

# OM ॐ POINT

INTERNATIONAL CIRCULAR • ISSUE 14 • SUMMER 2014





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## issue #14

# OMPOINT

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## Ruminations from the Layoutwalla

In this issue are some rare treats.

The opening is an article on beloved Hazrat Babajan, by prominent Indian author Ruzbeh Bharucha of Pune and Mumbai. Mr. Bharucha is a devotee of Sai Baba of Shirdi. The story of how this article arrived at our door is itself a mystery. Issue number 12, due to travel, took forever and a day to create, and during those months in 2013, somehow, Ruzbeh bhai's article found itself on Karl's computer. There was no room in Issue number 12, so it waited, spinning around endlessly on a hard drive, until this issue. A search of the email inbox revealed nothing. Archive search - nothing. A mystery. Karl thought Laurent had forwarded it. Laurent had never seen it, thought it would be a wonderful addition. Some internet sleuthing revealed Ruzbeh Bharucha's email address. We appealed to him, and his very gracious permission included this:

**How the article reached you is simple. *they* wanted it to so thats that. I have come to the conclusion not to think too much about how *the old chaps* work.**

**Regards to you and Laurent**

**please continue to spread *their word*.**

**be blessed**

***jai baba***

**Ruzbeh**

The next article is an extensive exploration of the Forgiveness Seminars written and presented by Laurent Weichberger and Soleil Brigham. A close companion and confidante of Don Stevens, Laurent was a co-creator of Don's *The Doorbell of Forgiveness*, itself a recounting of a long weekend seminar on this inspiring subject.

Since Don's passing in 2011, Laurent has continued to speak with interested groups, and this detailed article describes the process and dynamics in depth.

We welcome feedback or suggestions at  
ompoint@gmail.com

The next article is by our dear friend and brother Talat Halman. Laurent and Karl 'met' Talat via email when he gave our book *Celebrating Divine Presence* a rave review on Amazon.com. He is a practicing Sufi in a Turkish Order, a "Bektashi-Rifai", as well as a devotee of Meher Baba. Talat is a world recognized Sufi scholar, and his Ph.D. committee included Dr. Carl Ernst and Dr. Alan Godlas. Talat is an Associate Professor of Religion at Central Michigan University. His well-annotated article is on the relationships and subtle interplay between Meher Baba and various Sufi groups, as well as an assessment of Baba's true status as ( in Talat's words):

*"Qutub al-Aktab* (Pivotal Saint among all pivotal saints), the greatest Sufi master, *Sabeb-e Zaman* (the Master of the Age), *Insan al-Kamil* (The Perfect Human Being), the Avatar, Meher Baba."

The final major article is quite a find for OmPoint and for the Meher Baba community. It isn't often that literary work of this scale comes along. Ed Flanagan is a former Catholic priest, yes, the former Father Flanagan, who first heard of Meher Baba in the mid-1950s. His close acquaintance with many of Baba's Mandali inform this major work, a book titled *Christ Come Again: Avatar – The Life & Teachings of Meher Baba*.

Ed describes the book as "...the Avatar's revelations on his hidden life as Jesus, compiled from original sources: books, journals, letters tape recordings, online and personal accounts from those who met or lived with the Avatar."

Ed has given OmPoint permission to serialize his book, a course followed by many famed authors including Robert Louis Stevenson and Charles Dickens. We look forward to revealing a chapter (or two, as space allows) in each forthcoming issue.

Karl Moeller  
Tucson Arizona  
USA

# HAZRAT BABA JAAN THE QUTUB AND THE ROSE

by Ruzbeh Bharucha, India

The first time I felt Baba Jaan's loving Energy was seven years ago. I wanted to shift to Pune for good. Each time I would initiate the move, something or the other would impede the process. I am from Mumbai but for two and a half years was living in Delhi. My youngest daughter Meher was born and I didn't want her to live either in Mumbai or in the Capital. I had made several visits to Pune to work out the transition but it wasn't happening.

One day in prayer, Baba Sai of Shirdi, gently whispered that the only way my move to Pune would fructify was if I took permission and blessings from Baba Jaan, as S(H)e was the Ruler of this beautiful city. Baba Jaan took Samadhi (or left Her physical body) on September 20th 1931, but as the beautiful stanza says, 'Cycles change, the worlds rotate, But Qutubs never their seat vacate', Baba Jaan's spiritual reign over Pune continues.

I was aware of Baba Jaan, as my first book The Last Marathon, was about Avatar Meher Baba and life after death and spirit communication. I was aware that Baba Jaan was one of the Perfect Masters who initiated the realisation of Godhood in The Avatar.



I had often been to Baba Jaan's Dargah, when I used to visit Pune. So I reached Her Dargah, and as it so often happens, the chaps in charge of providing Pune with electricity, being prominent activists in the 'save Mother Earth' movement and big on conserving power and electricity, had shut off the electrical grids. The Dargah was in partial darkness. A small lamp burnt and head lights of the cars that passed by, on and off shed light within the Dargah. I was all alone with Baba Jaan. I knelt and touching Her holy Tomb, prayed. I told Baba Jaan, that I wanted her blessings and permission to settle in Pune, but only if S(H)e thought the move was best for the overall wellbeing of my family and Pune city. The moment I had prayed to Baba Jaan, the Dargah and all the nearby shops lit up, as the electrical power had been restored. I knew Baba Jaan had given me Permission and Blessings. I went and touched my forehead to the Neem Tree trunk, where Baba Jaan used to sit while in the body.

The moment I stepped out of the Dargah, Pune Electrical Board, sprung to action, and all around once again the state of semi darkness returned.

Within a week all obstacles were removed magically and in a few months, after completing my book I was working on, we shifted lock, stock and a temperamental baby, to Pune.



## THE FIVE PERFECT MASTERS WHO ASSISTED AVATAR MEHER BABA TO FLOWER



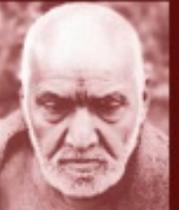
NARAYAN  
MAHARAJ



SAI BABA  
of SHIRDI



TAJUDDIN  
BABA



UPASANI  
MAHARAJ



HAZRAT BABA JAN

Every time, a day before I have to travel out of Pune, I go and seek Baba Jaan's Permission. There have been times when at the last moment, the trip has got cancelled. I know it is Baba Jaan's way of telling me, permission to travel denied. The moment I reach Pune, in a few hours I go to give my Hazari to Baba Jaan. I would like to believe S(H)e is as happy to see me as I am, to be back with the Old Monarch.

Baba Jaan was born in Baluchistan, Afghanistan and named Gulrukh (one who looks like a Rose), year of birth has been debated, either 1790 or 1820. S(h)e is believed to be born in an aristocratic family of noble lineage and according to many biographers Baba Jaan had the lineage of royal blood. (Obviously S(H)e was Royalty; spiritual Royalty.) Baba Jaan at a very tender age learned the entire Quran and thus was a hāfiẓah (one who knows the Quran by heart), apart from being fluent in Arabic, Persian, Urdu and her mother tongue, Pashtu. From a young age, Baba Jaan was more inclined towards prayers, meditation and silent contemplation. Between the age of fourteen to eighteen years, Baba Jaan's parents wanted to get their daughter married. Baba Jaan had other plans. On the day of the wedding, S(H)e ran away and reached Peshawar, and then Rawalpindi, which was then in India. One can imagine a young girl, from an aristocratic family, brought up in the rigid discipline of the Parda system, running away, travelling all alone, to reach an alien country, in order to continue the spiritual journey. Those days wars were common; bandits a way of life and in a male dominated world, a young girl of eighteen, manages to escape unscathed and reach India, itself was a miracle. God was with Gulrukh.

For a long time Baba Jaan continued with her spiritual practices till one day she met a Hindu Saint, who then formally initiated Baba Jaan into various spiritual practices. It is said that after the initiation, Baba Jaan went into seclusion for seventeen months, staying in a mountain, just outside Rawalpindi, continuing with the spiritual practices and austerities passed down by the Hindu Saint.

Baba Jaan after the seventeen months of isolation then stayed for a few months in Multan. It was here that Baba Jaan met a Majzoob, Muslim Saint, who blessed the thirty seven year old Gulrukh with God realization. Baba Jaan returned to Rawalpindi, met with the Hindu Saint, once again, who was instrumental in helping Baba Jaan return to normal consciousness; which means, though the state of God realization continues, Baba Jaan could also live a

normal human life, by coexisting with normal human consciousness. This is of utmost importance as if The Master cannot operate from normal consciousness, then the God realisation is of not much use to all of creation. It is like Radiance, not shared, only meant for One individual; while God realisation along with human normal consciousness, means spread the Divine Light and Radiance to all of creation.

Biographers are undecided at what age Baba Jaan met up with the Hindu Saint, but for many, nearly two decades had passed since the time S(H)e had left Afghanistan, while some say S(H)e met the Masters when S(H)e was nearly fifty years old, and some claim Baba Jaan was around sixty five when S(H)e became God realised.

Baba Jaan then travelled to Iraq, Syria, Baghdad and Lebanon. It is said that Baba Jaan travelled to Mecca, though disguised as a Man, via Afghanistan, Iran, Turkey and then back into Arabia. In Mecca, Baba Jaan used to offer the mandatory five times a day prayers and also visited the Dargah of Prophet Muhammad at Medina, all the while taking care of the needy, the hungry and ailing pilgrims.

Baba Jaan returned to India, and reached Nasik where for a long time S(H)e stayed in Panchavati. After that Baba Jaan reached Mumbai (those days it was called Bombay for some odd reason). By now where ever Baba Jaan went, people began to recognize the Light and Divinity that throbbed within and shone forth to one and all. In 1903 Baba Jaan made another pilgrimage to Mecca, returning a year later. S(H)e visited and prayed at Khwaja Saheb, Moinuddin Chisti's Dargah in Ajmer.

Baba Jaan then spent many years in North India and S(H)e was already considered a Saint by then. But Baba Jaan was facing problems there. Baba Jaan did not follow any set rules and norms prescribed by any sect of either Islam or Sufism. S(H)e walked the path of Oneness and being a Woman, revered and loved by the masses, the orthodox religious groups and leaders, were bound to have their egos and power threatened by this quaint, small, woman, who still towered above all of them spiritually. Baba Jaan never belonged to any sect. In fact S(H)e doesn't belong to the Chishti Order of Sufism too. Baba Jaan belongs to Him, The One and is only answerable to The One. Like Sai Baba of Shirdi, S(H)e too walked along with The Fakir.

One day, being God realised, and in that Spiritual Intoxication of Oneness and Spiritual Ecstasy, eventually led Baba Jaan to reach Pune.

“After being Self-Realized Babajan lived for some time ... in Punjab. During this stay many people began to respect her as a saint. Her occasional remarks, declaring *Ana'l-Haqq* [I am the Truth] upset the Muslim population, and fanatical Muslim Baluchi soldiers (sepoys) of a local military regiment buried Babajan alive. After a lapse of many years, during the First World War the Baluchi regiment was transferred to Pune, and in that city the same soldiers came face-to-face with Babajan sitting under her Neem tree at Char Bawdi. Fanaticism was transformed into devotion, and as long as the regiment remained stationed at Pune, the soldiers came to pay their respects to Babajan.”

The Baluchi regiment in fact became Baba Jaan's personal Body guards and it was after they revealed to one and all what had transpired that Baba Jaan began to be known as Hazrat Baba Jaan.

Before Baba Jaan came to Pune, S(H)e settled down in Bombay, in 1900, and lived in Chuna Bhatti for five years. There two Sufi Saints, very high up the Spiritual Order of Sufism [presumably the Chishti Order - KM], Maulana Saheb of Bandra and Abdul Rahman of Dongri, became disciples of Baba Jaan and The latter would address Them as 'My children'.

One day Baba Jaan met Hazrat Taj al-Din Baba of Nagpur, known as Baba Tajuddin, a Perfect Master, another Power House, who walked to the rhythm of The Oneness Family. It is believed that Baba Tajuddin advised Baba Jaan to go to Pune.

Baba Jaan settled down in Pune, in 1905. By then S(H)e was to some researchers either 85 or over hundred years old, depending on what one took Baba Jaan's year of birth.

Baba Jaan lived in the most humble manner, disregarding all physical comforts, which often saddened and troubled the thousands of devotees and disciples. When S(H)e came to Pune, initially lived near the Shrine of Panch Pir at Dighi. The entire place was ant infested. Hundreds and thousands of ants were visible and thus seen biting and crawling all over Baba Jaan. Eventually when one devotee could not bear the thought and her discomfort, after many days of persuasion he managed to take Baba Jaan to his house, and quickly he and his family toiled hard to

clean and clear the place of all the ants. Baba Jaan was a Fakir in the true sense. S(H)e refused to pamper the body and was so engrossed in The Oneness that physical discomfort and the body was of no consequence.

Initially before the Baluchi soldiers arrived in Pune and revealed how they had buried and presumably killed Baba Jaan, who they found happily moving about in spiritual ecstasy in Pune, the devotees called Baba Jaan Amma Saheb. Baba Jaan would get furious if called either 'mai' 'mother' 'woman' and tell one and all 'I am a Man'. One of the quotes of Prophet Mohammad is, 'Lovers of God are males; lovers of paradise are eunuchs; and lovers of the world are females'. That is why (she is addressed) Amma Saheb (Mother Sir).

Baba Jaan then began to live under a Neem tree near Bukhari Shah mosque at Rasta Peth. By then the number of devotees had increased to an extent that eventually the devotees began to request Baba Jaan to choose a place where S(H)e and they would be more comfortable. Baba Jaan refused till a banyan tree was cut down to widen the road. S(H)e then moved under a Neem tree (even Sai Baba of Shirdi when He came to Shirdi lived under a Neem tree) in Char Bavadi. This place was a dangerous area, frequented by thugs, thieves, mosquitoes, and filth abounded. Within a decade the same place became a hub of spiritual activity and a pilgrimage spot for devotees and disciples to frequent from all over India.

Dr. Ghani who knew Baba Jaan personally has penned a beautiful description in his book *Hazrat Babajan: The Emperor of The Spiritual Realm of Her Time*. "Short in stature, firm and agile in gait, back slightly bent with rounded shoulders, skin fair and sunburnt, face broad and heavily wrinkled, high cheek bones, liquid blue eyes possessing great depths, head covered with a silvery crown of thick white hair hanging loose to the shoulders, deep sonorous voice, all conspired to make her personality very unique and unworldly. Her attire was simple, consisting of a long apron extending below the knees, a pyjamas [pajamah, or trousers] narrowed round the legs and a linen scarf thrown carelessly round the shoulders. She always went about bare-headed; the luxuriant crop of white hair - never oiled or groomed - was for all practical purposes a headdress in itself."

Baba Jaan like most unique looking and behaving Masters was initially harassed by children who threw stones (and I met an old man a few days earlier who

told me that his neighbour knew Baba Jaan who would when in the mood also throw stones back at one and all). It is known that Baba Jaan called everybody 'bachha' (meaning child), spoke in Persian, Urdu and Pashtu. S(H)e had an extensive vocabulary of abuses.



Street view of Babajan's Dargah (Tomb)

By 1913 Baba Jaan was already revered by people in Pune and nearby towns and cities. It was that year when Baba Jaan and Avatar Meher Baba, a young lad then called Merwan, met Baba Jaan with tears gushing down the cheeks lovingly called Meher Baba 'my beloved son', in Hindi. In January 1914, one night Baba Jaan kissed Meher Baba on the forehead and told one and all that, 'this is my beloved son... He will shake the world and all humanity will be benefitted by him'. In the same month and year, Baba Jaan again kissed Meher Baba on the forehead and Merwan lost all consciousness of duality and became God-realised.

