

OM ॐ POINT

INTERNATIONAL CIRCULAR • ISSUE 3 • FALL 2009

Welcome to the 3RD issue of *OmPoint Circular*. The focus of this edition is spiritually inspired poetry. A very special thank you to the contributors for what they've shared. *Enjoy!*

INTERVIEW MEHER BABA & ARTIST

A: I am an artist.

MB: I love artists, because through art one can express oneself beautifully.

A: Up till now, through ideas, I tried to find the source. Is there any other way to the divine? (*The interpreter told Baba, he has painted fine paintings for a church, with deep insight to approach the subject, and not for competition.*)

MB: Yes. You have a right to understand and express. Art, when inspired with love, leads to higher realms and that art will open for you the inner life. When you paint, you forget everything except your object. When you are too much engrossed in it, you are lost in it. And when you are lost in it, your ego diminishes. And when the ego diminishes, love infinite appears. And when love is created, God is attained. So you see how art can lead one to find infinite God.

A: I realise that I have my ego, which I must use in a selfless way to express the divine infinite.

MB: Then that ego is not finite and limited. It is then the selfless, unlimited ego.

A: But this I will always try to develop more and more, even through art, and then leave it to you.

MB: Yes, and I will help you spiritually.



Block print by Aspen Weichberger, Age 14



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Loving Response TO NON-SPECIFIC PRAYER

by Cynthia Barrientos, Seattle, Washington, June 17, 2008

Since the 1930's, Meher Baba repeatedly told His disciples: "Don't worry, Be happy"

*"Do your best.
Then, don't worry;
be happy in My love.
I will help you."*

DO YOUR BEST

In preparation for a month-long pilgrimage in Meherabad, I began to experience an increasing sense of tension, uncertainty, anxiety and plain old simple "worry". Being one who is usually mindful of Baba's wishes by doing my best in a cheerful manner, I found myself disturbed by this mounting collection of uncomfortable emotions. In essence, the worry over worrying was taking on a spiraling downward cycle of distress, causing deeper, more powerful sensations of inner disturbance.

It reminded me of a mind trick I recall from my childhood where a mischievous kid challenged another

to NOT think about something ridiculous such as a "pickle". Most of us will find ourselves unable to get the visual image, the memory of the taste, the feel of the crunch or the smell of the dill out of our minds, especially if we TRY to NOT think about the pickle. Well, this long ago, yet familiar sensation of being unable to control my thoughts returned and was clearly unwelcome.

In my best attempt to empty my mind of these self-created emotions, I found that I was completely and utterly powerless. The harder I tried, the more intense they became.

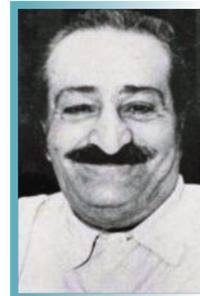
I WILL HELP YOU

One morning, the anguish became so magnified that it *finally* occurred to me to turn to Baba for help. I've discovered that the simpler and less specific the call to Him, the sooner and more powerful His response. My earliest prayers to Baba consisted of detailed requests in poorly disguised, revised versions of what I had already attempted to do to solve the dilemma. Rather than trust that He may have an entirely different and abso-

lutely brilliant solution, I somehow figured He needed some guidance to solve it in a way so that I would recognize the response when it appeared. Selecting my more recent version of prayer, I posed this brief request. "Dear Baba. I need your help. I have no idea what that looks like and I know that You do. I'll be watching."

THEN, DON'T WORRY; BE HAPPY IN MY LOVE

About two hours into my unusually busy workday, I noticed that the intensity of the emotions had somewhat subsided and I was able to be fully present for the parade of people who appeared one right after another through the door to my office. While engaged in a conversation with one woman, I glanced out the window and was stunned to see a familiar Baba Lover I have known for over 15 years and who is very dear to me. Our children have grown up together, shared the stage in Baba's Birthday plays and weeks of time together on pilgrimage. We frequently share Friday evenings in a variety of different Seattle area living



rooms, focusing on our Beloved. We've appeared together for early morning cleaning at Baba's Samadhi, then remained for prayers and arti.

Having no idea that I worked on this campus, she walked towards another office that had recently closed and moved to a new location. Puzzled, she looked at the locked door just as I was able to open our door and welcome her in. "Jai Baba!" I called. Her face lit up, mirroring my delight in seeing her. Pressing my palms

together by my heart, I repeated, “Jai Baba!” Approaching each other, we embraced, both talking over each other’s words of surprise & happiness.

Returning to our main office, I introduced my work friends to her, then invited her into my office. Over my desk hangs two black and white photos. One is of Meher Baba standing amongst Prem Ashram boys who are sitting under a tree and smiling up at Him. The other of Mani, play-

ing her sitar, is placed in such a way that it appears that she is gazing up at her big brother. Together, we took pleasure in joining Mani and the boys by focusing on His inviting presence.

It was then that I recognized His so very personal and loving response to my earlier call for His help. He sent me one of His dearest ones to exchange an embrace with another who loves Him. His idea was WAY better than anything I would have concoct-

ed that I might think of as “help”. Since that morning over a week ago, I continue to thank Baba for the absence of worry, the return of happiness and the awareness of His love.

Notes: 1. *Lord Meher* (Vol.16, p. 5673): “Do not worry. Be happy in my love and continue to hold fast to my daaman to the very end. Rest assured that all will be divinely well. God does not abandon those who trust Him.”



HAFEZ GHAZAL 78

AN ENGLISH TRANSLATION
BY FERESHTEH AZAD

دیدی که یار جز سر جور و ستم نداشت	بشکست عهد وز غم ما هیچ غم نداشت
یا رب مگیرش ار چه دل چون کبوترم	افکند و کشت و عزت صید حرم نداشت
بر من جفا ز بخت من آمد وگر نه یار	حاشا که رسم لطف و طریق کرم نداشت
با این همه هر آن که نه خواری کشید از او	هر جا که رفت هیچ کسش محترم نداشت
ساقی بیار باده و با محتسب بگو	انکار ما مکن که چنین جام جم نداشت
هر راهرو که ره به حریم درش نبرد	مسکین برید وادی و ره در حرم نداشت
حافظ ببر تو گوی فصاحت که مدعی	هیچش هنر نبود و خبر نیز هم نداشت

Did you see how the Beloved did not intend anything but tyranny? And how He broke his promise and had no care for our sorrow?

