.

Mehera Dennison's third baby due February 2008 in Massachusetts.



Cyprus Weichberger turns one year old on August 19 in Arizona.

Liz (Clay) Beard, just had her first baby, **Elijah Beard**, born July 28.



Alethea (Gard'ner) second baby due in October in Georgia.

Jessica (Craft) Mednick's first baby due February, 2008 in India/Australia.

Jessica (Gram) Stout's first baby due March, 2008 in S. Carolina.



Nadine (Edleman) McCowan's first baby (a boy) due September.

A TRIBUTE TO SHAR WISEMAN

MARCH 2, 1958 - JULY 23, 2007

Our dear spiritual sister, Sharon Wiseman, has passed into her Beloved Baba's arms on July 23. She is survived by her stepdaughters, Katie and Michelle, and her husband Sky.

While I shared with Shar about her deep love for Baba, and we shared dreams we have had of Baba, our poetry and her painting, I wish I had spent so much more time with this most wondrous woman. She loved her family and Baba so dearly, there are not words here to express her depth. We had some great email correspondence and she sent me many photos— some of her family and some of her India trips. A classic statement from Shar was, “I just got back from 2 months in Meherabad, and am unpacking from India... Christ, I miss the Samadhi. :o)”¹

— Laurent



L to R: Shar and Sky; Shar at Baba's Table Room; Illustration by Shar and Cherie Plumlee; Shar and Aloba at Meherabad

Seeing

by Shar Wiseman

The moon
appeared so much nearer
the earth last night.

Could this be so?

Then,
much later the
stars seemed to
reach beyond
the space they normally
occupy as if
beckoning a pilgrim Home.

Ahh, how wonderful
if one could witness
God within oneself
as clearly.

My Beloved whispers,
“True faith is a form of sight
and not of blindness.”

And with His kiss
a whole world opens from
within.²



L to R: Shar with Mohammed Mast; Katie; Painting detail by Shar, “You Have Asked For and Been Given Enough Words”; Michelle

Notes: 1. In an email from Shar to Laurent dated March 16, 2005.
2. From www.avatarmeherbaba.org/erics/sharpoem.html#seeing

B O O K ॐ R E V I E W

by Daniel J. Sanders, Flagstaff, Arizona, July 2007

For the first time Meher Baba's insights and revelations about the nature of the Avatar and the known Avatars throughout history have been compiled into one volume with James H. McGrew's "Avataric Advents: Meher Baba's Perspective on the Descent of God on Earth." As explained in the introduction by Rick Chapman,



McGrew actually met Meher Baba in 1966, one of the rare seekers permitted to do so during Baba's final years of seclusion and universal work.

Through Meher Baba, a tremendous new understanding of the great world prophets and the faiths they inspired

is now possible. McGrew has taken the wisdom and teachings Meher Baba gave the world on this matter, and organized it into one condensed form with this book.

The author is very thorough about citing sources from a wide variety of works (both Meher Baba books and many other historical spiritual volumes). Interestingly, after an initial chapter discussing the Avatar Himself and the themes that characterize ev-

Avataric Advents: Meher Baba's Perspective on the Descent of God on Earth

ery Incarnation of God in human form, McGrew chooses to present each advent by going backwards through time—starting with Meher Baba, then Muhammad the Prophet, then Jesus, Buddha, Krishna, Rama, and Zarathustra. Finally after almost 300 pages, he leaps forward 700 years into our future with a short chapter about what Baba said concerning "The Next Avatar."

Although McGrew uses Meher Baba's explanations to illustrate how all

the major world prophets are connected, he does not shy away from acknowledging their differences. For example, Avatars such as Jesus and Baba himself placed emphasis on the personal side of God, whereas Buddha and Muhammad focused on the impersonal. But these apparent conflicts are resolved through Baba's teachings by observing how they are merely different facets of the same diamond, or "beads on one string." Additionally the author boldly states

the most controversial details that Meher Baba revealed about the lives of Avatars such as Jesus Christ.

Also discussed are what Baba explained as the Avatar's di-

vine mistakes. In every advent, the Avatar makes one great mistake—on purpose! By examining these errors, or seeming errors, it helps one to understand the apparent differences between the major world religions.

Finally, and happily, McGrew is careful not to ignore the theme of the Avatar's divine sense of humor down through the ages. After all, the author asks, if God did not have a sense of humor, then how could we?

Order from www.SheriarBooks.org (Sheriar Foundation Bookstore), from the publisher at www.MeherBabaInformation.org (Meher Baba Information), or from lovestreetbookstore.com.