In Avatar Meher Baba's words, "When the five perfect masters brought me down (to earth), they drew a veil over me. Hazrat Babajan was one of the perfect masters, and she unveiled me to my present form. With just a kiss on my forehead, between the eyebrows, Babajan made me experience (in May 1913) thrills of indescribable bliss that continued for about nine months. Then one night (in January 1914) she made me realise in a flash the infinite bliss of God-realisation. At the time Babajan gave me the nirvikalp experience of my own reality, the illusory physical, subtle and mental bodies—mind, worlds, and all created things - ceased to exist for me even as illusion. Then I began to see that only I (in the sense of Highest Self), and nothing else, existed. The infinite bliss of my self-realisation was, is, and will remain, continuous. At the moment I experience both infinite

bliss as well as infinite suffering. Once I drop the body, only bliss will remain."

Baba Jaan loved tea and shared everything along with the devotees and liked to hear qawali. Baba Jaan did not speak much and when S(H)e did speak it was in a soft voice. S(H)e listened to all and would nod often in response. S(H)e cured the sick and even performed astral surgery. S(H)e would hold the affected area between the fingers, pray, order the entity bothering the ailing person and tell the entity to leave immediately and the sick person would recover and experience virtually immediate relief. S(H)e has been known to bring back sight to a Zoroastrian child, by mumbling a prayer and the blowing her breath on the eyes of the child. The child recovered immediately. Women who couldn't conceive were blessed and became proud mothers. S(H)e let people take away (rob) all the meager possessions S(H)e had or was gifted with. One night a thief was trying to take away an expensive shawl gifted to Baba Jaan by a devotee. Obviously the thief was finding the going tough, as part of the shawl was held underneath Baba Jaan's body. So Baba Jaan raised the back so that the shawl could be easily whisked away. Once somebody had gifted Baba Jaan two gold bangles and a thief snatched them away from Baba Jaan in such a rough manner that the wrist bled profusely, but nothing mattered to Baba Jaan. In fact S(H)e did not allow the thief to be apprehended and told the police to take in custody those who had created such a ruckus over two bangles.

It is mentioned that Baba Jaan would keep murmuring things and very often would say aloud, 'vermin are troubling me constantly; I brush them away, but still they keep on coming and troubling me'. S(H)e would go on and on talking under the breath and move the palms of the hand all over the body, as though cleaning the body off dirt or something that was causing lot of discomfort.

Meher Baba, gave the following reason to Baba Jaan's inexplicable behaviour: "Annihilation Of all Amal (actions) good and bad, means Najat (salvation) and Babajan being God-realized was much above the state of salvation. She not only had no Amal (actions) to account for, but was in a position to destroy the Amals of others. The physical body of a saint like Babajan, when working on earthly plane after realization, becomes the focal point to which myriads and myriads of Amal of the universe get attracted, and getting purified in the furnace of Divinity i. e., the body of the saint, they go out again into the universe

as spiritual Amal. ... Perfect saints like Babajan give out more spiritual Amal to the world than they destroy. Hence it is that living saints are a blessing and mercy to the world whether one knows it or not."

Also Baba Jaan often when consumed by Divine Glory would get upset and say aloud, "why do you torment and kill my children. They have done no wrong to you. Do I not feed you, and clothe you? What is it that you want? And still you carry on with all these atrocities on my children. What have I done to deserve all this?"



Hazrat Babajan's Tomb

Meher Baba, when questioned regarding this explained: " By children, she evidently meant the saints of the time (Awliyae-waqt), who are misunderstood, vilified and persecuted by the churches of all denominations, unmindful of the circumstances of which they are the outcome. Babajan was equally concerned about the enlightened and the ignorant, and hence her reference to feeding and clothing of the latter. She was as much for the material well-being of the world at large, as for the spirituality of the godly few whom she called her children."

Baba Jaan lived in the Physical Body in Pune for nearly three or more decades. S(H)e continued to live under the Neem Tree. Devotees fought over where The Master's Body, after the Spirit left, would be Buried. S(H)e didn't care about all this. The devotees were worried that the Cantonment Board, managed by the Military, would never give permission for a Dargah to be made, bang in middle of the road, even for a Master. Baba Jaan when told of all this high level drama about the burial, I am sure after a few choicest abuses, told them, "get away from here. How can the dead show concern for the living? I am not going to leave This Place."

Eventually S(H)e didn't leave the place. Even today Baba Jaan's Dargah is under the Neem tree. When still in the body, a nice room was made for Baba Jaan a few feet away from the Neem tree. Initially the British wanted Baba Jaan out of the area but realising the public sentiment and also the Baluchi body guards, the British relented. They made the dwelling. All officials had come to inaugurate the new dwelling. Baba Jaan refused to budge. The reason being the Neem tree was not part of the interior decoration plan. Eventually the officials had to extend the room in such a way that the tree too was part of the new dwelling. Once again Baba Jaan had shown little regard to man-made rules and regulations. S(H)e never followed any norms where religious worship or spiritual dos-and-don'ts were concerned and neither did she care much about the British or the Army or anybody. S(H)e from the time had left home till S(H)e left the physical body, lived by just His calling.

In 1930, journalist Paul Brunton (Raphael Hurst) visited Baba Jaan. He wrote the following: "She lies, in full view of passers-by, upon a low divan.... Her head is propped by pillows. The lustrous whiteness of her silky hair offers sad contrast to the heavily wrinkled face and seamed brow". They hardly met for a long time but yet Paul Brunton had felt Baba Jaan's Divinity. "That some deep psychological attainment really resides in the depths of her being, I am certain".

Hazrat Baba Jaan's Spiritual Status is that of a Qutub (though I am certain Baba Jaan would care little for all these titles). The Qutub literally means a pole; but spiritually, a Qutub is the heart-core-nucleus-focal point around which all of creation revolves.

On September 18, 1931, three days before S(H)e left the Body, one of Baba Jaan's Finger(s) had to be operated as it was obvious there was something wrong. It is believed that just a few days prior to this operation Baba Jaan had told those nearby that it was time 'S(H)e shut shop'. One of those close to Baba Jaan pleaded that S(H)e not speak in such a way and Baba Jaan said those beautiful words, "nobody, nobody here wants my wares. Nobody can afford the price. I have turned my goods over to the Proprietor".

The Qutub has left the building. The Fragrance of the Rose is here to stay for eternity and the beyond.

Be Blessed  
JAI BABA

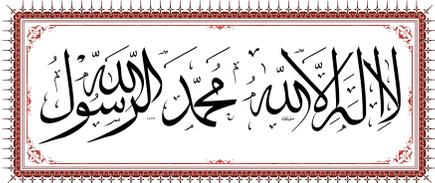
Ruzbeh N. Bharucha is the author of The Fakir Trilogy, The Aum Of All Things, The Devi's Emerald and The Last Marathon. [www.ruzbehbharucha.net](http://www.ruzbehbharucha.net)



Circle 1  
Painting by  
Rachel Therrien

## Ancestors

I see birds curve in flight  
Over the Jama Masjid  
And watch a child's kite  
Flown from a distant rooftop  
Dip suddenly in among  
Those tranquil domes  
And my heart follows  
Down into that sacred place  
Where I was drawn,  
The shrine of Khwaja Nizamuddin Aulia.  
Don't wonder how you came unto this place;  
Ancestors walked this way ahead of you.  
Ignorant in mind,  
I followed my heart  
And found a scent of indefinable longing.  
The next day I returned  
And sat in that courtyard  
Upon paving steeped in the music of ecstasy,  
And my soul poured out of me  
Till I was empty  
And couldn't find my shoes.



A third time I returned,  
Welcomed by the fragrance of love,  
And found my soul there too.  
And though I left,  
I can return again and again,  
Guided by the saints and sufis  
Who have clothed my soul  
With so much love.

Sarah McNeil, England, 2008





*"Full moon over Long Lake, at Meher Spiritual Center."* Photo by Alisa Genovese. "The June full moon is called a honey moon because the sun is at the highest point in the sky and reflects the most brightly on the moon. This June's full moon was on Friday June 13. These are extremely rare. The last one was in October 2000. To have one occur during the honeymoon is rarer indeed, the last one occurred Fri June 13, 1919. The next is due Fri June 13, 2098. It was special to have been at the Center during that time."

## "BEADS" Invade Italy

Advance Party Scouts Territory

### Meher Baba's Four Pillars Revisited

Continuing the recent nearly- annual tradition of Beads On One String Pilgrimages, five intrepid travellers are about to explore Rome, the wilds of the Italian Riviera, Portofino, Assisi, Venice, and Avila, Spain. These sites were visited by Avatar Meher Baba in the early 1930's, and because of their special spiritual energy, have become known as the 'Four Pillars.'

"It's going to be brutal and exhausting but we'll buck up and carry on bravely," said one participant, who, after that bit of hyperbole, requested anonymity. "We'll be eating Italian food on their Riviera.. have to take multiple trains-- *Italian trains*--and even have a flight to Madrid. And back. It won't be pretty."

As an advance planning group for a possible 2015 European Beads tour, this small group will be exploring transport and low-rent lodging options, including monasteries, along the way. Participants look forward to retracing parts of Baba's European travels, communing with Saint Francis and Saint Clare in Assisi, cavorting on beaches in Santa Margherita, taking gondola rides in Venice, and then over to Avila in Spain, home of Saint Theresa and Saint John of the Cross.

## ITALY



The first stop is Rome, where the group will visit the Basilica. Rumor has it they requested an audience with the Pope, but it fell through.

The group is international in nature, all are veterans of India Pilgrimages with Don Stevens, and were together on the Beads Heartland Pilgrimage in America, 2013. It is comprised of three Americans, an Australian, and a Scot.

The travelers rendezvous in Rome on August 31, and depart Spain on Sept. 14, 2014.

No book will be forthcoming, as far as we know.

## Ghazal

Oh Meher, every moment wants and woes pursue me

I worry day by day how, how to be free.

Even my wanting nothing keeps me bound--

in this everyday confusion I feel drowned.

How can I ever, ever reach that pure place

where nothing is between me and Your Face.

Oh Irma, come give your worry woes to Me,

let them drown in My Infinite Sea.

Just love Me. love Me and love Me--

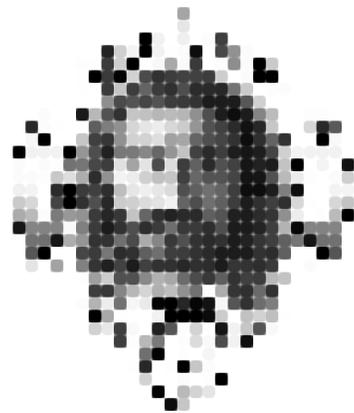
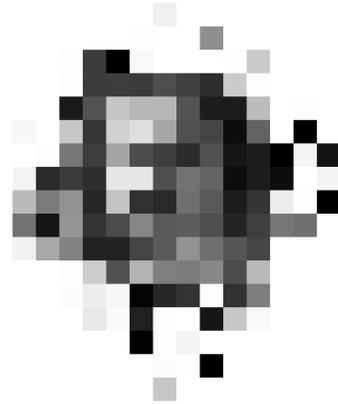
your love for Me will set you free.

Want Me and your wants will fade

like the sun's beam demolishes shade.

Oh Baba lovers everywhere, listen to this--

His very Being invites us to Bliss.



--Irma Sheppard

Written at 2014 Meherana Sahavas

## NIGHTWATCH

Pause in your morning prayer, sleeper,  
As you rise again fom the dead and open your eyes  
To the sense of daylight's renewal.

The reflection on the water's surface mirrors the sky.  
Who has wiped away the tarnish that had spread across the glass?

Do you remember those who stayed on the hilltop  
In the sun and scorching wind all day  
And throughout those bitter nights under the moon and stars?  
Men of ashes, our carers, No longer existing as anything other than  
The eyes, ears, hands, heart and mind of their Lord,  
Being for Him the conduit of His work,  
Receptor and transmitter,  
Linking this gross world with that which is beyond,  
Dispersing accumulated miasma from sleeping populations,  
And bringing to our waking  
This blessing of new light.

See the sky reflected in the mirror of the water  
Its surface tranquil in that moment  
Before your prayers end.

Sarah McNeill



now, today

You are free to explore  
the depths of your soul  
Each petal is carefully chosen by Me  
you did not wind up here by chance  
Listen My friend  
no one is in this game  
who was not invited  
When people ask what sport you play  
respond "I play tennis with the Beloved"  
love, serve, love, serve  
eyes on Me the whole time  
I did not put you in this world  
to hide your light  
You are part of My garland  
do not wilt before your time  
Crush the jasmine scent  
and share this essence I give

Marla Faith



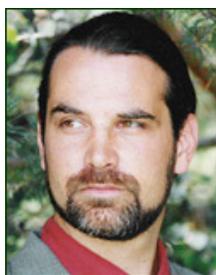
# Forgiveness with Meher Baba

By Laurent Weichberger and Soleil Brigham (May 2014)

“Start learning to love God by beginning to love those whom you cannot.”  
~ Meher Baba (July 10, 1958)<sup>1</sup>

## How Laurent became involved in forgiveness

When I started out with Meher Baba in 1986, I was not interested in forgiveness. In fact, the only time I really thought about it at all was when I prayed the Prayer of Repentance<sup>2</sup> (given by Baba), and after enumerating all the ways I had obviously failed to live purely I prayed, “In your unbounded mercy, we ask you to forgive us, O God, for all these sins committed by us, and to forgive us for our constant failures to think and speak and act according to your will.”



Laurent Weichberger

Aside from that, I was not a forgiving type, being a male Scorpio raised in New York City. It was not until working Don Stevens that the topic resurfaced, a full twenty years later, that I took the subject seriously. At that time, two things happened in quick succession that really hit the forgiveness ball out of the park, the first was a weekend seminar with Don and his “Young People’s Group” in Los Angeles, during October 2007, which resulted in the book [\*The Doorbell of Forgiveness\*](#). And the second was an encounter with Jean-Paul Samputu, a famous Rwandan singer and genocide survivor, in April 2008. These two events defined a new phase of my life with Avatar Meher Baba, and set a new course which eventually resulted in many Forgiveness with Meher Baba seminars.

## The Doorbell of Forgiveness

One day in London during 2003 Don said to me that recently he had “neglected the younger generation,” and wanted to do something about that. Admittedly he had been involved with young people, but as he rightly expressed that was in the 1960s and it was now a new millennium. He suggested to me that we start a new seminar tour around America and try to reach as many young people as possible with a new message he called, “Carry the Torch” seminars. The history of that is described in the book *The Doorbell of Forgiveness*, and there were ten such seminars, each with their own theme as given by Don. The seventh seminar was focused on forgiveness. Don actually gave us homework to do before the seminar, and some were prepared to share their forgiveness work during the weekend seminar. Don shared many things that weekend, all of which are captured in the book, so I will only share a bit here. Some of the most important points he shared with us were:



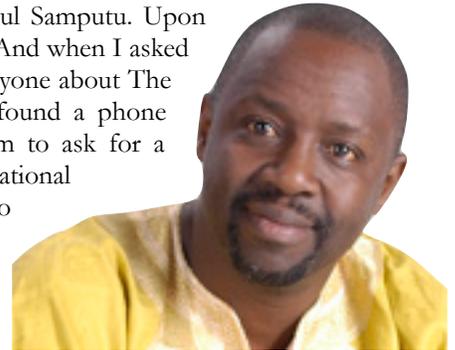
1. Do forgiveness work in your own backyard. Only then will you be authorized to share about forgiveness with others. He charged us to go home from the seminar weekend and choose a forgiveness project and try to tackle it head on before we met again.
2. Forgiveness is the most important spiritual work in the world today.
3. Don shared a series of his own intuitions<sup>3</sup> about forgiveness and suggested that we tune in to what our own intuition was telling us about how forgiveness worked. He admitted that he did not understand “the mechanics” of forgiveness but told us he believes we would figure it out.