Oh God, don't seize him even though he seized my heart like a pigeon
Tossed it to the ground, killed it, and did not even have the nobility to honor the rule that forbids hunting around a place of worship

My luck has given me the fate of being subject to cruelty
Alas, my Beloved is not accustomed to mercy or pity

Despite all this, those who did not suffer from his cruelty
No matter where they went, they were not honored

Oh Saki, bring the wine and tell the accountant

Not to deny us, for this kind of cup is endless

Every wayfarer who failed to pave the way to His Door
Became destitute and was forbidden entry into the Sanctuary

O Hafez, take away the flowing stream of your sayings
The claimant has no ability, and no knowledge

The Argentine group,
“Amigos del Amigo
Avatar Meher Baba,”
has launched its new
web site at:

www.meherbaba.com.ar

*(Even if you don't
read Spanish, take a look.
Baba is working!)*



Meher at age 2

“My beautiful son, His
gift to us from Beloved
Baba, had his 3RD
birthday on July 31.
His name is Meher, he is
the son of Meena
and Jonathan Grumette.”

–J.G.

*“It's a very Shiva
time right now.”*

–L.W.



*Drawing done by Meher Baba,
July 30, 1953, of Himself as a
“Mischievous Chicken.”¹*

by Kendra Crossen Burroughs, July 2008, Myrtle Beach, SC

Last Sunday afternoon,
July 12th, while on retreat at
Meher Center, I was heading for
the Sheriar Gate in order to walk to
Jerry Edwards' house for a gather-
ing. Suddenly, out of nowhere,
my eyes beheld something that my
mind could not quite absorb: two
fluffy white chickens were ambling toward me, pecking at the earth, in the
general vicinity opposite Phyllis Ott's house.



What on earth? Feral chickens? Where did they come from? Were they fugi-
tive Easter chicks? Someone's pets? It seemed unlikely that a residential area
like Briarcliffe would permit livestock.

These were two beauties, a rooster and a hen—puffs of spotless white feath-
ers, especially full around the feet, and the male had long, shiny feathers

on his back. They looked like prize winners at a state fair. As I bent over for a closer look, my sunglasses fell out of my pocket, and the rooster came right over to inspect them at my feet, so they seemed to be used to humans. I whipped out my camera for a few shots.

After admiring them for a minute more, I continued on my way, wondering if I should notify anyone about their presence on the Center.



Luckily, two young Baba-lovers were coming on foot toward the Sheriar Gate, so I pointed them toward the chickens and went on to Jerry's. There I had great fun watching people's jaws drop open when I said, "Guess what I saw on the Center?" and showed them the photos.

Later I heard the rest of the story. Dean N., one of the staff, recruited Joel M. (who happened to be sitting in the Refectory) to capture the fugitives, as Joel possessed chicken experience. When he arrived on the scene, he found a small crowd surrounding the pair with towels to corral or capture them, but no one

knew how. Not a problem for Joel: he grabbed them by the legs. At first, she ran away, but he chased her into the woods and snatched her up. Then he announced that he needed a pillowcase to stuff them into. It just so happened that Jeff W. was wearing a pillowcase on his head!

Now the question was where to put them. Joel said it was urgent to get them settled or else they might drop dead from the shock of being captured. Someone suggested the guest cabin known as the Coop, but it already had a featherless inhabitant. An even better idea was to use the cage-like device that had been built with fence wire as a raccoon-proof receptacle for the temporary storage of garbage. Joel attached a couple of broom handles with wire to serve as roosts. It was in this makeshift coop behind Lee's garage workshop that I saw the two chickens the next morning after following the sound of the rooster's crow. Dean was there to tell me that during the night raccoons had tried to dig their way to "Fanny and Freddy" (as Dean dubbed them)—without success, fortunately.

And now for the happy ending. The next day, the chickens were spirited away in a cat carrier, adopted by a pair of Baba-lovers who have a small chicken farm out in the country. They identified the birds as a Japanese breed and said they had long wanted exactly this type of chicken. The chickens are adapting nicely to the existing flock, which includes three Rhode Island red hens. It was described to me how, when the large

bowl of organic chicken feed from Pennsylvania is put down, the three red hens always rush right to it. But this time, they were pecked away by the white rooster. He sampled a little of the feed and then uttered some sounds to his girlfriend that evidently meant "It's OK, you can come over now." He selected a large morsel of corn and placed it on the ground for her to eat. (Awww...) Then she continued eating from the bowl.

The Baba-lover chicken farmer concluded this joyful tale of the two mischievous chickens by saying: "If this story isn't Baba's divine humor at its best, it's not out there!"

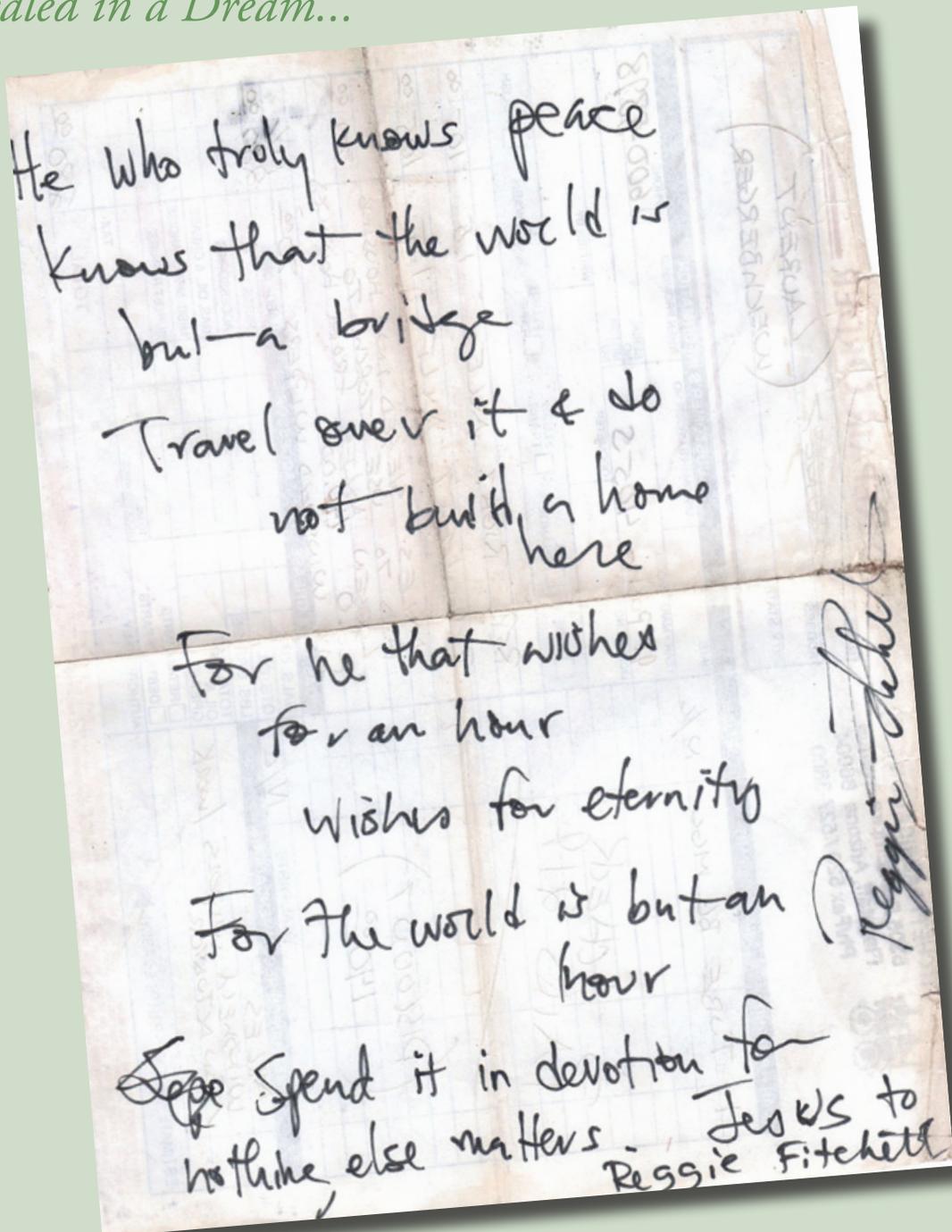
Incidentally, I wasn't the first person to spot the chickens. Susan White, who lives right next to the Center, had already discovered them and put food out for them and notified the Center. She told me that a few other people also laid claim to having seen them first. We agreed that seeing the chickens was very much like being "touched by an angel."