GOD'S NAME ALONE



by Marilyn L. Buehler, Sacramento, California, July 2007

Recently, I was asked to facilitate a Centering Prayer group. At first, I was hesitant, but it became apparent this task was mine to do. Before becoming a Baba Lover, in 1973, I had a meditation practice for nearly two years. Also, having been a teacher of meditation since 1976, I have mentored others to explore the inner life, in whatever form that may take. Centering Prayer is a way of opening to God that has been born from the Christian tradition and is known through the work of Thomas Keating.

If I were to facilitate a Centering Prayer group, it was necessary to explore this practice. The first step of Centering Prayer is to choose a word that symbolizes one's openness to God. This sacred word expresses an intention to consent to God's

presence and action within. Guidelines are often set for a meditation or devotional practice: establish a regular time for a daily practice, sit in a comfortable position, adopt a neutral attitude towards thoughts, and gently return to the object of focus. These are components of Centering Prayer.

I chose "Meher Baba" as my sacred word. At first, this new practice was met with skepticism. It was too simple. As I started the Centering Prayer practice, I was aware of my breath and found myself synchronizing the words "Meher Baba" with my breath. As Centering Prayer suggests, I detached from these thoughts, and soon awareness was sailing beyond the rhythm of the breath. Baba's name alone easily became the focus. This inner retreat became a source of peacefulness.



QUOTES FROM BABA

"Meditation is personal when it is concerned with some spiritually perfect soul. A suitable object for personal meditation may be taken (according to the inclination of the aspirant) from among the Avatars or the Masters of the past or from living Perfect Masters. Through such personal meditation the aspirant imbibes all the divine qualities or the spiritual knowledge of the Master. Since it involves love and self-surrender, personal meditation invites the grace of the Master which alone can give final realisation. So the Sadhana of personal meditation not only makes the aspirant similar to the Master on whom he meditates, but also prepares his way to be united with the Master in the Truth."¹

In June came an opportunity to explore Centering Prayer more deeply. I have been attending the Sancta Sophia Seminary in Tahlequah, Oklahoma, and I fly into the Tulsa airport. Thirty minutes outside Tulsa is the Osage Monastery (OM). OM is a unique monastery run by Catholic Benedictine nuns who embrace an

BABA DOES NOT LET US BECOME ATTACHED TO INNER EXPERIENCES, AND THE CALL TO WORK IN THE OUTER WORLD SEEMS TO BE THE TASK OF THE DAY.

interfaith approach to the contemplative life through the inspiration of Bede Griffiths. Being drawn to a contemplative life, and appreciating this Christian Interfaith approach, I arranged to spend four days at OM after attending seminary.

The plan was to fully participate in the daily routine. There is one hour of meditation at 5:15 a.m., a half hour at noon, and another hour in the evening before dinner. The sanctuary for daily prayers is a sacred space; the feeling there beckons one into quietude. Entering the sanctuary, one is naturally drawn to sit and go within. This four-day retreat was to be a deeper exploration of Centering Prayer and a delight to merge with Baba's name without distractions of the world.

Each day became a greater letting go of concerns and a forgetting of

things to do. Silence alone became my companion. During meditation, gently recalling Baba's name, it grew into a greater and greater surrender, and a knowing that Baba's name is, mysteriously, Everything. We can rest in His Name and trust that all is well. It is simple, complete and full of His Grace.

On the last day of the retreat, after Morning Prayer, I started to get up from my meditation pillow. I couldn't. Tears overcame me. "How indulgent!" I thought. Baba does not let us become attached to inner experiences, and the call to work in the outer world seems to be the task of the day. I am at ease with this contemplative life; do I really need to go back out there? I let the tears stream forth and reflected how Meher Baba's ashram is the world and He has asked to love and serve Him in others. I thanked Him for these four days of sweet quietude. After a while, the tears stopped, and I walked out of the sanctuary in preparation for the flight home to Sacramento.

The peace and light-ness lived during this brief stay are still with me and can be touched whenever I reach out. We can remember Him, during our day, and trust that all is well.

Notes:

1. From *Discourses* (6th edition) by Meher Baba, Volume II, "The Deeper Aspects of Sadhana," p. 188.
2. From *Lord Meher*, by V.S. "Bhau" Kalchuri, p. 4781.



"In the spiritual path, outward renunciation is not necessary. Be in the world and do your duty by those near and dear to you. But there should be no attachment. To lessen it, my name should always be taken now and then. If this is not possible, at least take it before going to bed and getting up in the morning. Bewail not calamity, but try to put up with it calmly, surrendering to my wish.