Needless to say, I took this all very seriously and embarked on my own forgiveness project, which is also included in the book as a separate chapter. Here is an excerpt of one of Don’s forgiveness intuitions, to give you a flavor of what he felt his intuitive guidance was sharing clearly with him:

“Forgiveness is the ultimate test of the ego. To condemn is the ultimate declaration of separateness.”<sup>4</sup> The intuition goes on from there and takes a rather cosmic voice to describe the details of the importance of forgiveness for followers of Meher Baba in particular. To say that I was deeply moved by what Don shared that weekend about forgiveness would be a total understatement. I was blown away, and so so glad I had the presence of mind to record the entire four sessions, the transcript of which became the heart-core of the book.

### **Jean-Paul Samputu’s Story**

Six months later in the Spring of 2008, my thirteen year old daughter, Aspen, returned from a concert at Northern Arizona University where she had gone to hear Jean-Paul Samputu. Upon returning home she said to me, “Daddy, I think you would have really liked it.” And when I asked her why, she explained that he took time out from the concert to speak to everyone about The Power of Forgiveness. I was stunned. The next day, I Googled him, and found a phone number for his agent. She gave me his cell phone number and I called him to ask for a meeting, so I could interview him for our Baba magazine, OmPoint International Circular. On the phone he agreed to an interview, but since he was on his way to Phoenix from Flagstaff, he asked if I could conduct the interview<sup>5</sup> over the phone right now. So we did!



Jean-Paul Samputu

The most amazing aspect of his interview was his declaration that during the 1994 Rwandan genocide, “... my mother, father, three brothers and a sister were murdered by one of our best friends.” He explained that the Hutu tribe, backed by the government, had killed the Tutsi tribe, and this went on until almost a million people were killed. After a long struggle with the ramifications of the genocide, and much alcohol and marijuana, Jean-Paul told me he found God. Before that, he was miserable, and unable to sing, and completely dysfunctional. One day, during his scripture study – and contemplation of God’s word he said God spoke to him directly. He related, “God told me to forgive the people who killed my parents, because if I forgive them, I will get healed totally.” He wanted to re-enter life fully, to sing again, and find happiness again. Sure enough, he fulfilled God’s instruction, and forgave his best friend, both personally (he found him in jail after the genocide), and publicly during the trial for atrocities committed in Rwanda. His public forgiveness earned him the role of “Ambassador for Peace” and now he and his friend (whom he forgave) travel the world giving seminars on forgiveness. This story was so touching to me that it inspired my own forgiveness work with Meher Baba. I later met Jean-Paul for lunch, immediately after Don’s funeral in London, and he wrote for me about forgiveness, which writing is included in the front of our book.

### **The Forgiveness Directions**

After hearing from Don and Jean-Paul about forgiveness, I started to formulate my own thoughts, and have my own intuitions about forgiveness. It started with a contemplation of the “forgiveness directions” as I call them, and which I used during the forgiveness seminars to plant seeds of contemplation for the attendees. The directions are like this, although the exact wording changes from seminar to seminar:

1. What does the word forgiveness even mean?
2. How do we forgive ourselves?
3. What does it mean to forgive another?
4. How do we ask forgiveness from another?
5. How do we ask Baba (or God) for forgiveness?
6. Do we feel we need to forgive Baba (or God)?
7. Can an individual ask for forgiveness from an entire group?
8. Can an individual forgive a group of people?
9. Can a group forgive an individual?
10. Can a group of people forgive another group of people (or nation)?

These questions, or directions were not meant to be answered in real time, but to settle in during the seminar, and allow for something to sprout in the way of an answer. In particular the directions around the group forgiveness sparked quite a debate. Some say it always boils back down to individual forgiveness and that group forgiveness, while a nice idea, is not a practical truth. For Laurent this point remains unresolved.

Another point was recently shared by Charles Haynes when in response to a question on forgiveness he said, “Forgiveness is not the same as reconciliation.”<sup>6</sup> Indeed, this reminds me to mention that in my own life with Meher Baba, a big aha was the realization that I can forgive and decide not to continue a relationship with an individual. Previously I had thought that forgiveness meant remaining with them. This realization liberated me to move on without them in my life in the same way.

### **Forgiveness Seminars**

Shortly before Don passed away in April 2011, he asked Laurent to return to a Baba group they had visited together and do forgiveness work with them. That group had been suffering tremendously with internal conflicts, and Don felt the only way forward for them was through real forgiveness. Shortly after this the book they had been working on together, *The Doorbell of Forgiveness* was published, and Laurent did the first forgiveness seminar for them. At that first seminar (and at five more), he invited Soleil Brigham to co-facilitate. Soleil’s interest in Meher Baba, as well as her longstanding spiritual experience and insight, coupled with her recent forgiveness work and a degree in Religious Studies made her well suited for this role. (Soleil shares directly in the next section of this article).

That initial seminar was deemed a success and so we offered the seminar to other Baba groups around America. The response was overwhelming, and the seminar has now been performed ten times:

1. Los Angeles, CA (twice with Soleil)
2. Sacramento, CA
3. Chicago, IL
4. Myrtle Beach, SC (with Soleil)
5. Berkeley, CA (three times with Soleil)<sup>7</sup>
6. Mariposa, CA
7. New York, NY
8. With additional requests from Sedona and Tucson, AZ; Chapel Hill, and Asheville NC; as well as London, Paris, and Israel.

### **Returning our hearts to God by Soleil Brigham**

When I met Laurent in June, 2012 I had been using forgiveness prayers for about one and half years and had been through a tremendous purgative process, a life change that was terrifying and deeply humbling. To date, I have combed through much of my personal past, contemplating and praying over it, releasing mental-energetic entanglements with others, and forgiving myself; attempting to forgive the dream. In the last several years I have found my spiritual Master Meher Baba, and discovered a handful of effective tools to help with forgiveness as a meaningful spiritual practice. Through these Forgiveness with Meher Baba seminars we have shared many prayer techniques from around the world in alignment with Baba's “Beads on One String” theme, which acknowledges the spiritual power and wisdom embedded in the heart of all the worlds major religions.

Spiritual forgiveness is much more than an intellectual exercise which might attempt to rationalize reasons why a person deserves forgiveness or compassion. Intellectual forgiveness might be a jumping off point but one needs to engage a deeper level of process for a real healing power to emerge. Letter writing (and burning), emotional release, and prayer work represent ways one can begin to engage the subconscious mind to gain insights, purge, and invite the blessing of God on our intention to heal at deep levels. Further, I have found that self-forgiveness is perhaps the healing direction that is most overlooked and would likely serve as the most important place to start, creating a stronger foundation within oneself. It is much easier to forgive others when we are not holding guilt and self-judgments. It is also quite possible that forgiving ourselves and others can happen simultaneously by realizing our inherent oneness. This requires taking some responsibility for our part in some of the uncomfortable encounters of life and helps one to move away from feeling like a victim. Wherever we start from, beginning to forgive is a spiritually valuable task, as it frees up our hearts to Love Baba More and More.

As stated above, there are a number of exercises we have used in our forgiveness seminars that one could use to first locate a problem, an event that was tumultuous or wounding, and second, to release stored emotions or

unexpressed feelings. There are also a number of prayers one can engage that help to disentangle our mental, subtle and physical connections with others. The Hawaiian spiritual tradition has one such prayer form that has become popular called Ho'oponopono: "I'm sorry, please forgive me, thank you for being my teacher, I love you." There is also a prayer that comes out of Christian mysticism: "You are the Christ, pure and innocent, all is forgiven and you are released." Both of these prayers may be said over and over with a particular person or circumstance in mind. This level of forgiveness can be seen as relating to ourselves and others in the three worlds or dimensions of being (physical, subtle energy and mental), and can assist in healing relationships in the world of diverse forms. Meher Baba said that "forgiveness is the best charity."

While researching forgiveness prayers from various spiritual traditions around the world I found a simple Sufi prayer which resonated with my heart ~ "God forgive me." [the Zikr "Ighstafar' Allah" - KM] These three words strung together encapsulate humility, purity, longing and eternal being in God. This prayer could represent forgiveness on the 7th plane, a returning of our hearts to Baba, Union. When this prayer is uttered by a sincere and humble heart it is like a key that can open the door to our Beloved. Since love and forgiveness were established by Baba to be intimately connected, if not the exact same thing, this level of forgiveness can be seen to relate to Jesus' primary commandment to "Love the Lord our God with our whole heart, our whole soul, our whole mind and our whole strength." When we humbly place our minds in our hearts and ask forgiveness of the Lord we open to the wholeness of Divine Love.

To summarize, there are categories and phases of forgiveness, some of which can bleed into each other, especially when Baba is invited every step of the way; they are emotional cleansing, intellectual forgiveness, self forgiveness, forgiveness with others, and forgiveness between an individual and Baba.

(The remainder of this article is composed by Laurent)

### **Charles Haynes on Forgiveness**

At the Meherana Spring Sahavas (May 2014) Charles Haynes was our guest speaker. After a particularly poignant talk he gave us about following one's conscience (based on a little known quote from Avatar Meher Baba), Charles allowed for a questions and answers session. I asked if he would say a few words about, "the importance of forgiveness."

Charles responded: "Yes. "Forgiveness is the key to freedom. Without forgiveness, one cannot be free to live the life of love and service that Baba would have us live. Forgiveness, of course, is not the same as reconciliation. Forgiveness one can – and should – be done internally within one's heart. Reconciliation requires that both sides come together and acknowledge what needs to be forgiven. Those who feel they have done nothing that calls for forgiveness are not easily reconciled."

### **Meher Baba on Forgiveness**

Throughout the seminar, we share many quotes from Meher Baba directly about forgiveness. There are too many to include here, but these are a few favorites:

"Without love, none can cultivate the noble habit of forgetting and forgiving. You forgive a wrong done to you in the same measure in which you love the wrong-doer ... Forgiveness follows love."<sup>8</sup>

"I am the Ancient One, and I have the divine authority to forgive anyone of anything!"<sup>9</sup>

"Let the past be gone. Why worry about past wrongs? Every person has done something very wrong... God is there to forgive."<sup>10</sup>

### **Mani explains Baba's gesture**

Beloved Baba's sister Mani explained that Baba had "one gesture for two words, there was one gesture for love and for forgiveness; same gesture." Mani demonstrated on a video how Baba made this gesture, reaching down with her hands just below the solar plexus and up towards the heart, and then pushing both hands down and out towards the recipient. She continued, "And when Baba would say 'I forgive you' it seemed like such an oceanic

gesture. As if the ocean waters have come over, and that wave has come over to the beach, and receded leaving not a trace...”<sup>11</sup>

When we did the Forgiveness with Meher Baba seminar, invariably we would bring up this point, and demonstrate it for those gathered. On a number of occasions, we would invite the seminar participants to put aside their pens and papers, and instead of sharing and listening to also perform the gesture, exactly the way that Mani described. The results were unexpected. For some, the fact that Baba’s gesture for love and forgiveness were the same was extremely profound. Because of this, we would pause here and ask – what does it mean that Baba’s gesture for forgiveness and for love are the same?



This alone would usually create a conversation among the participants, since there is no one right answer. The contemplation of this point is worthy no doubt. One of the best answers Laurent ever heard came from Soleil, when she remarked, “Perhaps it means that like Baba we should keep loving someone, even though they made a mistake, and so forgiveness means you continue to love them.”

### Other quotes about forgiveness

“Forgiveness means giving up all hope for a better past.” ~ Lily Tomlin

“The weak can never forgive. Forgiveness is an attribute of the strong.” ~ Mohandas Gandhi<sup>12</sup>

“Forgiveness is not an occasional act, it is a constant attitude.” ~ Martin Luther King, Jr.

“When I see someone who is upset with Baba, I tell that person to repeat over and over – Baba I am angry with you, and I am sorry. Please forgive me and help me to resign to Your wish and will.” ~ Arnava Dadachanji<sup>13</sup>

### Forgiveness and Compassionate Communication

Right around the time the Forgiveness with Meher Baba seminars started to take off, Soleil and Laurent started practicing Compassionate Communication (or Non-violent Communication – NVC)<sup>14</sup>. Together they created a worksheet for use by the forgiveness seminar participants, based on the four step NVC process, which briefly described is as follows:

1. Observation: What was the concrete event or incident that happened (words or deeds) that are the source of the need for forgiveness?
2. Feelings: What are your feelings in relation to this event (observation)?
3. Need: What needs do you have (or values, or desires) which are directly connected to your feelings above?
4. Request: We make a request to meet the need stated above. In the evolution of this NVC process for the forgiveness seminar we created a set of options based on the forgiveness directions, and allow the participant to write directly in the form:

- A. I forgive myself for: \_\_\_\_\_.
- B. I forgive \_\_\_\_\_ for: \_\_\_\_\_.
- C. Dear \_\_\_\_\_ please forgive me for: \_\_\_\_\_.
- D. Beloved Baba, please forgive me for: \_\_\_\_\_.
- E. Baba, I am upset with you for: \_\_\_\_\_ and I forgive you.
- F. Beloved God, please forgive me for: \_\_\_\_\_.
- G. To the \_\_\_\_\_ group, please forgive me for: \_\_\_\_\_.
- H. To the \_\_\_\_\_ group, I am upset with you for: \_\_\_\_\_ and I forgive you.
- I. More forgiveness expressions: \_\_\_\_\_.

Keep in mind this worksheet is completed individually in silence, within the group seminar process, and it takes around 30 minutes. Something about using a paper and pen, and moving your body to do this work, bringing it down from the mental emotional swirl into words is extremely powerful and healing and transformative.

We then ask for volunteers to share what they did with the worksheet, and we process together. It is truly an amazing tool. We have received tremendous feedback about the usefulness of this process. We have also heard that the forgiveness seminars are the most intimacy that some Baba-lovers have felt in the Baba community in years, or even decades.

### **Intuition and Forgiveness**

In closing there are two very important aspect of the forgiveness work that I must share, without which I don't feel this article would meet with Baba and Don's approval. The first is the relationship between forgiveness and intuition, and the second is how we, as Baba-lovers, bring all of the forgiveness work directly to Meher Baba.

In the book, *The Doorbell of Forgiveness*, we dedicated an entire section to the series of intuitions that Don experienced about forgiveness with Meher Baba, over many years. There is no way to do justice them here, but suffice it to say that Don's intuitions about forgiveness were so profound that it was truly inspiring to hear them directly from him during that weekend seminar with him. This leads to a larger question, How do we use intuition with the need to forgive in our daily life? In other words, Is intuition somehow a key tool in the mechanics of forgiving? Another article will be needed to further explore some of these intense issues, and I wholeheartedly recommend that everyone read what Don had to share about this.



### **Silent Forgiveness with Meher Baba**

In all of the seminars we gave, we made time in the schedule at the end of the day, to sit in silence with Meher Baba, knowing that he is present. The intention was to bring the forgiveness work (from that day) and any issues that had been revealed into His Light and Love, and to ask Baba to help us with this forgiveness work. Naturally, because it is a long period of silence (as long as 30 minutes), each process between a Baba-lover and their Beloved Baba will be different. No attempt is ever made to tell anyone "how" to do this, it is all about just doing it.

What we found, after hearing from so many over the years, is that this period of going directly to Meher Baba within, in silence, prayer, within the heart, has been vital to each individual's striving to move through forgiveness back to love. In other words, there is a release of some kind, a shift, and something returns in the way of peace, and clarity.

One close friend of mine, Alexander, while doing this forgiveness work shared so eloquently, "I have to forgive, because when if I don't I am not in the present moment, and I need to be in the present moment." Meher Baba said, "Live more and more in the present which is ever beautiful and which really stretches far beyond the limits of the past and the future."<sup>15</sup>

Don told us that forgiveness is the most important spiritual work in the world today. If this is true, then I am certain that bringing the forgiveness process to Meher Baba in daily life is a part of the work of the New Humanity. *Beloved Baba, please guide me to really live it with you, more and more, in oneness and love.*

### **End Notes:**

1. In *The God Man*, by Charles Purdom, p. 344.
2. For the entire prayer see: [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Prayer\\_of\\_Repentance](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Prayer_of_Repentance)
3. Don was extremely careful not to attribute intuitive perception directly to Baba speaking to us, except in rare cases. He admitted to a handful of these in his long experience with Baba over decades.