Notes: 1. *The Nothing and the Everything*, by Bhau Kalchuri, p. xi, Myrtle Beach: Manifestation, Inc.

*Author,
Kendra Crossen
Burroughs*



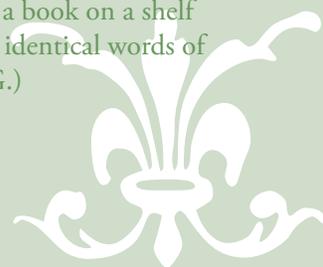
As revealed in a Dream...

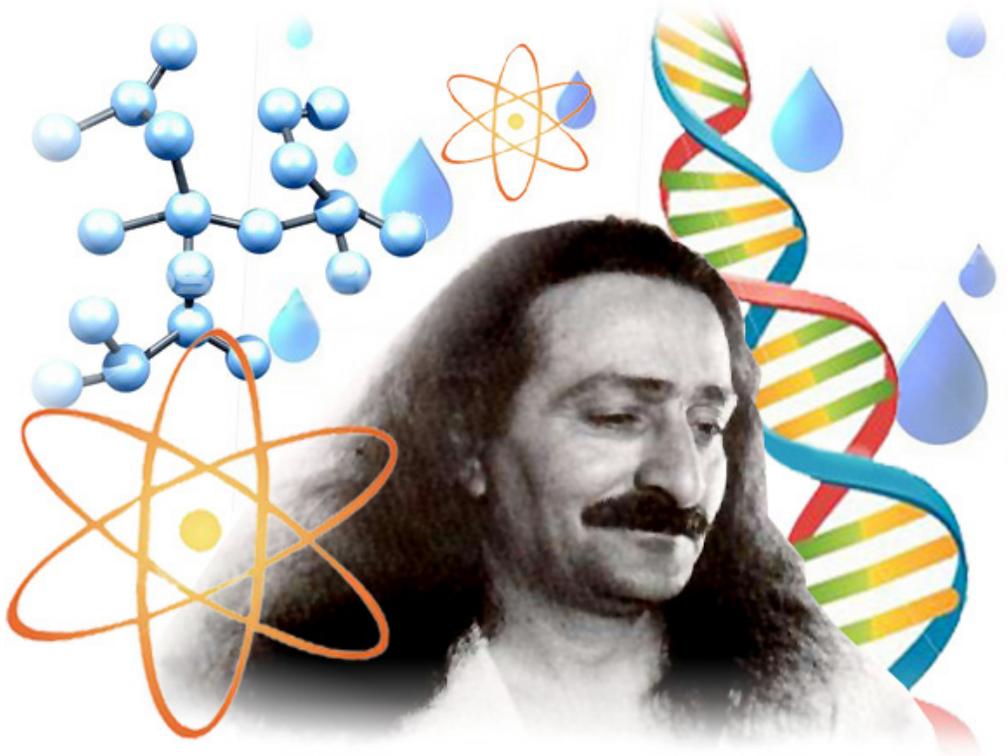


He who truly knows peace
knows that the world is
but—a bridge
Travel over it & do
not build a home
here
For he that wishes
for an hour
wishes for eternity
For the world is but an
hour
Jesus Spend it in devotion for
nothing else matters. Jesus to
Reggie Fitchett

“He who truly knows peace knows that the world is but a bridge. Travel over it and do not build a home here for he that wishes for an hour wishes for eternity for the world is but an hour. Spend it in devotion for nothing else matters.” —Jesus to R.F.

(The validity of these words were confirmed for Reggie when less than one month after the dream, a book on a shelf in a bookstore literally fell at his feet. Drawn to open *The Lost Years of Jesus Christ*, Reggie found the identical words of those which he received. He had never seen this book prior to this moment. —A.G.)





SOME THOUGHTS ON MEHER BABA & SCIENCE

by Robert Smith, Willow Grove, Pennsylvania, 2008

What wondrous times we live in. The genome has been cracked, the secrets of life are spilling out of test tubes here and there. A Q-Tip from the inside of your mouth will reveal your genetic ancestry, single molecules can be moved to create pictorial images, and scenes from the Samadhi can be web-streamed from across the world to your very own living room. Machines in the hospital can peer into your body, revealing illnesses; stellar images are transmitted from orbital telescopes, and people can communicate on a cellular phone half a world away.

Meher Baba said, “The *New Humanity*, which emerges from the travail of present struggle and suffering, will not ignore science or its practical attainments. It is a mistake to look upon science as anti-spiritual. Science is a help or hindrance to spirituality according to the use to which it is put. Just as true art expresses spirituality, so science, when properly handled, can be the expression and fulfillment of the spirit. Scientific truths concerning the physical body and its life in the gross world can become a medium for the soul to know itself; but to serve this purpose they must be properly fitted into the

larger spiritual understanding. This includes a steady perception of true and lasting values. In the absence of such spiritual understanding, scientific truths and attainments are liable to be used for mutual destruction and for a life which will tend to strengthen the chains which bind the spirit. All-sided progress of humanity can be assured only if science and religion proceed hand in hand.”¹

What is the peril of mind-centered research, or research conducted in the absence of spiritual understanding of true and lasting values? Without grounding in a firm values and ethics

framework, the scientist can become driven to acquire the truth, and obtain the scientific results regardless of the potential costs.