"There is no use renouncing the world, your wife, your children and property. Renunciation of the mind is what is required. Don't starve your stomach, starve your mind! You take your mind with you in external renunciation, and constantly have thoughts of your family, wealth, and so forth"²





The art of
Marla Faith

marlafaith.com • *All works are for sale.*



Pleased • Oil on canvas

“**P**leased is a 2006 oil painting based on a black and white photo of Baba from 1952. I made several versions of this painting, trying to catch the glee that seems to emanate from Baba in the photo. With this fifth try, I finally felt satisfied that He was present in it.”



Boathouse Girls • 6' x 5' Oil on canvas

“**B**oathouse Girls is a 6 x 5 foot oil painting of my daughter, Nila, and her best friend, Savannah, from our June 2007 visit to Meher Center.

Baba said it was His home in the west
and that He never leaves it,
and there He is on the boathouse dock,
always present behind everything.”



The Enigmatic Meher • 3' x 4' Oil on canvas

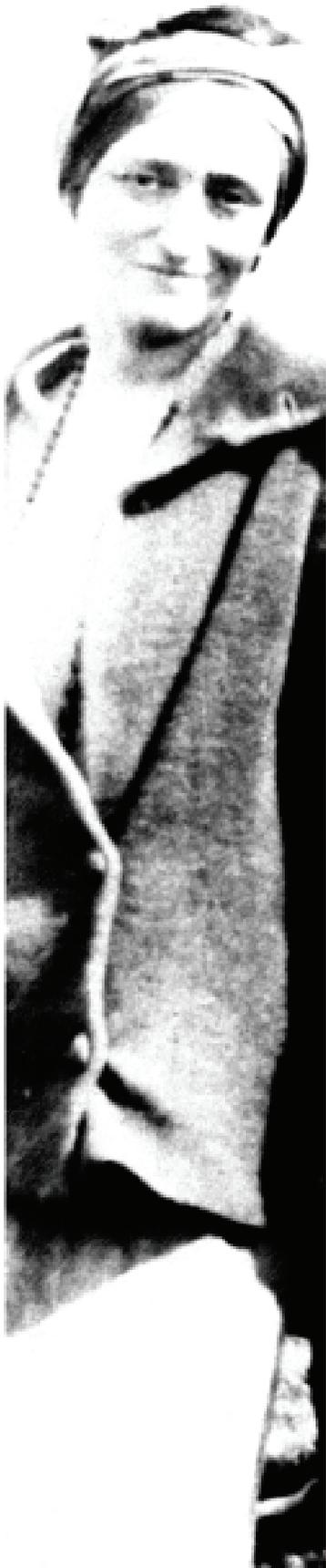
“ **A**fter painting giant women for a whole year, I was itching to do a painting of Meher Baba. This 3 x 4 foot oil painting is entitled **The Enigmatic Meher**. It is based on the photo of Baba that hangs in the Lagoon Cabin. ”



Ganesha • Tiny gouache painting with small shells around the border

“In Hinduism, **Ganesha** is the remover of all obstacles. Symbolically, he is big enough to get through anything, and because his mount is a mouse, he is also small enough to get through anything.

This son of Shiva and Parvati is a favorite deity in India.”



A Spiritual Internship with Margaret Craske¹

Copyright © 2003 by Wendy Morris

As I blew out my candles on my seventh birthday cake, I silently wished for freedom. My wish was not for freedom “from” something, but rather, for freedom towards something. I wanted a way of being that was open, connected to everything, and totally un-self-conscious. For many birthdays after that, my wish was a wordless yearning.

Throughout those years I felt ashamed and secretive about my wish because I knew my friends were wishing for more tangible gifts, like bicycles. As a child I read a question somewhere, “How can you talk about the sea to a frog in a well?” The question comforted me. I was the frog in the well, daring to hope that oceans exist.

One adult in my early life who seemed to know something about “the ocean” was my dance teacher at the Metropolitan Opera, the

renowned ballet teacher Margaret Craske (pronounced “crask”). Miss Craske, as we called her, was an irascible and exacting force. If you were looking for an impeccable foundation in classical ballet technique, then that was what you found in her classes. But if you were looking for a ritualized training in the technique of being a human being, you could also find it between the spoken words and dance steps. For me, each class was an embodied lesson in consciousness, integrity and intention.