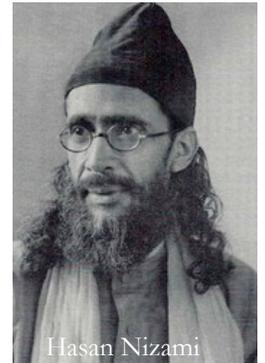
4. The intuition is titled, “Forgiveness 3” and appears in *The Doorbell of Forgiveness*, by Don E. Stevens & his Young People’s Group (London: Companion Books, 2011), “Forgiveness at Meherabad,” p. 201. [Doorbell]. For more about Don Stevens see the article “Don E. Stevens,” by L. Weichberger, at <http://lovestreetbreezes.org/issues/The-May-2012-Breezes.pdf> p. 54.
5. The entire interview is published in OmPoint #2 p. 18, “Jean Paul Samputu and the Power of Forgiveness,” by L. Weichberger (June 2008) here: [www.ompoint.com/OmPoint\\_Circular\\_2.pdf](http://www.ompoint.com/OmPoint_Circular_2.pdf). For more about Samputu see: <http://www.samputufc.org/aboutips>
6. Charles responded during his talk to the entire Meherana Spring Sahavas (May 2014), when Laurent asked, “Can you share about the importance of forgiveness?”
7. The first “Berkeley” seminar was actually held at Karen and Allan Talbot’s home in Moraga, CA. Alisa Genovese and Dick Anthony also acted as co-facilitators for the twenty attendees. The additional Berkeley seminars were co-facilitated by Soleil and Alisa, with continued a series of forgiveness gatherings at Alisa’s home.
8. The quote from Meher Baba, *ibid* Doorbell p. 264.
9. This quote from Meher Baba is in *Lord Meher*, by V.S. Bhau Kalchuri, p. 5485 [Lord Meher].
10. This is from a saying of Meher Baba to his disciple Baily, during 1919, *ibid* Lord Meher, p. 272.
11. Mani on Baba’s gesture for love and forgiveness being the same is *ibid* Doorbell, “Forgiveness at Meherabad,” p. 251.
12. The quote from Gandhi is in *All Men are Brothers* (Rajpal and Sons, 2012).
13. The quote is from *Gift of God*, by Arnavaz Dadachanji, p. 234.
14. For more about NVC see: The Center for Non-Violent Communication here: <http://www.cnvc.org>
15. Quote is from *The Path of Love*, by Meher Baba (Myrtle Beach: Sheriar Foundation, 2000), p. 118.





Sorry to give you this trouble but you are always chosen to work on my behalf. When I will go for the life of absolute retirement you will have to attend to all my affairs in the West, also some times in the East.<sup>3</sup>

Later Inayat Khan dictated to her a book which she transcribed called the “Book of Instructions for the Murshid.”<sup>4</sup> Starting in March 1923 Inayat Khan lived with Rabia for seven weeks.<sup>5</sup> Inayat Khan also visited her again in 1925.<sup>6</sup> From 1911-1926 Inayat Khan and Rabia Martin exchanged over 60 letters.<sup>7</sup> As she describes in a letter to Inayat Khan’s brother Mahboob, on March 16, 1926, Inayat Khan conferred upon her, in her own words, a “final initiation” making her his “*Esoteric successor*.” Inayat Khan wrote out for her and gave her the text of this initiation in his own hand.<sup>8</sup> On February 9, 1939 she was re-initiated into the Chishti lineage (Inayat Khan’s lineage) before 3,000 people by a friend of Inayat Khan’s and a very esteemed Sufi master, the *sajjada-nishin* (attendant of the shrine, literally, “the one who prostrates before the Pir”) of the tomb of Chishti Master Khwaja Nizam al-Din Awliya’ in Delhi, and prolific journalist named Hasan Nazami who had 17,000 *murids*.<sup>9</sup> Later Meher Baba would say that this second initiation was irrelevant, since Inayat Khan had already initiated and designated her as his successor before he passed.



Hasan Nizami

Further Inayat Khan’s second most distinguished American *murid* Samuel Lewis recounted from his six interviews with Inayat Khan in June 1925 that Inayat Khan reiterated Rabia Martin’s position as his successor:

He began telling me some things which were also told to Pir-o-Murshid Hasan Nizami on his (Hazrat Inayat Khan’s) death bed. I was told over and over again Pir-o-Murshid Inayat Khan intended that Murshida Martin be his successor. I was to stand by her and protect her but see to it that she never defended herself. He went over that again and again.<sup>10</sup>



Samuel Lewis

We return to Rabia Martin’s introduction to Meher Baba. After hearing the 1942 lecture in San Francisco by Princess Norina Matchabelli Murshida Martin then read all the available literature by and about Meher Baba. She subsequently spent two years in New York and also in Myrtle Beach, S.C. (circa. 1943-1945) frequently visiting and living with Norina Matchabelli and another of Meher Baba’s close disciples Elizabeth Patterson.

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<sup>3</sup> Letter of February 8, 1915. In Pir-o-Murshid Hazrat Inayat-Khan and Rabia Martin. *Yours in the Infinite: Transcribed Handwritten Letters from Pir-o-Murshid Hazrat Inayat Khan to Murshida Rabia Ada Martin 1911-1926*. San Francisco: Sufi Ruhaniat International, 2009.

<sup>4</sup> Zia Inayat-Khan, p. 76. (December 11, 1911).

<sup>5</sup> Zia Inayat-Khan, p. 164.

<sup>6</sup> Zia Inayat-Khan, p. 183.

<sup>7</sup> Privately published as Pir-o-Murshid Hazrat Inayat-Khan and Rabia Martin. *Yours in the Infinite: Transcribed Handwritten Letters from Pir-o-Murshid Hazrat Inayat Khan to Murshida Rabia Ada Martin 1911-1926*. San Francisco: Sufi Ruhaniat International, 2009.

<sup>8</sup> Letter of May 29, 1929 as quoted in Zia Inayat Khan, pp. 204-205. Other evidence and testimony of Rabia Martin’s designation of successorship (*khalifat*) appear among pp. 204-209, 213-217, 259-260. This is pertinent since the leaders of the European Sufi Movement, as Inayat Khan’s European organization was called, rejected Rabia Martin’s claims to successorship. For a Weberian assessment of Rabia Martin’s charisma as original rather than official see pp. 223-224.

<sup>9</sup> Carol Weyland Conner, “Recognize the True Teacher,” *Glow International*. November 2004, p. 14.

<sup>10</sup> Samuel Lewis, quoted in Wali Ali Meyer, “The Sun Rises in the West,” accessed June 5, 2014 .

The current Murshida of Sufism Reoriented Carol Weyland Conner explained Murshida Martin's experience through Norina's transmission of Meher Baba:

It was through Norina that Rabia Martin was able to experience Meher Baba's divinity and consequently lay her Sufi Order at his feet in 1945...Both women, Rabia Martin and Ivy Duce, reckoned Norina as the medium through which Baba first made personal contact and revealed his divinity to them, as he could not leave India at the time.<sup>11</sup>

Rabia Martin thus came to conclude that Meher Baba was the teacher she had been waiting for, her next teacher after Hazrat Inayat Khan.<sup>12</sup> In particular she became convinced that Meher Baba was the *qutb*.<sup>13</sup> An indication of Rabia's awakening appears in a letter she wrote to her daughter Etta in July 1945:

May God illuminate your heart so lovingly and so clearly that you will understand your greatest opportunity on earth today to come toward Meher Baba, humbly, simply, without hesitancy and learn who you are and how you can experience and know God. This is what I am doing, this is what I want above all in this or any other world. Amen.<sup>14</sup>

Meher Baba had praise and admiration for Inayat Khan saying that he was "a great soul, a great Sufi and for the West a great starter."<sup>15</sup> Meher Baba also said that Inayat Khan, "...was a great soul, a Pir [Master] of the fifth plane."<sup>16</sup> In her journal, Rabia wrote of a moment of her mystical recognition of Meher Baba as one of the greatest moments of her life:

...all was granted with such blessing I could scarce support myself and I held Norina's hands on each side of my face to steady me—as I was in a half kneeling position on the couch on which she sat cross-legged as usual—and I was greatly affected but in the truest and holiest manner (from my heart). ...and a great and Divine presence pervaded my whole being and enveloped us all... I have had great and holy hours in my life, but this I record as the greatest and most blessed promise of my further journey Godward.<sup>17</sup>



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<sup>11</sup> Carol Weyland Conner, "The Dark Journey of the Soul: Princess Norina Matchabelli," in *Glow International*. Spring 2014, p. 17.

<sup>12</sup> Rabia Martin met Norina Matchabelli at a lecture that Matchabelli gave in San Francisco. According to Ivy Duce's daughter, occasionally another Meher Baba lover, Countess Nadine Tolstoy (Leo Tolstoy's daughter-in-law) also visited with Rabia Martin. (Charmian Knowles, *Spread My Love*. Walnut Creek: Sufism Reoriented, 2004, p. 5.)

<sup>13</sup> Keating, Ross. *Francis Brabazon: Poet of the Silent Word—a Modern Hafiz.*, p. 63. In Meher Baba literature, the word *qutb* is spelled *qutub*.

<sup>14</sup> Carol Weyland Conner. "Recognize the True Teacher," in *Glow International*. November 2004, p. 18.

<sup>15</sup> Quoted in Allan Cohen, "Meher Baba and Sufism Reoriented," in *Sufism*. Walnut Creek: Sufism Reorient4ed, 1971, pp. 25-26.

<sup>16</sup> Dr. Abdul Ghani Munsiff in a letter to Ivy Duce on behalf of Meher Baba, quoted in Carrol Weyland Conner. "A New Sufism Intrinsic to Meher Baba's Advent," p. 13. Accessed May 3, 2014 at: [http://www.sufismreoriented.org/Sufi\\_Charter\\_Part\\_1\\_Glow\\_Summer\\_09\\_with\\_Interview.pdf](http://www.sufismreoriented.org/Sufi_Charter_Part_1_Glow_Summer_09_with_Interview.pdf) / For an explanation of the seven planes see Meher Baba, *God Speaks*.

<sup>17</sup> Quoted in "Murshida Martin and Meher Baba," Unpublished manuscript. (1986) Binder B-3. (This event may have happened on May 8, 1945.) Sufism Reoriented Archives. Walnut Creek, CA. Quoted in Carrol Weyland Conner. "A New Sufism Intrinsic to Meher Baba's Advent." Accessed May 3, 2014 at: [http://www.sufismreoriented.org/Sufi\\_Charter\\_Part\\_1\\_Glow\\_Summer\\_09\\_with\\_Interview.pdf](http://www.sufismreoriented.org/Sufi_Charter_Part_1_Glow_Summer_09_with_Interview.pdf)

Elizabeth Patterson wrote to Meher Baba about her visit to Rabia Martin's home in San Francisco:

When we went to her home in San Francisco for luncheon she had a place laid at the table for You and everything was served to You first, showing she had an understanding and reverence. Afterwards she took us into her meditation room and asked Norina to speak on Your behalf, which was very rare she said, but she added, the real Sufis recognize all masters<sup>18</sup>

Rabia Martin wrote to Meher Baba in a cable and a letter both in August 1945 dedicating both herself and her Sufi Center in Fairfax, California (called Kaaba Allah) to Meher Baba. Meher Baba accepted her as his student and accepted full responsibility for the Sufi Order.<sup>19</sup> Later, in 1945 Rabia asked her *murids* to make the choice in two weeks to either follow her in following Meher Baba or to resign from the Sufi Order. In these last years Rabia Martin taught from the charts of Meher Baba, rather than from Hazrat Inayat Khan's materials. Martin's student Ivy Oneita Duce who later became her successor wrote of this period:

...[S]he [Rabia Martin] disclosed to me that her object in coming to New York and staying so long was to assure herself, through meeting those who had met him [Elizabeth Patterson and Norina Matchabelli], that Meher Baba was really the *Qutub*, and that she had obtained her conviction. For the first time I saw the Divine Theme [in *God Speaks*, pp. 224 and 226], with charts on reincarnation, published by Baba's devotees years before. I was enormously happy to come to grips with that theory and to feel strongly that Baba was correct in what he depicted. I asked Murshida why she had not told us about Meher Baba before, after she met Elizabeth Patterson and Norina Matchabelli, but she said, "Ivy, I had to be sure. I hold a sacred trust with my *mureeds* and I could take no chance of leading them astray."<sup>20</sup>



Ivy O. Duce and Meher Baba 1952

The extent of the secession and Rabia and Ivy Duce's conviction that there is no difference between Meher Baba's teachings and the teachings of Hazrat Inayat Khan is described by Ivy Duce's description of visiting Rabia on her death bed in a letter to Meher Baba:

...I found Murshida Martin very ill in San Francisco and her pupils mostly seceded from her due to confusion and disagreement....I tried to talk to as many of the pupils I could. I did my best to get them to understand that from my perspective there was no difference between your teachings and Inayat Khan's...<sup>21</sup>

Murshida Martin, as paraphrased by Don Stevens, had said in addressing her *murids* in 1945:

You all know that it is a principle of Truth that on the death of one's master, a Sufi must start at once his search for the master in physical form who is to continue his spiritual guidance. Despite

<sup>18</sup> Elizabeth Patterson quoted in Carrol Weyland Conner. "A New Sufism Intrinsic to Meher Baba's Advent." Accessed May 3, 2014 at: [http://www.sufismreoriented.org/Sufi\\_Charter\\_Part\\_1\\_Glow\\_Summer\\_09\\_with\\_Interview.pdf](http://www.sufismreoriented.org/Sufi_Charter_Part_1_Glow_Summer_09_with_Interview.pdf)

<sup>19</sup> Don Stevens, "Who Brought the Sufis," Accessed May 5, 2014 at: Accessed May 1, 2014 at: <http://www.jaibaba.com/mandalids/broughtsufis.html> . Also cited in Keating, Ross. *Francis Brabazon*. p.63-64.

<sup>20</sup> Ivy O. Duce, *How a Master Works*. Walnut Creek: Sufism Reoriented, 1975, p. 20. See also Bhau Kalchuri, *Lord Meher* (Revised Online Edition, ed. David Fenster). <http://www.lordmeher.org/rev/index.jsp?pageBase=page.jsp&nextPage=2470>

<sup>21</sup> Carol Weyland Conner, "Recognize the True Teacher," in *Glow International*. November 2004.

my love for Inayat Khan, I knew that this was my duty to him and to my vow as a Sufi...Meher Baba is not a follower of a particular school of thought, but of Universal Truth. He is a true Sufi in that he tells us of the unity of all religious ideals [incidentally a title of an Inayat Khan book] and works to bring them together in love, harmony and beauty [quoting Inayat Khan's definition/description of God as used in daily prayers]. He does not require those who love him to follow and dogma or form. He is the true giver of the essence of the Sufi ideal of the unity of all Truth.<sup>22</sup>

Rabia had asked Meher Baba that he accept her as his student and he accepted as well as taking responsibility for the Sufi Order. Don Stevens recounts this:

The story she [Rabia Martin] recounted as the basis for this decision she asked us to make, was that she had asked Meher Baba in earlier correspondence if he would accept her as his student, and when he had agreed to this, she then asked if he would also accept the responsibility for the spiritual guidance of her students. In turn he had agreed to this request as well, assuring her that as soon as he could he would travel to America to meet Murshida Martin as well as his other new spiritual charges.<sup>23</sup>

As Allan Cohen describes the background to this situation,

Aside from previous letters to her, in 1927, Hazrat Inayat Khan let it be known to Sheikh Hassan Nizami [the living Chishti Pir] that Rabia Martin was to be his successor in guiding the order... Meher Baba later confirmed that Murshida Martin was the rightful leader of the Order<sup>24</sup>

In spite of her overwhelming attraction to Meher Baba, Rabia expressed some reservations. Meher Baba answered Rabia Martin's self-questioning about her loyalty to Hazrat Inayat Khan with this encouragement:

...The One Great Light has gathered all the Divine Sifat [Attributes] in one personality which is I. I am not different from your Murshid [Hazrat Inayat Khan]—and I will not have strangers think me more—because then they think me less...No, Murshida—your love for Inayat Khan is fulfilled in me—and my love for you is fulfilled in God<sup>25</sup>

But, in 1947, after Rabia Martin's death and as Martin's designated successor, Ivy Duce felt ill-equipped to be a *murshida*, she appealed to Meher Baba for guidance and aid. Meher Baba was simultaneously preparing to inaugurate the process of re-orienting Sufism in Pune, India, in what turned out to be a failed project under the auspices of Dr. Ghani in 1948.<sup>26</sup> Meanwhile Ivy Duce arrived in India in January of 1948 to meet Meher Baba face to face from January 7-12, 1948.<sup>27</sup>

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<sup>22</sup> Quoted in Don Stevens, *Some Results*. Companion Books, 2005, p. xii.