Scientific research is not for the meek or mild, for it exists only in a constant competitive atmosphere. Academic and industry research alike are constantly racing to be the first to discover, patent, and publish. The stakes involve scientific data, research funding, fame, fortune, group identity and nationalism. Infighting, back-biting, cut-throat politics and espionage are not unknown in the halls of academia and industry. Without a firm grounding of spiritual values, one could easily get swept away by the turbulent tides of acrimony and ego-binding.

Examples? In 2006, Korean scientists, in an attempt to produce a human clone, falsified data published in "Nature", and inserted embryos in at least 50 "test volunteers" in experiments declared ethically unsound. In the 1980's and early 90's, Soviet Union's bio-weapons program "BioPreparat" modified and weaponized smallpox virus as a bio-weapon. US government scientists exposed Army soldiers in hospitals to deadly levels of radiation without their knowledge to study the effects of radiation damage in the 1950's and 60's. Watson and Crick stole data from Roslin Franklin in their quest to elucidate the structure of DNA. I do not mean to imply that these characterize the entire scientific field, but they are listed as notable examples, or exceptions to the rule.

Books have been written about the frauds in science: those who falsify data and report it as truth. When uncovered, the deceit damages science in the public eye, results in countless hours and dollars lost in attempts to reproduce false data, and sets progress back as a whole. I once worked on an academic project only to discover that a colleague had falsified data that was the basis for the entire project. What a waste.

Not as a meaningless company stanza, observed but not followed, but a sincere spiritual understanding of how to honestly conduct science in a matter reflecting one's true self.

influx of researchers searching for signs of subtle energy, or use of scientific tools to probe the mental world. DNA unwinding is still a product of a protein complex, and not due to sanskaric interactions. Scientists won't be grappling with whether their research involves natural or unnatural sanskaras, or analyzing the interplay of karma between colonies of ants, and sociological studies of native tribes in distant places. God won't be called upon to solve problems, nor reached for as a scientific postulate either. The inability of science to answer spiritual questions will remain.

What will happen, then? An adoption, by the individual researcher, of a more balanced ethical and moral spiritual code of conduct. The lure of

even changing one data point will be quelled by a strong sense of right and wrong, even in the face of such Mayanic maelstroms of ambition, fame and fortune. As more people adopt this code, it would filter upward to become incorporated into government, corporate, and academic codes of conduct, adhered to by all practitioners of science. Not as a meaningless company stanza, observed but not followed, but a sincere spiritual understanding of how to honestly conduct science in a matter reflecting one's true self. Didn't Meher Baba prize honesty and integrity?

Science can take us so far in understanding our world, the amazing interconnectedness of life. Science has such transformative powers to help humanity. Let it become more so. In the last five years, methods of water purification, solar powered stoves and computers, and micro-economic financing have begun to sweep across AIDS-ravaged Africa. Pharmaceutical companies continue to invest in helping humanity: Merck pours money into HIV research, experimenting with vaccines and therapies, as well as donating medicine to fight river blindness. Groups like the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation are funding research diseases that big pharmaceuticals won't. To ignore the potential of scientific attainments to uplift humanity, on a physical level, out of poverty, sickness, and despair, is to ignore a cup of water offered to one thirsting in the desert.

Let us re-examine Baba's statement, "Just as true art expresses spirituality, so science, when properly handled, can be the expression and fulfill-

ment of the spirit. Scientific truths concerning the physical body and its life in the gross world can become a medium for the soul to know itself; but to serve this purpose they must be properly fitted into the larger spiritual understanding. This includes a steady perception of true and lasting values.”²

How can one contemplate such a fact that science could help the soul to know oneself? Because it is simply a facet of the reality, and the interconnectedness of the physical world with the spiritual world is a constant source of amazement.

Darwinian evolution so clearly mirrors the evolution of the soul in *God Speaks*³ that it takes my breath away. The knowledge that the soul is evolving through all the different forms that continue to physically evolve is astonishing. Just think of the sanskaras the dinosaurs must have wound, the Trilobites from ages past. A rampaging Tyrannosaurus-Rex, a motherly Maisaurus, a tree-eating Brontosaurus! The Big Bang is just a physical echo of the Whim manifesting the Illusion in the Oversoul’s initial effort to know Itself. The universe is still expanding, seemingly infinite.

We are truly all one in a scientific sense. Can you imagine that the same nucleotide sequences, A, T, G, and C made up the same DNA (although in a difference order of sequence) of the dinosaurs as it does for you and me? We shared the same amino acids that make up a variety of different proteins. On a fundamental level, the majority of the same house-keeping

genes that keep cells active, functional, and moving can be compared to the proteins in the yeast in our bread of our daily snacks.

Can you envision a water droplet, made of hundreds of water molecules, each bouncing around, faster and faster, each molecule separate from the other, but all the same drop? Or picture each atomic orbital of hydrogen and oxygen, spinning around each other, like little tiny dervishes? All that motion, that movement in a single cup of water or in the water vapor in the air you breathe?

These are examples of how a joining of the spiritual aspect of the physical world (that we understand how it has happened via science) leads to a harmonious acceptance of the world as it is. The intellect is stunned at the beauty of the scientific benchmarks of the world.

On a practical level, continuing research into nutrition and mental health allows us to better take care of our physical shells, nurse our emotional and mental aspects, and be in an optimal healthy state to deal with issues of the spirit. The adoption of medicine can lead one to continue a healthy life (post-antibiotic) instead of dying early of pneumonia. Service for others is encapsulated in the continuing production of scientific products to help humanity.



Definition of Science

What is science anyway? Let us clarify that science is the process of acquisition of knowledge, of the exploration of the unknown through circumstances that can be rationally tested, evaluated, and analyzed. A series of given observations produces a theory about how the world works. Utilizing this theory, one could correctly predict the given outcome of an experiment.

This is slightly different from the standard hypothesis centered textbook definition of the scientific process, as it incorporates messy reality. At the bench, sometimes scientists just watch and tinker. What happens

if we do this? If we do that? Ooh! Oops! Interesting. Cool. Gradually a theory emerges, which can then be rationally tested. Dogma can be ignored, made to stand on its head; exceptions are always found.