Three days a week, my young peers and I lined up at the ballet bars dressed alike in simple black leotards, with bare legs, white anklets, and our hair wrapped up in anonymous buns. Just like little Buddhist nuns (who traditionally dress alike and wear shaved heads), our uniformity depersonalized our distinctions and pointed us towards a level of expression that is beyond superficial appearances.



Miss Craske railed at us not to “flail your limbs about”, because “every moment of dancing has to have meaning, and you give it meaning with your focus, intention and clarity.” It was apparent to me that she was not just talking about dancing, but about life itself: it is not enough to flail about with our lives; if we want our lives to be imbued with meaning, we need to focus our attention and clarify our intention, not just every once in a while but moment upon moment, with constancy and rigor. She was teaching us how to express our lives through awareness.

We were trained by Miss Craske to think only in terms of authentic long-term gains, rather than short-term rewards. She made certain that we initiated each outward leg rotation (“turn-out”) from our hip joints, rather than at our ankles. When a dancer rotates from the ankles it creates an appealing illusion of a wider range of rotation than the dancer can genuinely support. Miss Craske made sure we understood that when we indulge in an illusion, we sacrifice any possibility of improvement because real change needs to start from a truthful assessment of the current situation. If we were tempted to exaggerate our turn-out, Miss Craske came by with her wooden cane and tapped our feet back into a more authentic stance, the way a Zen master might rap a drowsing meditator back into consciousness. Hour after hour, week after week, year after year we were drilled with an unspoken message: the way to generate real improvement is through incremental, sustained practice that is grounded in an honest assessment of the current reality. When I saw girls from other

ballet schools turn their feet out from their ankles, I felt sorry for them because they didn’t know better.

Just a couple of years ago I learned that Margaret Craske is also renowned as a close disciple of Meher Baba. Baba (as he is known by his disciples) was one of the first of many Asian spiritual masters whose teachings infused our western world in the twentieth century. After recently reading Margaret Craske’s book, *The Dance of Love*, (written in 1980), the trajectory of my life suddenly made sense. Being her student at such a formative age set me along a life path of rigorous, body-based spiritual development.

Miss Craske’s influence abides in the cells of my body because what we learn experientially, with our bodies, is an ingrained learning. She was adamant that dancing is about making conscious choices. When I substitute the word “life” for the word “dancing”, the message becomes, “Life is about making conscious choices.”

I consider my years training with Margaret Craske as a spiritual internship. Miss Craske’s insistence on integrity and clear intention were patterned into my biological structure as a girl. Those patterns continue to influence my daily choices as a woman, for which I am deeply grateful.

Note:

1. From wendymorris.org (used by permission)



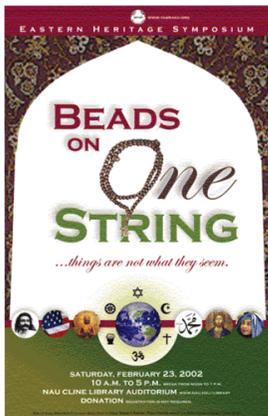
ON THE ॐ HORIZON

“Beads on One String: Faith Declared”

by Laurent Weichberger, Flagstaff, Arizona, October 17, 2007

We are extremely close to completion on a new book project, “Beads on One String: Faith Declared”. In his seminal book, “God Speaks”, Meher Baba placed the following short message just before the start of the book text:

“I am not come to establish any cult, society or organization; nor even to establish a new religion. The religion that I shall give teaches the Knowledge of the One behind the many. The book that I shall make people read is the book of the heart that holds the key to the mystery of life. I shall bring about a happy blending of the head and the heart. I shall revitalize all religions and cults, and bring them together like beads on one string.”



Poster for Beads on One String Seminar held February, 2002 in Flagstaff, Arizona.

Reflecting on this message, and similar messages Meher Baba gave over the years regarding Beads on One String, it has been clear to many Baba lovers that he felt strongly about all faiths making an effort not only to get along, but to honor one another's faith. He expected this of his own disciples, which came from various faiths including Zoroastrian, Hindu, Buddhist, Christian, Sikh, Sufi, Jewish, and Muslim, not to mention the atheists and agnostics!