<sup>23</sup> Accessed May 1, 2014 at: <http://www.jaibaba.com/mandali/ds/broughtsufis.html>

<sup>24</sup> Allan Cohen, "Meher Baba and Sufism Reoriented, Inc.," in *Sufism Walnut Creek: Sufism Reoriented*, 1971, p. 27. Pir Hasan Nizami had performed a ceremony of investiture confirming Rabia's status as Inayat Khan's successor on February 9, 1939 in front of 3,000 people. Meher Baba later told Ivy that this ceremony and the certificate Rabia had received were irrelevant since Meher Baba felt that Inayat Khan had indeed designated Rabia as his successor.

<sup>25</sup> Quoted in Allan Cohen, "Meher Baba and Sufism Reoriented, Inc.," in *Sufism Walnut Creek: Sufism Reoriented*, 1971, p. 34.

<sup>26</sup> According to Sufism Reoriented President, Ira Dietrich Dr. Ghani ran a Sufi group in Pune. This assertion is found in a short booklet which accompanies recent editions of *God Speaks* titled, "The Story of *God Speaks*: It's Origin, Development, Editing, and Publication." unnumbered page 7.

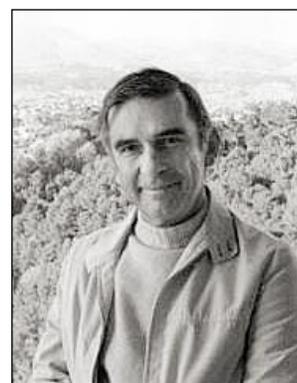
<sup>27</sup> Conner, Carol Weyland. In *Glow International*, Summer 2009, p. 11.

Another of Murshida Martin's *murids*, Don E. Stevens, who had been initiated soon after 1940 also played an instrumental role in the formation of the new order as well as later serving as co-editor with Ivy Duce of Meher Baba's masterwork *God Speaks*. Stevens's student Laurent Weichberger describes this period:

During 1945, Murshida Martin put her Sufi order directly under Avatar Meher Baba's supervision (a full seven years before Don met Baba in New York in 1952). Francis Brabazon [another *murid* in the Inayat-Khan lineage, an Australian who later became an intimate disciple of Meher Baba] arrived in Fairfax [where the Sufi Order had its headquarters called Kaaba Allah] from Australia to prepare for Baba's visit there. Soon after, Murshida Rabia Martin became ill and shared profoundly with Don on her deathbed just before passing. The period from 1945 to 1952 is a transition period during which Ivy Duce became the new Murshida of the order, and Don helped her in the creation and running of the innovative order under Meher Baba's direct guidance.<sup>28</sup>

Don Stevens explains what happened:

I had not been a Sufi for very long when Murshida Martin, my spiritual guide, announced to me and other members of the Sufi Order whom she had gathered together in her San Francisco apartment, that she had finally found the successor to her own teacher, Inayat Khan, who had died many years before. She told us his name, Meher Baba, which meant nothing to me, as I had never heard of him. She went on to recount that she had studied during the last two years, for as much time as she could, with two of this great man's students in New York, and that they were coming to the San Francisco Bay Area the following week-end. In fact, they had accepted Murshida Martin's invitation to address her Sufi students at the Fairfax Sufi School, and we were all invited and urged to attend this rare opportunity to hear firsthand accounts from direct devotees of the great man, Meher Baba. We all duly collected in Fairfax on the appointed day, and were told many things by Norina Matchabelli, Elizabeth Patterson and Mildred Kyle, a third devotee from the Seattle area. Our Murshida told us that after the Fairfax meeting she would give us two weeks to decide whether we would follow her under the guidance of Meher Baba, or ask her to release us from the vow we had each taken with her on our initiation as Sufis.<sup>29</sup>



Don E. Stevens

Murshida Martin began to teach directly from Meher Baba's charts and his writings, as Don Stevens, who was present, recounts:

The end result of all this was that everyone then present accepted Meher Baba as their Spiritual Master, and a great project to adapt the Sufi School as a home worthy of Meher Baba's visit began, with painting and pruning and refurbishing everywhere. In turn, Murshida Martin began at once to teach her Sufi mureeds from the charts contained in "The Divine Theme, by Meher Baba" one of the few teaching tools available to Murshida Martin directly from Meher Baba. But her classes were not to continue for long, as soon after she contracted a cancer, and after a rather lengthy battle, succumbed to its inroads.

In a letter, Murshida Martin instructed Ivy Duce on how as a Sufi she should follow Meher Baba and his guidance:

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<sup>28</sup> Laurent Weichberger, "Don Stevens: a Short Biography," in Don E. Stevens (with Wayne Smith), *Three Snapshots of Reality. Three Snapshots of Reality*. Companion Books, 2014, p. 21. For more on Francis Brabazon, his Sufi Shaikh Momin, and Murshida Martin, see Ross Keating, *Francis Brabazon: Poet of the Silent Word—a Modern Hafiz*. Beacon Hill, Australia: World Axis Press, 2002., pp. 63-73.

<sup>29</sup> Accessed May 1, 2104 at: <http://www.jaibaba.com/mandali/ds/broughtsufis.html>

Baba says Sufism is the purest spiritual teaching on earth today—but we are now in a New Age<sup>30</sup>--and methods and striving for attainment must have a great adaptation to our great spiritual needs and that is what he is doing now so that we may advance more quickly and leave some past methods behind—but do not leave behind the pure essential teachings the great Sufis of all ages contributed from their spiritual experiences. When he states that he comes to Awaken<sup>31</sup> he means exactly what he says --(experience, the Truth, and no longer concepts, theories, intellectual beliefs, etc.)--this age is to be ushered into Love. (Praise be to our Creator.)<sup>32</sup>

Murshida Duce's daughter Charmian Duce Knowles describes this period as follows:

When she [Rabia Martin] appointed my mother as her successor, Murshida Martin had already identified a luminous Indian figure named Meher Baba (1894-1969) as the long-awaited Avatar of this Age. After Murshida Martin died [August 1947], my mother decided to go to Baba's ashram in India to surrender her life to him and to lay the Sufi Order at his feet. [This happened during January 7-12, 1948] He accepted responsibility for the order and confirmed my mother's role as Murshida, or spiritual head of the order. Later Meher Baba officially "reoriented" Sufism to meet the demands of modern America and wrote a charter establishing Sufism Reoriented. Thus was born a real spiritual school in America, directly under Baba's guidance.<sup>33</sup>



Carol Conner

Meher Baba emphasized to Ivy Duce that he intended that she build Sufism in the West. Current Murshida Conner explains:

When Baba first saw Murshida Duce in 1948 he interrupted his seclusion and his work with *masts* [God-intoxicated souls] for five days to meet with her. He told her that they had been together many, many times, and that he had drawn her again to him in this lifetime to build up Sufism in the West; he told her that this was her destiny in this incarnation. He told her then that he had a plan for renewing Sufism under his guidance.<sup>34</sup>

Thus Rabia Martin succeeded in doing her part in "reorienting" Hazrat Inayat Khan's Sufi Order under the auspices of, under the guidance of, and with the instruction and blessings of the *Qutub al-Aktab* (Pivotal Saint among all pivotal saints), the greatest Sufi master, *Sabeh-e Zaman* (the Master of the Age), *Insan al-Kamil* (The Perfect Human Being), the Avatar, Meher Baba.

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<sup>30</sup> On the idea of a New Age, see Meher Baba's Discourse, "The New Humanity," in the beginning of *Discourses*.

<sup>31</sup> One of Meher Baba's maxims was, "I have come not to teach but to awaken." This maxim is engraved on Meher Baba's tomb.

<sup>32</sup> Quoted in Carrol Weyland Conner. "A New Sufism Intrinsic to Meher Baba's Advent." Accessed May 3, 2014 at: [http://www.sufismreoriented.org/Sufi\\_Charter\\_Part\\_1\\_Glow\\_Summer\\_09\\_with\\_Interview.pdf](http://www.sufismreoriented.org/Sufi_Charter_Part_1_Glow_Summer_09_with_Interview.pdf)

<sup>33</sup> Charmian Duce Knowles. *Spread My Love*. Walnut Creek: Sufism Reoriented, 2002, p. vi.

<sup>34</sup> Carol Weyland Conner. "A New Sufism Intrinsic to Meher Baba's Advent." Accessed May 3, 2014 at: [http://www.sufismreoriented.org/Sufi\\_Charter\\_Part\\_1\\_Glow\\_Summer\\_09\\_with\\_Interview.pdf](http://www.sufismreoriented.org/Sufi_Charter_Part_1_Glow_Summer_09_with_Interview.pdf)

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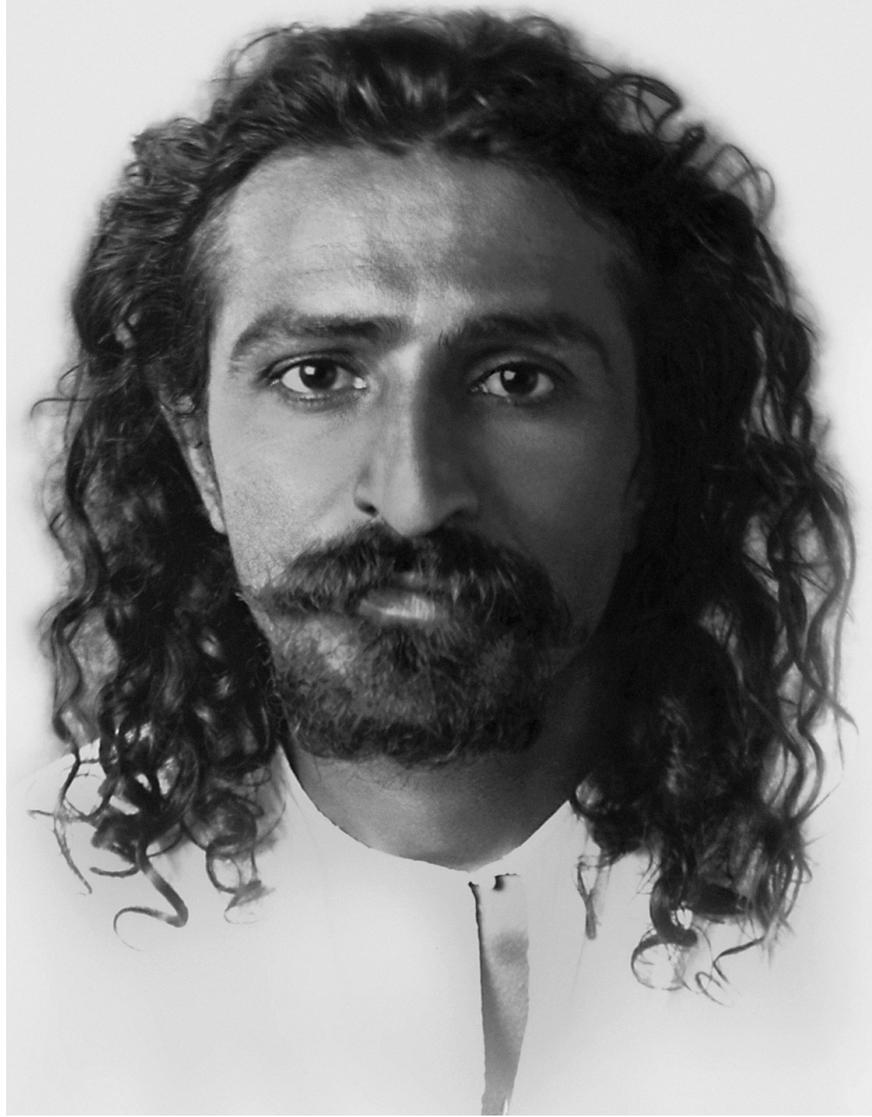
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“God does not listen to the language of the tongue. He does not listen to the language of the mind. He responds to the language of the heart.”

Meher Baba



**“I tell you on my divine authority: I am the Ancient One,  
I am the Lord of the Universe.”**                      – Avatar Meher Baba

# **Christ Come Again**

By Ed Flanagan

*Even an exalted biography of God in human form, while providing food for mind and heart, revealing the deepest spiritual secrets never before experienced of oneself as *Infinite Truth*, is only a book. And so is only that – a book – like the Zen koan, pointing at the moon; while actually *becoming* the moon is something else.*

Seven days before his passing, Meher Baba instructed his night-watchman-disciple, Bhau Kalchuri, to write his biography, adding, “***Make it interesting!***” Dear reader, though a generation removed from that mandate, I hope I have made his life most interesting to you.

***Beloved Godman, Meher Baba, just wait till they hear you were here again!*** –elf

## **Book I**

***Christ Come Again: Avatar – The Life & Teachings of Meher Baba [1894-1969] and The Avatar’s revelations on his hidden life as Jesus, compiled from original sources: books, journals, letters tape recordings, online and personal accounts from those who met or lived with the Avatar.***

### **Book I – Chapter One**

## **The Avatar’s Last Seven Major Advents**

“*There have been Buddhas before me and there will be Buddhas after me,*” said Gautama Buddha, predicting the greatest one would bear the name “*Compassionate.*” The name “Meher Baba” means “*Compassionate Father.*” Before his advent as Buddha, Krishna said: “*When virtue declines, evil and injustice resurge in the world. Then I, the Avatar, take human form again.*” Throughout history His message is always the same.

However, meeting a man who had complete Christ-consciousness people would have difficulty seeing he was the *same* Christ – really, *the same one?* as the personality would be different. The message has never clothed itself in the same body twice, and always has a new “freckle or two.” To be delivered, the message assumes a vehicle suitable for its time/place, and expresses itself in terms which can be understood by the people of that period. Returning in the 20<sup>th</sup> century, Christ as Meher Baba repeats his forever age-old message: GGV5:161

*I am that Ancient One – Zarathustra, Ram, Krishna, Buddha, Jesus, Muhammad . . . .  
Now I am Meher Baba. In this form of flesh and blood the same Ancient One whose past*

*is worshipped and remembered, whose present is ignored and forgotten, and whose future advent is anticipated with great fervor and longing. 3227*

*I intend to destroy the bindings of all superfluous religious ceremonies. The times of Jesus and Krishna were altogether different from the present. I have to guide people according to the needs of the time. In the present atomic age, material progress has nearly reached its zenith.*

*It is but the shadow of the internal progress in the realm of spirituality . . . . 4177*  
*Everything except your being*

*infinite is illusion. . . . 1772 From the beginning, Maya is hanging around my neck with you all, and for that reason I have to come again and again among you . . . . 3869*

### **Baba explains Humanity Utter Need of the Avatar's Help**

The soul's consciousness is in bondage – caught up in a universe that is nothing but pure imagination. And since there is no end to imagination, man is likely to wander indefinitely throughout the mazes of false consciousness. The Perfect Master or the Avatar [Christ incarnate] can help him to cut short the different stages of false consciousness by revealing the Truth. Without *experiencing* the Truth, the mind is likely to go on imagining all kinds of things forever.