Amidst the clutter, there is always the observation, and the question, “What does this mean?” In the end, it is all scientifically meaningless if it can’t be tested and evaluated.

Einstein developed theories which were only proven over ten years later observing the panoramic laboratory of the universe.

The key is in the testability and definition of the field of interest. If one has a theory, can it be tested? Over the last ten years, acupuncture has been tested by proponents of alternative medicine and validated to the

Darwinian evolution so clearly mirrors the evolution of the soul in *God Speaks*, that it takes my breath away.

point that acupuncture treatment for certain ailments is currently covered by medical insurance companies in California.

Touch healing was disproven by a seventh grader's science project, in a simple reproducible experiment. This requirement of rational testing and observable outcomes separates science from spirituality and philosophy. One can not measure God. One cannot quantitatively measure the shade and length of a sanskara, the "resistivity" of an aura, or the weight of karma.

An analogy of science and scientists: A blacksmith takes a piece of metal bar, holds it in the fire, and begins to shape it with repeated blows of a sturdy hammer. Through knowledge, acquired both from education provided from his mentors, and personal experimentation, he can craft innumerable objects from that simple steel. Over time, a collected wisdom accumulates, and he learns that Damascus steel creates the finest, sharpest blades, Ireland ore creates the sturdiest steel for shield braces, and metal mined locally is best suited for shovels and horseshoes. The fire, when heated to this color, melts the bar quickly for molding, when heated to that color, softens the formed edges. Sand from the river, irregular in shape, pits the surface of the metal with curious designs, while sand from the coast smooths the surface. Does the farmer blame the blacksmith for

One cannot measure God. One cannot quantitatively measure the shade and length of a sanskara, the "resistivity" of an aura, or the weight of karma.

forging horseshoes when he looks at his crops trampled by the horse cavalry of an invading army? Does the prince's guard thank the blacksmith for crafting a sword which withstands the strongest blows from his adversary's weapon? The scientist is the blacksmith, learning about the physical world through his hammer of experimentation and investigation, crafting tools from his knowledge for other to use.

Science & Scientific Attainments:

The process of science should be distinguished from scientific attainments, which attainments usually include scientific products.

The discovery of radioactive isotopes, their properties and characteristics is basic research science, while the engineering of a container designed to bring two pieces of radioactive metal together (upon an arranged signal) to generate a nuclear fission reaction is applied science. The atomic bomb is an attainment of science, and not itself science. The design of a computer language to produce a visual image, and the development of a method of accessing a page of language (with said visual image) from another computer halfway across the world is science. The Internet and pages on the World Wide Web is an attainment of science.

There are many different types of science: Engineering science, computational science, physics, geology,

biology, the study of people, places, and things. Let us not confine ourselves to the media-saturated concept of science as a haven for genetically modified organisms, cloned sheep, and incredibly weird things. Reality is weird enough.

Western Perception of Science:

Science, in the Western⁴ mind, typically brings up images of the "Man in the white lab coat". The scientist is the intellectual equivalent of the Wall Street Corporation: morally bankrupt, driven to acquire the truth, obtain the scientific results regardless of the potential cost. A collection of images might include the maniacal scream of "It's Alive!"—the casualties of a bio-engineered plague in *The Stand*, killer dinosaurs unleashed in *Jurassic Park*, and tiny children in *Honey, I Shrunk the Kids*.

However, the concept of people selflessly collecting data and working together to produce a greater goal is quickly abandoned upon the first splash of reality in a functioning research environment. The ego thrives on the drive to publish the newest information first, the competition between rival laboratories, the self-aggrandizing and promotion in both industry and academia. Patents abound on genes, proteins, and animals. The question of "common intellectual property" is certainly debatable.

God for these scientists, doesn't exist, unless as a last minute plea for help. Historically, there is a basis for this perception, with Dr. Mengleson in the death camps in Nazi Germany,

the Tuskegee Syphilis experiments, and the radioactivity dosing experiments during World War II. Fortunately standards have been placed for ethical treatment of human subjects to attempt to prevent such travesties of justice.

As an actual scientist, submerged in the scientific world, I can say the public perception is far, far from the truth. There are the “bad apples,” the scientists who falsify data on human cloning, willingly modify results, or just plain make them up. But for the most part, costs are weighed, and people do make moral decisions.

Notes:

1. From *Discourses* (6th edition), by Meher Baba, (Volume 1, p.19-20).
2. Ibid.
3. *God Speaks*, by Meher Baba (Sufism Reoriented): ISBN 978-0-915828-02-9.
4. As opposed to the Eastern (or Oriental) viewpoint.

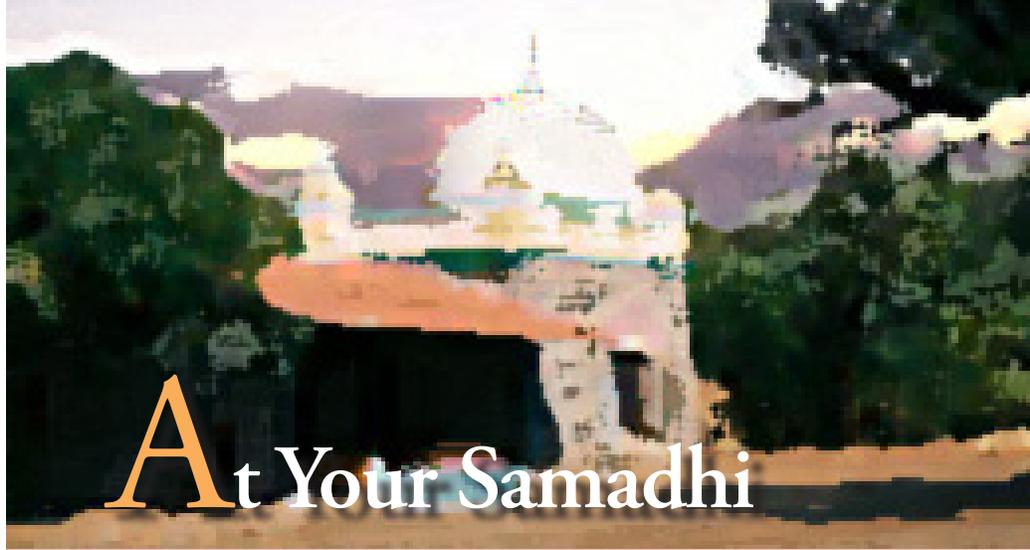


Author Robby Smith lives in Willow Grove, Pennsylvania, with his beautiful family including wife Rose, and their four children.



If there is a God, and I'm the wrong religion, he's not going to punish me and send me to Hell for being the wrong religion. And I don't know what is the right religion.