Based on an all day seminar presented at Northern Arizona University in February 2002 in response to the chaos of September 11, and the need for global education and understanding around Eastern faiths, this book is an anthology of spiritual faith declared by those living that faith, as follows:

- **Introduction**, Don E. Stevens
- **Ancient Mysticism:** Zarathustra to Mohammed, Laurent Weichberger
- **Judaism**, Yaakov Weintraub
- **Vedanta**, Thomas M. Knoles
- **Sufism**, Karl Moeller
- **Hinduism**, Kelly McCabe
- **Buddhism**, Lopon Tsultim Wangmo
- **Jainism**, Ameeta Vora
- **Christianity**, Mary Esther Stewart

- **Sikh dharma**, Haring Singh Khalsa
- **Modern Mysticism: Ramakrishna and Vivekananda**, Hazrat Inayat Khan, and Avatar Meher Baba, Laurent Weichberger.

We are honored to have a brand new introduction by Don Stevens who has had direct experience with Meher Baba regarding the Beads themselves, and we won't spoil his story here. Trust me, it is worth reading and contemplating deeply. In fact, his own project regarding the “Beads on One String” as a video documentary is starting to gather momentum and you will hear more about that soon. Then we have all of the above contributors sharing from the depth of their living wisdom regarding the faith they have chosen.

This book is a monument of faith honoring; I feel blessed to be a part of it. Baba willing, we shall have this book available in early 2008. May this work be pleasing to Beloved God.

Note:

1. Meher Baba, from *God Speaks*, page facing p1.



ASPIRATION PRAYER OF SELF-HEALING COMMITMENT TO THE BEINGS OF THE SIX REALMS

by Lopon Tsultim Wangmo, March 31, 1999

As long as beings suffer from meanness and hate in the hell realms,
I wash anger from my mind and pray for our release.

As long as beings suffer from hunger and thirst in the hungry ghost realms,
I wash greed from my thoughts, and pray for our release.

As long as beings suffer from unawareness in the animal realms,
I apply myself to the study of the Buddhadharma, and pray for our release.

As long as beings suffer from desire in the human realms,
I train myself in contentment, and pray for our release.

As long as beings suffer from jealousy in the realms of the titans,
I rejoice in the success and happiness of others and pray for our release.

As long as beings suffer from pride in the god realms,
I live each day in gracious humility and pray for our enlightenment.

*May all beings be released from their suffering and enjoy
the Great Happiness.*

OM ॐ POINT

Ompoint invites you to share your images, art, or words. The next issue will be dedicated to mental health issues and spirituality. Please send submissions to Laurent at laurent@ompoint.com.

CREDITS p1 Photo of Avatar Meher Baba at Capo Di Monte, Cannes, France, 1937. Copyright © 2007 Avatar Meher Baba Perpetual Public Charitable Trust, Ahmednagar, India; p2 Photo on "Don't Worry, Be Happy" card is Meher Baba in Ganeshkind Gardens, Poona, India, May 1957. Copyright © 2007 Avatar Meher Baba Perpetual Public Charitable Trust, Ahmednagar, India; p3 Photo of Avatar Meher Baba in Meherabad, India, May, 1936. Copyright © 2007 Avatar Meher Baba Perpetual Public Charitable Trust, Ahmednagar, India; p4 Painting of Meher Baba and his sister Mani flying a kite, by Wodin, used by permission. Copyright © 2007 Steve Jamison; p5 Painting of Avatar Meher Baba copyright © 2007 Searchlight Books, Walnut Creek, CA, Detail of Meher Baba painting, © Anthony Davis; p10 Photo of Avatar Meher Baba, Guruprasad, Poona, India, May 1965. Copyright © 2007 Avatar Meher Baba Perpetual Public Charitable Trust, Ahmednagar, India; pp12-16 All paintings are copyright © 2007 Marla Faith; p17 Article is copyright © 2003 Wendy Morris. The photo of Margaret Craske is from *Lord Meher* and copyright © 2007 Avatar Meher Baba Perpetual Public Charitable Trust, Ahmednagar, India; p18 The photo of Meher Baba and Margaret Craske is from *Lord Meher* and copyright © 2007 Avatar Meher Baba Perpetual Public Charitable Trust, Ahmednagar, India; p20 The prayer is copyright © 1999 Ani Tsultim Wangmo. The image of Buddha is from http://what-buddha-said.net/Pics/Hibiscus_Buddha.jpg.

All quotes of Avatar Meher Baba's words are copyright © 2007 Avatar Meher Baba Perpetual Public Charitable Trust, Ahmednagar, India. We are grateful to the late Lawrence Reiter for his decades of work to preserve and protect Meher Baba's blessed images. Some photos of Avatar Meher Baba are copyright © the Mani S. Irani (MSI) Collection. All rights reserved to the copyright holders. We are grateful to Alison Govi for many hours of loving dedication to the design of this first issue of the OmPoint Circular, it wouldn't be here without her effort.