The soul can imagine that it is a beggar or a king, a man or a woman, etc. The soul thus goes on gathering the experiences of the opposites. Wherever there is duality, there is a tendency to restore balance through the opposite. For example, say a person experienced being a murderer.

That is counter-balanced by the experience of being murdered; and if the soul experiences being a king, it has to be counter-balanced by being a beggar. Thus, the soul wanders endlessly life after life from one opposite to the other without being able to put an end to false consciousness.

The Master can help to arrive at the goal by giving a perception of the Truth and cutting short the working of imagination which would otherwise be endless. He helps the soul in bondage by sowing in him the seed of God-Realization. Still, it always takes some time to attain God-realization. Every process of growth in the universe takes TIME. Aw vol.1, no.3, p.33–34

Over time, the Avatar keeps returning to the earth for his destined work. In this most recent multi-millennium cycle the same Avatar was known in several

sequential major incarnations as Abraham to the Israelites, c. 4000 BC, as Zoroaster to the Persians, c. 3000 BC, King Ram and Lord Krishna to the Hindu races of India c. 2300-2100 BC and c.1400- 1200 BC, as Gautama the Buddha c. 525 BC to India, Ceylon, Burma, China and Japan.

Then He came to the Jews as Yeshua, known to the Romans and Greeks as Jesus, born in 4-6 BC, and again c. 525 AD as Mohammed the Prophet to the Arabian nations – all the *identical* Ancient One whose ways and emphasis are different in his successive advents.

Meher Baba often repeated that in each advent the Avatar quietly does his Universal work and is mostly unknown to the public during his earthly life. During that advent he cuts a hole in the door separating the gross world from the 1<sup>st</sup> subtle spiritual plane.

That piece hangs in the door by a thread and constitutes his “collecting phase” of humanity’s false impressions. For 100+ years after dropping his physical body, he is then in the “cleaning phase,” after which his Universal Manifestation always occurs, as the entire world comes to know and follow him. Jesus’ mission was to the scattered lost tribes of Israel.

Meher Baba’s mission this time, as the 7<sup>th</sup> and final Avataric incarnation in this recent 5000 year spiritual cycle, is the greatest. Coming in this age as the Compassionate Father of all humanity’s tribes – East and West – as the universal Avatar.

His message is to all global nations in one. This time he said he came “especially for the West.” It was not a question of choosing the West, but a question of where his work was most needed for spirituality and materialism go hand in hand according to God’s plan. T 211

We saw above that the sphere of influence of all previous Avatars in this cycle took place mostly in the immediate region or countries surrounding their life on earth. He is the first Avatar in this cycle to encompass and travel the globe several times.

He dispensed his divine love and compassion in total silence, laying worldwide cables for a *spiritual* New World order – *The New Humanity* – to be born perhaps from the great rubble-remnant of the earth’s distorted projection of the false *New World Order* in the mid to latter 21<sup>st</sup> century. Seekers in the counter-culture

movement began to find Meher Baba as he ended his work on earth in 1969 – especially the flower children and Jesus-freaks.

Having shed their former skins, many heard of Baba through his *extremely* hardball admonition against drugs, including, “*If God can be found in a pill, He isn’t worthy of being God.*” His most famous saying is, “*Do your best, then don’t worry. Be Happy in my love and I will help you.*” This became the famous expression and song, “*Don’t Worry, Be Happy.*”

Thought to be a mere “pop” phrase, it has deep, solid spiritual basis behind it; also the basis of Krishna’s teachings in the *Bhagavad Gita* and Jesus’ admonition: “*I tell you not to worry about your life . . .*” [Luke 12: 22-34] – coming multiple times from the mouth of God.

Well, coming from the priesthood, all this was *utterly* new wine to me, and I had a decidedly old wineskin. New eyes are needed before one can even begin to see the enormous possibility of the God-Man coming once again on earth. I am attempting to provide that new way of seeing – that my eyes, mind and heart may become virtual vehicles to facilitate that.

The power of that Truth is in these pages. The reader has only to grasp the Light of that silent Word-Sword to slay all falseness, within or without and without a doubt! The following comments on love for Jesus will become in future ages a new book of “Epistles.”

They are the early letters to the faithful from the “new apostles,” in this case Eruch Jessawala, Meher Baba’s chief male disciple whom he undeniably referred to as his *new* “*St. Peter.*” Eruch wrote to Christian disciples in the early 1970s shortly after Baba’s passing:

Our Beloved Lord Jesus was also accused of being one of the false prophets and crucified along with two others of disrepute. Did this in any way affect His Christhood? Now, 2,000 years later, Jesus is worshipped as the Christ – the God-Man – despite being condemned, slandered, persecuted and crucified. Pay no need to believers or adversaries or even the so-called evangelists.

Whatever they say about the God-Man, most important is *your* faith and love for Him. If you have faith in and love for the God-Man, you are blessed indeed! And it is enough even if you were the only one in the world to believe in Him at this time of His Advent. LFM 81

How blessed you are to love and adore Christ! Do so with all your heart and soul without reservations or confusion. Let not the demon of dual concept of Baba and Jesus ever stand in the way of your one-pointed devotion to Christ. Let there be no conflict in your heart.

However your mind may try, let not your mental concept of Baba stand in the way of wholehearted devotion to Christ. The instant your love for Christ is accepted by Him, know you are accepted by Baba. Meher Baba and Jesus Christ are but forms and names of the same Ancient One.

At the height of your love for Him, Christ's Grace will appease your thirst for intellectual certainty, bestowing the conviction you seek. Continue loving Christ with all the warmth of your heart. True, simple and unadulterated love for Him will make Him touch your heart and awaken it to recognize his present Advent. Force not your mind, but allow your heart to work it out by His Grace.

Meanwhile, heed His ancient warning of which you are well aware – “run not after false prophets, babas, and masters.” I salute your deep love for and firm faith in Christ. May your love for Him lead you to Him. He is compassion incarnate. He is love. LFM vol. 2, p. 15

You are made to be happy and cheerful as the birthright of all men on earth. All man's undertakings are purely adventurous. Man neither *gains* nor *loses* anything by his attainments or failures in life, but in his attempts he invariably leaves after his death a trail of his experiences.

These experiences directly or indirectly helps others to set out for greater and greater adventures until some of them actually reach the Goal of no return through the realization of God – the Self. To realize the self is true attainment; all else is pure adventure. LFM 63

The pilgrim season at Meher Baba's Tomb-Shrine in India in January 2007, the year of this particular chapter's writing, included over 100,000 pilgrims with groups representing 45 countries, including Australia, El Salvador, Argentina, Mexico, Spain, Italy, France, Germany, Switzerland, Norway, Holland, Sweden, Yemen, Serbia, Russia, England, Ireland, Scotland, the U.S.A., Canada, Israel, Egypt, India, China, Korea, Japan, and Iran.

This includes a group of Armenian Christians from Iran, whose culture predates the dominant Islamic one by over a thousand years. These pilgrims are from all major and minor religions. They comprise even those who never subscribed to any

particular religion at all, including so-called atheists, all drawn by the magnet of the Avatar's Divine Personality.

## Suppressed News of Christ's Return

When first coming upon Meher Baba, many are quite perplexed. "In this age of total information, how on earth had I not heard of him *before*?" is a common question having two answers. Meher Baba said the Lord always comes veiled, like a thief in the night, quietly does his Universal work of suffering for humanity and leaves. Only well after he has gone does the world begin to awaken to his new advent – the full outpouring of His Holy Spirit.

This is termed his *Universal Manifestation*, always occurring about 100 years later. The second reason is that those who have dictatorial control over all mass media news outlets on the planet must assure for their own selfish reasons of world domination that this information *never* be allowed to get out to the masses, as it would totally end their agenda. That's why it wasn't carried on CNN, Fox, BBC or any major network news services.

And don't even bother looking for it in any major worldwide print or online media newsgroups, as this information is so very carefully veiled by those whose job it is to make sure that you see and hear only what they *want* you to see and hear with their own spin on it.

Isn't it most likely that the false "One World Order" of secret global governments would suppress such an astounding event as Christ coming once again. Their propaganda and "debunking" policies would forestall and ridicule the general public's belief, as it would prove more earthshaking than the most startling UFO event one could ever wildly imagine.

If extraterrestrial information were suppressed, certainly the Avatar's advent would be 100 times more so. Mass media would be taken over by the national security apparatus to assure suppression, so at least "public credibility" on a large scale would be averted. They want nobody raining on their parade to take over world control. No new messiahs, *thank you*.

In the future, evidence of this will clearly be found in such things as Brookings Institute Reports and in top-secret archives prepared for the government and congress over the last sixty years. Such a report was prepared on major UFO events by psychologists and a panel of highly specialized consultants on how

people would react and repercussions on international political systems and government leadership.

Orson Welles' 1938 broadcast, *War of the Worlds*, showed the government it had to clearly prepare for such eventualities. Public euphoria/religious hysteria would need careful control to ensure an orderly society. Evidence for Christ's return to earth if suddenly found on a large scale would produce a hazardous trauma for governments in maintaining the normal "order of society," to say nothing of inducing dizziness in all the traditional religions.

Otherwise, rapid, total social disintegration could likely result. Anthropological files contain countless examples of societies once so sure of their place in the universe, only to disintegrate when having to associate with unfamiliar societies espousing radically different ideas, belief systems and consequent ways of life.

Letting such information out as even a believable *possibility* among the general public at large would be a bad idea. And so, until the Avatar himself wants his information to get out, be sure it will be limited to only those he personally touches and reveals himself to.

But at the Avatar's public Manifestation +/- 2069 it will be a different story, when most will directly *feel, recognize, accept and welcome* his return, even if they missed it when he was physically present on earth, silently dispensing his love and compassion to humanity.

I knew two of Meher Baba's brothers, but especially his sister, Mani [*Mah-ni*]. Raised in Catholic schools, she grew up loving Jesus and wanted to become his nun. She once explained in a letter to Western followers in the early 1970s:

While oblivious to it, the greatest event for the world is when God visits the earth as Man. Of all planets in the 100 billion galaxies of universes [more than all the grains of sand on earth!], Earth alone is where this miracle happens again and again. But when it happens, poor Earth is unconscious, like a king who is crowned in his sleep and misses his own coronation. The God-Man as the Avatar visits Earth when it is dark. When it is in pain and sorrow, He comes in that dead of night.

Only a few see Him by the light of His Love. The Dawn comes only after He leaves. And with it comes the growing awakening, remorse and agonized waiting for His return – the resolve not to miss Him next time. Many a 'next time' has slipped through many a worn out resolution, until that time is here. That time is here, ***now!***

But this God-visit is to be different. Our Earth-world will not be left asleep in darkness. The Compassionate One will shake it awake and witness His Love's rising in the dawn of His Word. The entire world . . . will know Him when He breaks open His silence and gives to it The Word. FL 324

When asked how he knew he was the Christ and others didn't, Meher Baba said:

I knew it from before *the beginning-less beginning*, before *anything* was. Others cannot know that I must take this particular human form. Jesus was totally unknown in his time, even by his own intimate companions, even to Judas who grew up with him, was always near and kissed him.

As Judas couldn't understand, so you do not understand me externally in my physical form; because as the real, infinite Christ I am within you as within everyone. . . I knew it before everything. I came from my own *Self*. One cannot know Existence until one exists in that *Existence*. A57; **1512**

If people were to ask me, "Have you seen God?" I'd reply, "What else is there to see?" If they were to ask, "Are you God?" I would reply, "What else could I be?" If they would ask me, "Are you the Avatar?" I would say, "Why else have I taken this human form?" The only message I give and have ever been giving is: *Love God and you will find that your own self is nothing but God*. **3518**

One is here reminded of the Gospel passage about Jesus: "*And these were such hard sayings that many turned and walked with him no more.*" (John 6:66) To make sure people knew and understood about his life in this advent, just seven days before departing the physical plane, Baba ordered his close disciple Bhau Kalchuri, author, poet and night watchman – his beloved "St. John," and my friend for over 34 years – to write his biography.

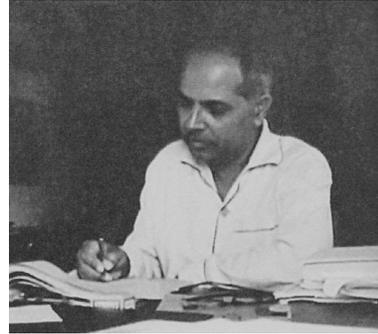
This historical study of the Avatar's advent, *Lord Meher*, from its beginning also includes Bhau's personal experience of being in Meher Baba's close contact day and night for sixteen years, from 1953 until Baba's passing in 1969. In these pages I have freely drawn from that 20 volume biography with online page numbers in bold with no letter code prefix. Bhau's poignant memory of that final day is from his diary after Baba had left his body:

You completed your seclusion work on the afternoon of January 30<sup>th</sup> 1969. I was with you and remember how glorious you looked. Victory was yours, but I did not grasp what was happening. Each afternoon on completing your work, you gave me

lines for ghazals [devotional song-poems expressing the rapture, anguish and longing of a lover's heart for his divine Beloved].

On that final day, you looked at me and gestured, "Here's one more line for a ghazal." But even a little movement of your finger caused such spasms as lifted your body off the bed, causing such pain that you told me your bones were breaking. You looked at me and shed tears.

How it pained my heart seeing you suffer. I sorrowfully said, "Oh, Baba, Please don't give me the line now; later when you're feeling better." But there was no later. Your fingers moved, and from your silence came that one line: ***"What will we do, living, when you have gone away?"*** 5414



Bhau Kalchuri writing Lord Meher, 1971

Meher Baba's passing was a shock that deeply distressed Bhau Kalchuri and all other disciples for long after. But remembering Baba's order to him, Bhau spent the next two years interviewing all the other disciples and collecting data from vast resources – documents, diaries, letters and messages carefully collected over the previous fifty years under Baba's orders. No Avatar before him has ever left such a complete record of his life.

When Bhau actually sat down to write it by hand, he didn't even have enough money for food to subsist on, nor could he afford the paper to write it on. His two young children chipped in and bought him a fountain pen and the best ink which wouldn't fade over time. While writing, it was as if Baba were directly guiding him, filling in the minutest details, such that at times Bhau didn't know in whose hand the pen really was. GuG 765

Baba often appeared to Bhau during the writing, snapping his fingers to hurry and finish the work he had given him. Bhau hand-wrote eighteen hours a day without break, often in tears, to the point of developing carpal tunnel syndrome before it was known as that. He completed the 20 volume 7000 page English biography, *Lord Meher* in seven months.

With its extraordinary details of Meher Baba's earthly sojourn, it is the most documented record of any Avatar's life in man's history. *Meher Darshan*, a 28,000 line rhyming poem of the Hindi biography, was written afterwards in a four month period.

## From Jesus to Meher Baba

Once a general initial understanding about the Avatar is assimilated, and specific information on Meher Baba's life is grasped by the reader, we can then examine the fascinating, and previously unknown hidden aspects of Jesus' life and teachings – astounding revelations that will absolutely rock the world. But before validation of Meher Baba is fully established, anything he said about his previous advent as Jesus is unsupported.

But once Baba's life is grasped in these pages, Jesus' life will open like a flower, revealing undreamed of historical and mystical insights. This information was revealed in minute detail in conversations Baba had with his disciples during a period of over 40 years; statements made drawing parallels to his present life and teachings with specific incidents that occurred in what he claims was just *one* of his previous Advents, the one in which he was known as Jesus of Nazareth.