B.K.



At Your Samadhi

As Your hair flows wild in the billowing wind
And Your tender dark eyes look deep into mine,
I feel You know exactly what troubles my mind
And You'll give my soul the perfect timed sign.

I sit in Your sahasras, Your love's warmth envelops,
Like arms that create waves of love's effervescence,
With the sense I can not push how quickly I develop;
Your hands will hold and keep me in Your presence.

Your smile is sweet as You express the all-knowing,
And watch my little foibles play out their silly game.
How can I imagine the sheer depths of Your loving
When I merely remember to repeat Your lovely name?

Love is the ocean that can sweep away all one's fear,
And carry us in a direction that we may not understand,
But as You are the Captain, to take my life and steer
What right have I to question a destination unplanned?

By You, in the heat I sit and await Your final answer
Well aware Your wish must be the over-ruling will
But as the sun beats down; so away drips the pressure.
I'm here to quench the thirst and drink of You my fill.

No one can fathom the glory of what He's giving,
He opens our hearts that His nectar we may taste.
Such Bliss is unimagined but sustains our living
In the world we dip in for rare sips we cannot waste.

It's His grace that I'm writing these words of inner joy,
At peace in His Nazar with calmness I've never known,
Drinking in silence gulps of music that will never cloy
He's the core of my being, and the love that has grown.

I feel so little in His palm as tears of closeness start to well,
But He burns right through my soul, so intentions just dissolve.
When my closed eyes look within I linger in His sacred spell
And hold tight to Him, whatever, with blessings of His resolve.

Poem by Kokila Mino-nahab Gillett



This Odd Behaviour

by Sara McNeill, Brighton, England

At this stage
Seeing how far there is to go,
And knowing by now the utter helplessness
Of hopelessness,
I shout aloud the words of your merry song;
Inviting all calamities and difficulties,
And along the road
Hear other voices raised singing:

*“Let despair and disappointment
Ravage and destroy the garden of your life.”*

Together we carouse:

*“Brotherliness is the link
And the common enjoyment of suffering.”**

I share this odd behaviour
With strangers who, though unknown to me
Are known to me.

It is the age of Aquarius
And You have changed the water into wine
And us into drunks.
As drinking partners we sing your merry song
Of mad happiness,
Staggering along on drunken legs
Endeavouring to walk straight,
Holding on to each other for dear life,
Not trying to drown our sorrows Lord,
Just striving to lose ourselves completely
And find You now,
For who can bear the thought of
Another seven hundred years?

* The Song of the New Life – Meher Baba



Poetry

for me is a way of

recording life's journey, not a deliberate artistic creation. I never set out to write a poem. Rather a poem "comes to me" in some manner, and then I write it down, with lesser or greater effort to make it express the feeling that prompted it. I was not at all inclined in a literary or artistic direction as a young person, being quite absorbed in science and mathematics. Then around the age of 40, I experienced a kind of spiritual opening, becoming exposed to a whole range of experiences, thinking and feeling. A series of circumstances combined, including joining a Unitarian-Universalist church, attending a "liberation week" retreat, reading the book *The Turning Point* by Fritjof Capra, participating in sound healing circles, doing Zen meditation, and being introduced by a friend to the writings of Krishnamurti and hearing him speak. Accompanying this was an outpouring of poetry, which continued over the years, though at a lesser rate. Poetry for me is about connection, and if it helps in nurturing spiritual friendships, I am content.



tion, and being introduced by him speak. Accompanying this the years, though at a lesser rate. nurturing spiritual friendships,

Most recently my wife, Shona, and I have been attending the Center of Light in Charlotte. They seem to me to

by
Bob Oberg

be somewhat Catholic in some respects, with emphasis on Mother Mary as well as on Jesus. They have a monthly peace meditation. At the first one we attended the blessing I asked for was change in US policy in Afghanistan to not target civilians. (There seems to have been some progress on this front since then.) Shona had a visualization of a large Mother Mary blessing the earth. That image inspired the poem "Mother of Peace", and a little later the poem "A Prayer" came.

MOTHER OF PEACE

The Divine Mother stands tall and serene
She bestrides our war-torn earth
Looking down with infinite tenderness
Softly she sings a gentle lullaby
Rest my children, lay down your arms
Life is precious, you are precious, my darlings
Do not kill your brothers and sisters
You are all my children, every one
Your hearts beat with my own
Peace is my gift to you.



T HE NEW AGE

In the fullness of time, Lord
Let it be, Let it be
In the fullness of life, Lord
Let it be, Let it be.

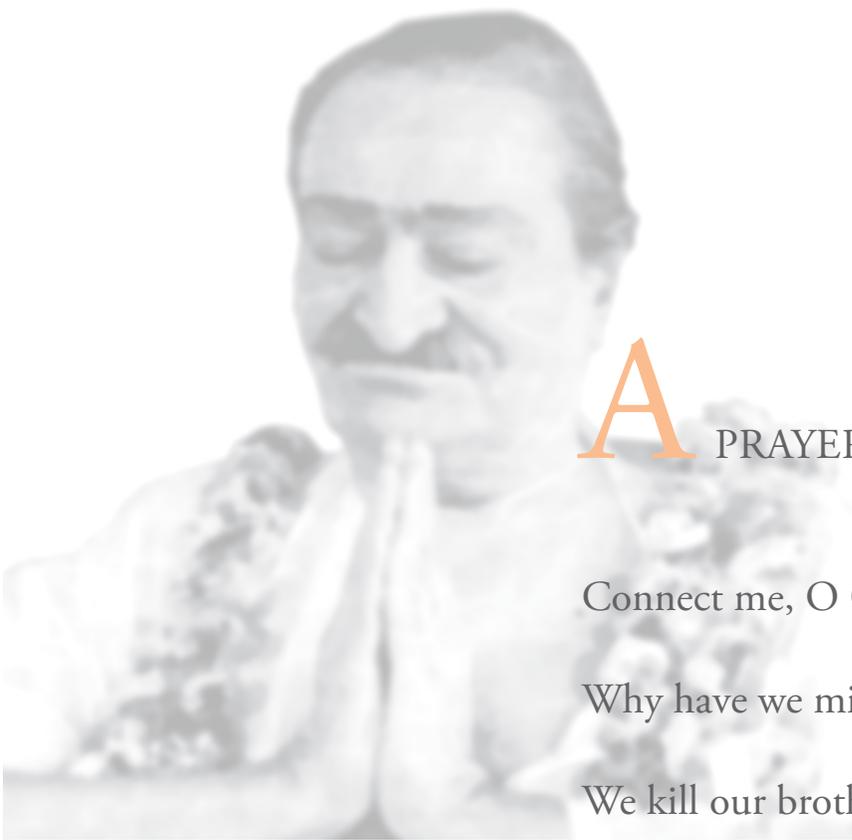
When Truth feels that its moment
Has come upon the land
When Love is at its fullest
And lets us all understand.