Besides that advent and this present one, the Ancient One had an additional five advents, totaling seven during just humanity's last 5000 years. They will all be detailed as chapters unfold. And so, He whom we call Jesus lived on earth more than once. All previous 5000 year cycles saw 7 major advents of the same Christ going back into humanity's endless past, far beyond recorded history or imagination. This advent is the end of a *cycle of cycles*.

All cycles of time in illusion end and begin after 700-1400 years. A *cycle of cycles* is 5000 years long, during which the same Avatar makes seven major earthly appearances. The great Saint Ramakrishna once said: "God reveals Himself in the form the devotee loves most, whether as a Jew, a Zoroastrian, Hindu, Buddhist, Muslim, Christian or non-believer."

I have chosen this particular path of exposition because it is how I myself, a Christian, stumbled upon it; from the known to the unknown; from Jesus whom I loved, to one who despite raging resistance from my theologically/dogmatically trained mind, drew me with a spiritual fragrance, at first troublingly and then wondrously identical to that of Jesus. I was drawn like a moth to the flame.

Or again as Ramakrishna said, "*When the flower is in full bloom, bees will simply come on their own*. So now, like a worker bee I'm returning to the hive, wings vibrating and buzzing with the urgent message. "Go – the rarest blossom, the one for whom all other flowers bloom, is nectar-ripe, waiting for you."

This rare gift, freely given to me and hundreds of thousands in the 20<sup>th</sup> century, will be offered to incalculably more in the 21<sup>st</sup> century and for ages well beyond. So what follows, then, is a new piece of cloth – a quilt if you will – woven from many patches and threads gathered over decades of voluminous writings. These include books, discourses, conversations with family members, recordings and casual talks with countless people in various countries who met and instantly fell in love with the God-Man.

I spent many years hearing directly from Meher Baba's closest companions about his life and teachings and their intimate years of living with him; research not only filtered through the Catholic ideological and theological mindset in which I was trained, but most importantly, distilled from my own heart which he has obviously and deeply touched.

Entering the orbit of a true Master, no matter what age he lives in, the present or thousands of years ago – for the Infinite One is timeless – the chalice of one's heart is literally turned upside down, emptied of old wine that it may be filled with the new.

Jesus himself said, *“New wine cannot be poured into old wineskins.”* You yourself must *become* that new wineskin. Life coaches say, “To find your true life path, just follow your bliss.” Well, this has been a journey of following both my bliss and agony.

Probably the deepest hearing has come from listening to his Silence, for he was silent throughout the last forty-four years of his life. When he passed in 1969 before I even knew of him, by a strange but perhaps divine coincidence one of the top songs on the charts was Paul Simon's *“The Sound of Silence.”*

Driving in New York City in those early days of 1969 after returning from the Far East and resigning from the priesthood, I kept hearing this song on the radio, *“The words of the prophets are written on the subway walls and tenement halls, and whispered in the sound of silence.”* Meher Baba said, *“Things that are real are given and received in silence.”* 1654

There were innumerable visits, tracing places he had been in America, Europe and Asia, always culminating in India. My first visit there was for several months to finally bow down at his Tomb-Shrine, where his human form lies for all humanity over the ages to come.

Quiet tears flowed from unmistakable feelings that I had truly and finally made it back home after wandering long through the desert of both my gross and spiritual past. The living presence of love incarnate and the void inside me felt inside his Tomb was absolutely singular. Though one could not see him – One who had supposedly died – his aliveness to the heart was palpable – touchable.

Before his passing, Baba told his disciples they'd soon see the result of his work and how his children from all over the world would come. Those disciples hadn't a clue as to what he meant. As far as they were concerned, he had left and the story was pretty much over. It was time to close up the shop. Little did they know! Countless thousands came.

And they are still coming, more and more every year from every corner of the globe. Well, I consider myself lucky to have been in the first wave. As already mentioned, his resting place draws hundreds of thousands of pilgrims yearly from over the world – Hindus, Muslims, Christians, Buddhists, Jews, and even one-time atheists.

They come to the treasure house where he said each and every human being has *their own* divine treasure waiting for them, un-claimable by any other, as during his physical lifetime he personally worked and suffered *to inscribe their very own name upon it*.

Knowingly or unknowingly, man is ever seeking the goal, which is to realize his true Self. Especially in his last years, Meher Baba shattered his body to revitalize his internal links with the world, so that intimacy with his lovers' hearts could be fully established.

This link is actively retained to this day. Though his body is under a marble slab, that little domed-room holds the key that unlocks any human heart sincerely calling upon God as the Eternal Beloved, from whatever their religious background or even lacking one.

I also had the great fortune over the years hearing firsthand accounts of the Master's life in interactions with his family – two brothers, a sister, aunt, nephews, a niece, cousins and intimate disciples of his outer and inner circles – his *mandali* [from Sanskrit, *mandala* = circle] as he called them – archetypes through whom he would work to help all humanity.

Those mandali-disciples in Baba's inner-circle were the new apostles. Baba said, "By *mandali* I mean those who've been with me for several years [or lifetimes],

who serve me with their all, asking for nothing. In short, mandali means those whose intimacy I *feel*.” 3445

Some of these mandali, particularly his new “Peter” and “John” – Eruch Jessawala and Bhau Kalchuri – were the most ordinary, engaging, selflessly down-to-earth people I ever had the pleasure of meeting. He lived and died for them, as they did for him.

Their position was directly beneath the lantern, closest to the source of light, yet veiled in the shadow of its Truth. He seldom gave his disciples conscious experiences of the inner spiritual planes; nor was living with the Avatar a bed of roses. It was more like a bed of thorns, for spirituality entails grinding down one’s egoistic, false self-assertions to utter dust:

***Dust under his feet – His challenge to become that – Grinding yourself out. –elf***

“Real yoga means you *go*, and God *comes*. . . . You are your own curtain, and only when you go can You come. How to go? The only solution is love. When you ‘go’ [are annihilated] through love for God the Beloved, You ‘come’ [emerge] as You really are.” 4547 Meher Baba’s disciples had to let go of self-concerns completely. Their security, likes, dislikes and moods all had to be put at the Master’s feet. This was a painful and agonizing process. Life with Baba was day-by-day experience of Jesus’ call to “*Leave all and follow me.*” Though each had a definite character, he taught them to live in harmony. Each was to be the one to “give in.” Never minimizing their differences, he brought them to the surface saying, “I don’t want stones around me.” Thank you, Eruch and Bhau, for your friendship and sharing your prodigious memories of your years with the Avatar.

Jesus said, “*Leave all and follow me.*” Do you realize what that means? It means to *truly* leave all and follow me. And what it is to leave all? It is to leave everything, even your self, behind you. This means that having left everything behind, you have to follow me, and not run ahead of me.

And to do this is so very difficult, because it’s so very simple. If you let your will guide you, so that you walk ahead of me, you become your own obstruction to my leading you. And since you are ignorant of the pitfalls on the way, I have to keep a constant watch lest you fall. What this amounts to is that instead of you following me, I have to follow you.

I am not limited by form. I am within everyone and in you as the real guide. Following me doesn’t mean you have to leave everything and stay near me. It

also doesn't mean that you're to use me as a dumping ground for all your worries, nor that you're to expect me to fulfill all your wants.

It means that you're to be completely resigned to my will, abiding in a spirit of total surrender. To follow me is to obey me and do as I want. When my will becomes yours, you are truly following me – safe and saved. I know the way and its labyrinths. I *am* the way and the goal. AO 167

Besides my companionship with his intimate disciples, listening deeply over two decades to stories of their lives with him, there were also letters and emails and online chats exchanged over that time. *Matchless*, is the only word to describe his most intimate ones – these new Apostles. The written memoirs of their years with him will go down in history to be read by millions in future ages, just as we have read epistles and New Testament accounts.

One can see that this material is highly unconventional. To some it may be disturbing and even blasphemous. Others will get it immediately, because their hearts have been yearning so long and so deeply for it. The Divine has been drawing them individually and inexorably more inward and away from traditional “external” religious forms and values.

The Divine draws us away from illusory Maya, that master showman who misdirects your attention, pointing toward the illusory world which doesn't really exist, while what's actually happening is somewhere else where you're not looking and what *really does* exist.

*Maya*, the principle of illusion, can blend in with any background. We all know how an octopus sends out a black, inky trail to fool predators and catch prey. It's been happening for zillions of years and to us too. *Maya*, the master of smoke-screen of illusion, lures us with her black smoke-and-mirrors to fall time after time, moment after moment for her delusion of false consciousness. And somehow, moment after moment we keep falling for her lie. Damn!

## Challenging the Jesuits

I remember in early 1982 in Goa, a Portuguese city on India's west coast, almost being thrown out of a luncheon I'd been invited to with several Jesuit priests and theologians for suggesting the same Ancient One whom we all love as Jesus, had been on earth officially as the Christ several times before he was known as Jesus, and two more times since then.

I had arrived in Goa from Bombay that morning on the overnight ferry – the very same steel-hulled boat that Meher Baba himself took on three trips there decades earlier. That old iron ship was still in service in 1982. I then took a local bus to the town of Old Goa where I encountered a Jesuit priest on a street corner, insisting that I join him for lunch.

A heated discussion during lunch had the Jesuits defending the old dogma that Christ came only once, with me citing some un-nerving possibilities that cutting-edge theology is rethinking that premise, and that the God-Man as the one Christ re-appears on earth in cycles that were predictable. Well, good thing everyone had finished eating when the subject came up, as there was nearly uproar, fueled by my confident and certainly expressed convictions.

After practically choking on his post-lunch biscotti while exchanging his own adamant doctrinal ideas to contradict a priestly equal on the subject, the flushed Jesuit superior of the community neatly folded his napkin and ended the meal with a reluctant observation, “*Well, if that were the case, I would have to change all my theological views.*” He then got up and abruptly walked out, leaving a very awkward silence around the table.

Well, Ok, maybe it was an upstart move on my part, but I’d earlier warned my newly met Jesuit priest-friend who had invited me to the luncheon, “Please don’t put me on the spot and ask me to talk about the research I’m doing here in India; let’s just not go there today.”

But he was so intrigued by what I’d shared with him earlier on that street corner about Meher Baba as the Avatar of this age that he did *just* that. Well, as any five year-old could have easily foreseen, the result was worse than stirring a doctrinal hornet’s nest.

The co-founder of the Jesuit Order, St. Francis Xavier, was one of my patron saints during my seminary training and missionary years in the Far East. His body has lain for 500 years in an uncorrupt state, simply as a vivid sign of his inner honesty before God. His burial crypt is the greatest Christian pilgrim center in India and is within the Basilica of Good Jesus in Goa, beside where we were having lunch that auspicious noontime.

I was there that day not to argue with the Jesuits, but to bow down to Xavier, as Baba himself had done so many decades earlier. The first time he came alone, climbing up to the bell tower through a dark spiral staircase. Years later he returned with his men. 556

Then in the 1930s, he also brought some of his Western followers there. Entering the Basilica three times during his life, Baba imparted the atmosphere of his Divine Presence for the benefit of those coming in later times, saying Xavier was spiritually advanced.

I was simply retracing his footsteps. Who knows that he wasn't looking over his shoulder, seeing one day I, too, would visit here and dare to speak openly about him to these Jesuit priests as an *equal*. I left with a secret satisfaction that something happened that day beyond anything I'd have ever attempted on my own. Clearly, I had just shaken loose some pretty old tiles on the venerable roof of the old Basilica of Jesus where we were gathered.

Perhaps even St. Francis himself was calling and urging me on during that luncheon to speak the truth as I knew it – exactly what he had done centuries ago when he preached Jesus to the unbelieving Hindus of India.

Another similar event, also unplanned, happened with a group of nuns from India who interacted with me while they tended the religious souvenir shop high above St. Peter's Basilica dome in Rome. You'll find this amusing story in my own biographical narrative in *Book II: Empty Chalice*

– *The Diary of an Ex-Priest*, Chapter 7, *Meeting*

*God's brother*, on my first pilgrimage to Rome to India and Meher Baba's tomb in the early winter of 1981.

Well, theological times really haven't changed since then, and undoubtedly this is going to be a *very difficult* jump for many traditional Christians, to say nothing of the clergy. The final irony is that several priests who had given young Meher Baba – Merwan Irani – his high school education 70 years earlier, were assigned from this very same Jesuit province in Goa, teaching at St. Vincent's High School in Poona. Is this not truly the irony of ironies?

There are several Catholic priests now quietly loving and following Meher Baba as Jesus returned, including an American Catholic Bishop – the first of a huge wave coming in the future. Meher Baba's two younger brothers were also students at St. Vincent's high school.



Built in 1594, exactly 300 years before Meher Baba's birth, the Basilica of Good Jesus in Old Goa, India, where the incorrupt body of St. Francis Xavier lies. To the right is the Jesuit residence where the author was invited to lunch.

The priests derided the younger brothers over claims others were making about their elder brother's *spiritual state*. "Is not this the Merwan we taught in chemistry and English class?" Draw any parallels you see fit. Meher Baba's second favorite Christian male saint after St. Francis of Assisi was St. Augustine, who is most famous for this one sentence:

*"That which is now called the 'Christian Religion' existed among the ancients, and never did not exist from the very beginning of the human race until the Lord came in the flesh. Then, that true religion, already existing, now newly came to be called **Christianity**."*

Twenty-five years prior to Meher Baba's birth and exactly 100 years before his death, Ralph Waldo Emerson in 1869 quoted this very passage from St. Augustine in his famous speech to the Free Religious Association of America, as did Theosophy's founder Rudolph Steiner in 1904 in his *Introduction to a Spiritual World-View*.

In that notion of religion we also include Judaism, Zoroastrianism, Vedantism, Buddhism, Muhammadism and the countless other *isms* which have existed from times immemorial, specifically as a direct result of the Avatar's repeated human incarnations in past cycles, going far back far beyond humanity's recorded memory. In the sense of the Old Testament name, "*Emmanuel – God is with us,*" and always in human form no less.

## The *Only* Son of God

Someone once asked, "Was Christ the only son of God?" Meher Baba replied, "*Christ*, and not just Jesus, *is the only son of God*. Christ means he who is one with the Father, the Infinite; and all who realize ultimate reality are *in* that identical Christ-state. When Jesus said, '*I and my Father are One*,' he proclaimed his Christ-state; Jesus means the God-Man of Nazareth who attained to Christ-consciousness and Perfection." QA 12-13

Most Christians believe that the God-Man came *once only*, and upon finishing His spiritual work, He then basically abandoned being here on earth "among us and as one of us" for all other times and eternity – belief in the Second Coming notwithstanding. So much for *Emmanuel – God always being with us!* They also minimally and erroneously believe that the only legacy Jesus left behind is found in the totally altered/redacted New Testament.

And there is a further explicit belief that unless you grab hold of *that one* particular manifestation of the Savior, then you are damned to hell for eternity. This is not only an ugly picture, but it is hardly something that could ever come from the compassionate Jesus.

He who “*bruised not a reed,*” could have ever uttered, intended or implied such a thing by any stretch of anyone’s imagination. This humiliation was brought upon Jesus by the darkness of orthodoxy on one side, and blind fundamentalist extremism on the other.

This means that if such a being as a “God-man” exists in the first place, then he is unequivocally the prime actor, factor and moving force on the stage of human existence – and indeed across the entire creation. Would it not be strange that if he came at least once, then he certainly might have appeared in other *sequels*, to say nothing of *prequels*?

As Adam, the first God-Realized soul in the universe – known as Shiva in India – he obviously owns the franchise, while humanity goes through stages where it needs periodic, fresh dispensations of divine love – “fresh, live and in person.” If spirituality were food, would you give birth to a child and present him with a trailer full of canned goods saying,

“Well, here, this is it – all you need for the rest of your lifetimes.” Humanity is no different. The Lord said, “*I am the Way and the Life,*” and He manifests as that Way and Life in an event beyond imagination, by incarnating in the Christ-state repeatedly over the course of human history, according to its needs and in each new age every 700–1400 years.

No one comes to the Father except by Christ. But *Christ* exists long before the body of Jesus and well after it. Christian fundamentalists need finally to grasp that *Christ* is a divine *office* and not merely an individual personality occurring only once in time on earth. Abraham, Zoroaster, Rama, Krishna, Buddha, Jesus, Mohammed and Meher Baba are all in a circle holding hands in the Beyond as One – His manifestations in just this most recent 5000 year cycle of the same Ancient One – humanity’s Beloved and original Adam. This office has been filled by that *same* Ancient One, the first soul to become the Christ – Personal God – countless times in different bodies with different names and not limited to a single historical time-event. To repeat: He came to earth in seven major advents in this last 5000 year cycle. He appeared in countless other times in endless previous cycles on

earth, as at the end of an earlier 5000 year cycle, Avatar Abraham came before Zoroaster. 24

Understanding this from the source Itself will free us from our self-made cage of limited understanding. Something great comes in grasping this, as we do not lose Jesus or any of our other Avatars. Rather, we gain them and the rest of humanity across various world religions as *true* spiritual brothers and sisters, like all those clustered lights on the Christmas tree or the Hanukah menorah – like beads on one string around the neck of God.

These are his children from his other incarnations, family you never even knew you had. And one day there will be such a party! Meanwhile, is there a Christian child who has not sadly wondered why Jesus came only *once* and so very long ago?

Is there a devout Hindu, Buddhist, or Muslim who's not searched their hearts with the same burning question: where *are* Lords Rama and Krishna, the compassionate Buddha and the noble Prophet when we so sorely need their living presence on earth right now?

The premise here is that one of the Lord's appearances occurred more recently than you'd have ever imagined; that it is drawing, actually hurtling you closer to your own and all your brothers' and sisters' spiritual destiny throughout the world – a destiny undeviatingly the same, completely transcending traditional notions of religion, heaven or hell.

While some might feel anguish that they “missed the show,” not knowing that the Lord was *actually* here in this age, my reaction was surprisingly different – *joyful!* that even in the cloud of unknowing I had somehow sensed and felt his presence. I was thrilled with even the mere thought that I was a human being living on this planet at the same time he was.

Though our paths never directly crossed, they came close by 100 miles or so in July, 1956. I had just entered the seminary in Pennsylvania and on my 20<sup>th</sup> birthday Meher Baba was in New York City proclaiming that he was the Avatar of this age on NBC Television.

He must certainly have been gazing on me that day, seeing I would take up his Avataric call to produce this monumental work through which he would reach out to countless millions. I hold myself doubly fortunate, since Baba said that the “priests” would be the last ones to find him. Well, I was an exception to that.

And I know in my case, discarding that persona in an honest way put me on a path where he had a better chance to reveal himself to my heart, gradually emptying me of hierarchical “specialness” and old religious forms.

Although I had not heard of him at the time, I made my fateful and most difficult decision after thirteen years to leave religious life in January 1969, the exact year and month that Meher Baba dropped his physical form, his “garment of disguise,” as he called it, to live now eternally in the hearts of all his lovers.

With ever-present gratitude, I undertake this excellent adventure of telling you his life story; and how anxious I am to get to it. But all these introductory pages were necessary. The new mysticism of Meher Baba is ancient, yet ever new, opening wide the spiritual gates and bringing the mysteries of heaven down upon earth – equally to kings and sweepers alike.

From hints that Jesus gave on the Avatar’s reappearance, the early Christian fathers were definitely expecting his return before a thousand years. This was a very specific belief in the early church, easily researched and commonly referred to as the *Millennium*.

Of course, they weren’t expecting it in 570 A.D. when Jesus returned as Muhammad, and certainly not expecting that this time He’d be wearing an Arabian hat and coat. They were looking for that old familiar Jesus they had known; another classic misunderstanding of the words of the Avatar and totally misinterpreting the periodic *barakath* – the grace of history. Meher Baba explains his endless appearances as the Avatar in this way:

As God is always One and the Same, so is the Avatar; the eternal, indivisible, Infinite One who manifests Himself in the form of the Messiah, the Buddha, the Prophet, the Ancient One and Highest of the High. This eternally one and the same Avatar keeps repeating His manifestation.

From time to time in different cycles, He adopts different human forms and different names.

He’s born in different places to reveal Truth in different garbs and different languages, to

raise humanity from the pit of ignorance and help free it from the bondage of delusions. HM 33

Whether there have been 26 Avatars since Adam or 124,000 Prophets, as sometimes

claimed, or whether Jesus was the last and only Messiah, or Muhammad the last Prophet, is all immaterial and insignificant when eternity and reality are considered. It matters little to dispute if there have been 10 or 26 or a million Avatars. **The Avatar is always one and the same.**

The five Perfect Masters bring about the advent of the Avatar-Christ-Prophet on earth each time. This goes on cycle after cycle. Millions of such cycles must have passed by and will continue to pass by without affecting eternity in the least. GS 249-50

While on earth, five Perfect Masters share the same eternal state of God-Realization as the Avatar, wielding Infinite Knowledge, Power and Bliss for the spiritual benefit of the creation, moving and shaking it in its never ending journey toward its very own Godhood. Each wills their own death when their Universal work on earth is completed.

When a Perfect Master drops his body, another God-Realized soul then become a Perfect Master, completing the council of five Masters always present on earth. The Avatar uses Infinite knowledge and not his Infinite Power and Bliss. Otherwise, how could he suffer helplessness for humanity's sake as Avatar, Messiah, Buddha, Christ and Savior? He literally worships the creation with seven major incarnations each separated by 700-1400 years.

In this last 5000 year cycle, appearing as Zoroaster [Abraham], Rama, Krishna, Buddha, Jesus, Mohammed and now as Meher Baba, there were two exceptions to the 700- 1400 year time-frames; the advents of Jesus 625 years after Buddha, and Mohammed, coming about 570 years after Jesus. It was exactly 1400 years from Mohammed to His new advent as Meher Baba – the exact time the Prophet Himself had clearly predicted.

Meanwhile, with confusion about the advents of Zoroaster and Abraham, Eruch states: "Baba told us, 'I came to arouse and awaken humanity as Abraham, Zoroaster, Rama, Krishna, Buddha, Jesus, and Mohammed and now I have come as Meher Baba.'" AO 212 Previously, Baba rarely mentioned Abraham, and many felt confused at this. However, let's review what Baba said in *The Highest of the High*. "Of the most recognized and much worshiped manifestations of God as Avatar, that of Zoroaster is the earlier – having been before Rama, Krishna, Buddha, Jesus and Mohammed . . . Abraham was not mentioned to avoid confusion as Zoroaster come Again. So Baba said, 'Don't put that in.' Baba explained that at the time of Abraham the Zoroastrians were expecting Zoroaster to reappear. So when Abraham came, they referred to Him as Zoroaster, thus causing confusion if there was one incarnation [of Zoroaster] or two, and it was this that led Baba to not openly refer to Abraham as one of his advents as the Avatar, though he most certainly was.

Noah, named Ziusudra in 6000 year old ancient Sumerian cuneiform tablets, was a Perfect Master in an earlier 5000 year cycle 11,000-13,000 years ago at the time of the last mini-pralaya [collapse], known as “the great flood.” Buddha named six ancient Avatars, giving them names in the Pali language, such as Kashyapa, Krakuchanda, Matuposaka, Subedha, Vipashyin and Vishvaban, and two future Avatars, Dipamkara and **Maitreya** – the All-Compassionate One [Meher Baba].  
LBE 3

With countless Avataric cycles in humanity’s endless past and relatively endless future, the God-Man’s universal work in each age gradually lifts and trues humanity out of the thralldom of enmeshed ignorance lived in the gross world. 26

The Soul – Existence Infinite and Eternal – is beyond space and time; while it is chained in those two prisons to witness what happens in its own gross physical, subtle emotional and mental thought worlds. Soul itself never participates in those life illusions.

Though it lives in the midst of them, blinding the soul as to its own divine origin and nature, creation is then becomes a mere factory – a reincarnation production line, if you will, to create the consciousness necessary for the Soul to come to know *that all souls were, are and will be eternally God, as the Over-Soul.*

Then, after ages, the soul finally arrives at the threshold of the spiritual path to begin traversing the seven inner planes, finally ending in full God-Realization – Infinite Bliss, Infinite Knowledge and Infinite Power – experienced by each soul individually and eternally.

This means that the coming golden age of an unprecedented spiritual push about to take place for life in all seven kingdoms of creation has been in preparation during this entire most recent 5000 year cycle. Meher Baba proclaimed the Good News in this way.

“The happiness of God-Realization is the goal of all creation; worth all physical and mental sufferings in the universe. Suffering is then as if it were not. The happiness of God- Realization is self-sustained, eternally fresh and unending, boundless and indescribable. And for this happiness has the world sprung into existence.” ss 28

Without the Avatar’s intervention, it would be an endless journey. Baba and his Master Upasni Maharaj stated it requires 8,400,000 pre-human evolutionary forms of stone through animal kingdoms, and another 8,400,000 human births to finish the journey.

At a local animal preserve in 1929, Baba revealed, “Tigers take 100s of 1000s of years to take human birth. Bears are the most lustful among animals; monkeys and gorillas are most advanced. Their first human incarnations are as native savages.” ·  
1048–49

Why the gross human state at all? That’s a fair question. The reason is this: the Infinite Bliss – Brahma – being formless, being one, i.e., being *Alone*, is not conscious of and cannot enjoy its own state of Bliss. When it desired to see what it was like and enjoy its own state, with the help of Maya [self-desire: “*Who Am I?*”], it began to evolve itself for that purpose, till it assumed a form capable of enjoying its own status. The last form it evolved to accomplish this is the human form.

The human form is thus the natural evolutionary outcome of Brahma – formless, infinite Bliss itself. The human form is the last of 8,400,000 stages in evolution. Just as numerous blocks are needed to build a house, 8,400,000 stages are essential to build the *first* human form. Then 8,400,000 human reincarnations are needed to complete the journey to God-Realization – the absolute destruction of all sanskaras, the stopped state of mind, void of thinking without going into the unconscious state of sound-sleep. GI Int May 1995

Souls not destined for God-Realization receive *moksha*, eternal Liberation – Infinite Bliss and Knowledge without Infinite Power. But once entering the 1<sup>st</sup> spiritual plane, that soul’s destiny is full God-Realization and not simply *moksha* – Liberation.

*He will enlighten the ignorant atom with knowledge of its very Divinity Making it one day drink the wine of its own Immortality –elf*

A filmmaker from my early teens, writing this book was very much like filming and editing a movie – each scene carefully framed, photographed and edited as a major motion

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·Bhau Kalchuri’s book, *The Nothing and the Everything*, pages 291, 300–02 further explains that the human form contains the sum total of the experiences and characteristics of the previous 8,400,000 evolving form *in each of the six evolutionary stages, thus totaling 50,400,000 pre-human forms.*

picture is conceived filmed and finished in final post-production. With the reader's patience, at the end of Chapter Three, things will begin to unfold in a surprisingly cinematic way for your ultimate enjoyment, appreciation and realization of Meher Baba's life story. Baba gave excellent advice on cultivating self-forgetfulness by remembering his "*image*" as in cinema:

One of the easiest ways of cultivating self-forgetfulness is to concentrate on a picture of the Master, for this helps the aspirant to shift to some extent from concentration on himself to one who is the being and form of Perfection. And when the picture on which he concentrates becomes alive, this is called Illumination. And this seeing of the alive picture brings about further forgetfulness of himself. Soon, he has no more thoughts about himself at all.

His whole mind is focused on the living face and form of the Master as the eternal Beloved, and eventually he merges in Him forever. He then knows that he himself was all along the Reality of his own concentration. This is Self-revelation – the final real Self-assertion: "*I Am That.*" Forgetting himself, one becomes the *rememberer* of who he truly is.

And then all who forgot themselves remembering him are also liberated, for if one member of a family attains emancipation, with him are emancipated generations of his past and present connections. Such self-forgetfulness can be practiced by everyone, and its way is easy, delightful and safe, because it is always under the tender regard of the Master Himself. AO 170–71

Called by different names, the Avatar is yet always one and the same Ancient One. Meher Baba says all worship returns to him. The sigh within the prayer is the same within the Christian, the Muslim and the Jew – all indivisibly longing for the same God.

Humanity is now at the end of its most recent last 5,000 year cycle. A new advent begins in 700 years when the God-Man returns to earth as a new manifestation of the Avatar in a new guise, a new hat and coat and name, beginning a new 5000 year spiritual cycle.

## Revelation of the Magi – The Star Child

To set the scene for this thrilling divine romance, we look back to the ancient mathematician-astronomers. Over the ages their wisdom learned how to track the cosmos and predict periodic re-appearance of certain comets and heavenly signs, such as are said to appear when God periodically incarnates to work in human form on earth and then leaves it.

There is an ancient tradition that the three Wise Men bearing gifts for Jesus' birth were mystic Zoroastrian sages from Persia. Now a re-discovered ancient Syriac text may change that. What we perhaps didn't know is revealed in, "*Revelation of the Magi*," found deep within the Vatican archives and reported on ABC news on December 23<sup>rd</sup> 2010.

This ancient text tells a strikingly different version from St. Matthew, as the Magi come from a far, eastern idyllic land of "*Shir*" – China. As a divine "mission control- central" these far-eastern sages were astrologically tracking the re-appearance of the God- Man-Avatar under the five Perfect Masters of the age.

They were monitoring his return back from the Beyond into human form again on earth. Harvard PhD translator of the rediscovered Vatican text, Dr. Brent Landau, reveals that the *Bethlehem Star* not only *led* the Wise Men, but *transforms* into the Christ Child:

The star descends from heaven, filling the cave with light which eventually concentrates and reveals a small, luminous human being – "*a star child*," who is the infant Christ. When the star child speaks to the Magi, it is startling: He tells them: "***This is one of many occasions on which I have appeared to the peoples of the world.***" Further statements by Christ, the Magi, and even God himself reinforce the revelation that the Christ is the hidden source behind all humanity's religions.\*

If this startling text is so, traditional Christianity can no longer reject the validity of all other religions. This supports Meher Baba's revelation that the one and only same Christ- Avatar comes again and again in different ages, with different names and forms to awaken humanity to God's one eternal message of divine Love that resulted in all the major religions.

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\*See: [http://www.huffingtonpost.com/brent-landau/on-revelation-of-the-magi\\_b\\_788238.html](http://www.huffingtonpost.com/brent-landau/on-revelation-of-the-magi_b_788238.html)

# wisdom from rumi

"Ride on love and don't worry about the road!  
Because the steed of love has the smoothest ride."<sup>1</sup>

"The heart is your student for love is the only way we learn."<sup>2</sup>



Rumi and Shams Tabrizi

"When inward tenderness finds the secret hurt,  
pain itself will crack the rock and Ah!  
Let the soul emerge."<sup>3</sup>

"Be silent,  
Only the Hand of God can remove  
The burdens of your heart."  
(Rumi, can't find source)

"Wherever you stand,  
be the soul of that place."<sup>4</sup>

"Whatever happens to you, don't fall in despair. Even if all the doors are closed, a secret path will be there for you that no one knows. You can't see it yet but so many paradises are at the end of this path.

Be grateful! It is easy to thank after obtaining what you want, thank before having what you want."<sup>5</sup>

1(From "Rare Soul Wine" in "Love's Ripening: Rumi on the Heart's Journey" translated by Kabir Helminski and Ahmad Rezwani)

2(From "A Rumi Daybook" translated by Kabir & Camille Helminski)

3(From "One Song: A New Illuminated Rumi" by Michael Green)

4(Rumi, can't find source)

5(Some sites say Rumi, some say Shams Tabrizi, can't find source)