In the fullness of time, Lord
Let it be, Let it be
In the fullness of life, Lord
Let it be, Let it be.

When the Earth hears us listen
To the Stillness that lies within
Then Peace will guide our awareness
And bring the New Age in.

In the fullness of time, Lord
Let it be, Let it be
In the fullness of life, Lord
Let it be, Let it be.





A PRAYER

Connect me, O God, to the suffering of your children

Why have we misused your abundance?

We kill our brothers and sisters

We despoil and poison the very earth itself

Encased in our ego shells we live our tawdry lives

What will bring repentance?

What will touch me, move me, change me?

What will open the door?

Tell me, please.



YOU

The miracle that is you ...

You give your love
You give your truth
You give all you know how to give
(And that's a lot.)

You show us all how we are to live
How to sing
How to create
Beautiful things.

The color, the life
The sound, the light
It's all the same
It's the miracle of you.



LIGHTNING IN THE DARK

Lightning flashes in a darkened sky
And is gone again
The sky remains, ready for another flash.

Listen! to your soul's song
What you hear, you have heard before
The flash is new—no repeated refrain
Yet you recognize it at once, as an old friend.

Listen! to a song of our planet
Despairing voices in a dying world?
The Dark is there truly.

But another wind blows upon the waters
A wind, a breath, a death...
In dying there is life.

Listen! to the quickening spirit
That moves upon our land
We are ready to understand
Circles are forming, linking hand in hand
We are seeking to be one ...
God's will surely shall be done!

The Transformation takes but an instant
Listen! to your heart
Be ready to do your part.



LORD SHIVA & KABBALAH MEHER BABA

by Laurent Weichberger and Xia Neifion-Clark, Flagstaff, May 2009

In January of this year, I started to really contemplate Lord Shiva, one of the trinity of the great Hindu faith. Of course, in Hindu spirituality, there are countless gods, and at the same time Hindus acknowledge a hierarchy where the Lords Brahma, Vishnu and Shiva reside at the uppermost aspect of the Divine, beyond even the Creation.

**BUT WHO IS SHIVA,
OR WHAT ASPECT OF
THE DIVINE IS
REPRESENTED BY SHIVA?**

It so happened that I have been living with not one, but two statues of Lord Shiva: one a statue of Parvati and Shiva that my wife Lilly gave me for my birthday, and another which my dear spiritual brother Kelly McCabe just gave me, so lovingly, which sits behind me as I work in my office. In any case, consciously or unconsciously, Shiva has been very present with me more and more over the years. But who is Shiva, or what aspect of the Divine is represented by Shiva?

These questions and more I have started to explore with a few close spiritual companions, such as Joni Haug, and Xia Neifion-Clark. In addition, I have been reading material from Meher Baba, as well as the books: *The Heart of Awareness* (a translation of the Ashtavarka Gita), by Thomas Byrom, and *Kabbalah, The Way of the Jewish Mystic*, by Perle Epstein. What I have discovered from these mystical conversations, and writing, and my own contemplation is that essentially all faiths have this Shiva





aspect, which can be described as the “Destroyer, or Dissolver,” or that aspect of God which brings disillusionment.

While writing this article three things happened in short sequence that reminded me of Shiva’s presence, with which I still obviously struggle. First, the Air France’s flight 447, a relatively new jet that went down over the Atlantic Ocean with over two hundred souls on board, including many children and one baby. The flight began in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, and was heading to Paris when it just vanished—an unimaginable loss. Then, our next door neighbor, Jimmy Martin (a young college student) overdosed on drugs and died. Lastly, our backyard has had a couple of small finches nesting in a birdhouse we put up in a tree years ago, and lately their fledgling chicks have been chirping loudly as the food the parents bring back is doled out. Yesterday, our cat Lavender took it upon herself to empty the bird house of all inhabitants. I was sad. I took the bird house down from the tree, and burned it in our outdoor fire-brazier. How can these things be allowed to happen? I was guilty of not doing more to protect the bird house from our cat. I intended to put some type of shield around the tree trunk for this purpose, but Lavender got up the tree before I got around to creating this home-made contraption. What could anyone have done better or differently with an overdose situation, or an intercontinental airline flight?

ESSENTIALLY ALL FAITHS HAVE THIS SHIVA ASPECT, WHICH CAN BE DESCRIBED AS THE “DESTROYER, OR DISSOLVER,” OR THAT ASPECT OF GOD WHICH BRINGS DISILLUSIONMENT.

Rather than try to describe any further, in this little preface, what I have just begun to discover about Shiva, I would like to share four things with you directly, in the following order:

1. A chat room conversation I had with Xia on Facebook, about Lord Shiva, which she has graciously permitted me to share.
2. A quote from the Kabbalistic teaching found in my beautiful Epstein book which to me reflects perfectly the Shaivite tradition.
3. A section of *The Heart of Awareness*, entitled simply, “I am Shiva”.
4. Quotes from Meher Baba’s messages *The Final Declaration*, and the follow up messages, *The Clarification*, *Confirmation*, and *Final Decision*, which I feel inspired to share because of their relevance to Lord Shiva.

Xia (X) and Laurent’s (L) chat about Lord Shiva on January 27, 2009 (edited for readability):

X: How was your hike in Sedona?

L: Fantastic. I took the opportunity to contemplate Lord Shiva.

X: Lord Shiva—Awesome. Isn’t there a rock in Sedona named Shiva? Or is that the Grand Canyon?

L: No, Lord Shiva is an aspect of God.



X: ... I just didn't know if you were visiting Shiva, the rock, and that's why you contemplated Shiva, the Universal aspect. I'm continually in the process of unfolding new states of Awareness, so I don't particularly feel that I am in any specific process right now, that is different than my normal...

L: I was just sitting on a bench with my daughter, in the sun, and I was contemplating Lord Shiva... would love to run that by you, my contemplation that is...

X: Please do.

L: Okay, lets do it. How much do you already know about Shiva?

X: I am familiar

L: Okay. Meher Baba explained that Shiva is an aspect of the One God. There is no duality in Reality. It is all One. But there are states of God (apparently). This is all according to Baba, yes?

X: I have the same belief, yes.

L: Yes. good.

X: Yes.

L: These states of God, are somewhat fascinating as they unfolded, or emerged from an original state called by Baba, "The Beyond-Beyond" state of God.

X: Yes, very similiar to QBLH (Kabbalah).

L: He said any attempt to explain that original state of God fails, and results in an explanation not of that original state, but of the second state, "The Beyond" state of God. The Beyond state is God the Father of Jews and Christians, Allah of Muslims and Paramatma of Hindus, or the Oversoul of some philosophers. Yes? QBLH is the same yes.

X: Yes exactly.

L: So, after The Beyond came yet another state, that Baba calls Ishwar, or broken down further, Brahma (Creator), Vishnu (Preserver) and Mahesh or Shiva (Destroyer). There are also corresponding Archangels in Baba's cosmology. He uses Persian names for the Archangels:

X: Understood. Nice!

L: Israfeel (the angel who creates life); Mikael (the angel who sustains life); and Izrael (the angel who destroys life). So the three divine states are expressed by the arch-angels. I had a dream with Baba and one of his angels, and it blew my hair back. Anyway. I need to do more research, but my contemplating was going in an intuitive direction, like this: All those states, Brahma, Vishnu, and Shiva, are natural. There is no effort involved, to the point where the Creating, Preserving and Destroying are not even conscious. There is not a Brahma with a visor and a lamp and a desk creating. There is a primal natural divine creative force at work, always.

ALL THOSE STATES,
BRAHMA, VISHNU, AND
SHIVA, ARE NATURAL.
THERE IS NO EFFORT
INVOLVED, TO THE POINT
WHERE THE CREATING,
PRESERVING AND DESTROY-
ING ARE NOT EVEN
CONSCIOUS.



*Shiva at Mt. Kailash, Tibet,
where, according to legend,
Shiva lived.*

X: Yes

L: See? So, what then is Lord Shiva? That is the force that Destroys, constantly, and naturally, unconsciously. What then is being destroyed, and when? Your turn, LOL. Whew.

X: I would correspond Lord Shiva to the catabolic force... continually breaking down parts... for easier digestion/usage... also for the purpose of not allowing any form to crystallize... in Tarot this would be linked to the Tower... also to the letter Peh... where we build up forms and treat them highly, but really they are not getting us closer to the ONE, like we perceive a tower might... but are deluding us and keeping us from perceiving the ONE... we need Shiva, the destroyer, to break down our falsehoods rooted in the material... instead of in the ONE

L: That last sentence of yours is the key, yes.

L: Because, according to Baba (again not my experience but certainly my belief), there is only God. There is not God and... there is only God. Therefore, anything that is not God cannot be real. It is false, it is illusion, a creation of Maya (more about that later).

So what is there for God to destroy if all is God? The falsity itself, well, if it is illusion, and not real, there is not a need to destroy that. But then our perceptions and attachments, or another way, our wants, desires, cravings, our belief that it is real, and that we need it. So, what I got was that Lord Shiva destroys anything and everything that is not being created by Brahma or currently being sustained (preserved) by Vishnu. The angels are part of the creating and preserving, but then it gets complex, because so are we. Why?

X: Because we are in the image of God, and a part of God and perhaps mirror God's complexity (which of course would be perfectly refined into absolute simplicity)

L: Yes and more

X: yes, that's what I just said to myself... "and more"

L: Baba states that once we realize that we are in fact identical to God, not just an image, but really are that, we find that the Angels and Archangels exist in us, as divine aspects of our own true nature. So it is not an externalized separateness, but a realized Oneness. Then Lord Shiva is in us, as an aspect of our own divine nature. Whew. Your turn.

X: I agree with that... realizing we are in the image is the first step to realizing we are... I love that he uses Persian names for the Archangels.

L: Me2. Yes, it is all steps. Baba says there are 49 distinct steps to God. But that is his numerology LOL. It has to do with consciousness and planes of consciousness

X: interesting...

L: Yeah. That is all I got about Shiva.

✧

It is plain to me that the essence of Kabbalah is identical to the essence of Hindu mysticism, and other types of mysticism. I found this dramatically portrayed in the *Kabbalah* as revealed to the Hasidim, a sect of Jewish Mystics, as found in Epstein (p.121):

“Like the Lurianic* Kaballists, the Hasidim were very taken with the idea of man as God’s necessary helpmate. Since the Absolute had constricted itself for man’s sake, it was obligatory for man to purify the entire material world so that the light of the En Sof** could again radiate without the obstructions cast by illusion. The Hasid never doubted that his separation from God was illusory, nor that his role in life consisted in stripping away the illusion. The ecstatic experience itself became his weapon for penetrating the barrier between his bodily and spiritual selves; mohin degadlut (expanded consciousness) was his vehicle to God.”

* Followers of *Kabbalah* Master Isaac Luria.** En Sof = The Infinite



An excerpt from “I am Shiva” found in *The Heart of Awareness* (pp 74-75):

3

I am fulfilled.
 The elements of nature,
 The body and the senses,
 What are they to me?
 Or the mind?
 What is emptiness or despair?
 What are holy books,
 Or knowledge of the Self,
 Or the mind,
 Even when it is free of the senses?
 Or happiness,
 Or freedom from desire?
 I am always
 One without two.
 Knowledge or ignorance,
 Freedom or bondage,
 What are they?
 What is “I,”
 Or “mine,”
 Or “this”?
 Or the true form of the Self?
 I am always one.

What do I care for freedom
 In life or in death,
 Or for my present karma?
 I am always
 Without I.
 So where is the one
 Who acts or enjoys?
 And what is the rising
 Or the vanishing of thought?
 What is the invisible world,
 Or the visible?
 In my heart I am one.
 What is this world?
 Who seeks freedom
 Or wisdom or oneness?
 Who is bound or free?
 In my heart I am one.
 What is creation or dissolution?
 What is seeking,
 And the end of seeking?
 Who is the seeker?
 And what is found?



Title page of First Edition of Zohar, Mantua of 1558: considered the main foundational text for Kabbalistic thought.



I felt intuitively guided to add excerpts from these four spiritually important messages from Meher Baba:

From *The Final Declaration*, on September 30TH, 1954 (see *Lord Meher*, p.4546 at: www.lordmeher.org/index.jsp?pageBase=page.jsp&nextPage=4546):

[I start quoting after the message has started]

“...For man to have a glimpse of lasting happiness, he has first to realize that God, being in all, knows all; that God alone acts and reacts through all; that God, in the guise of countless animate and inanimate entities, experiences the innumerable varied phenomena of suffering and happiness. Thus, it is God who has brought suffering in human experience to its height, and God alone who will efface this illusory suffering and bring the illusory happiness to its height.

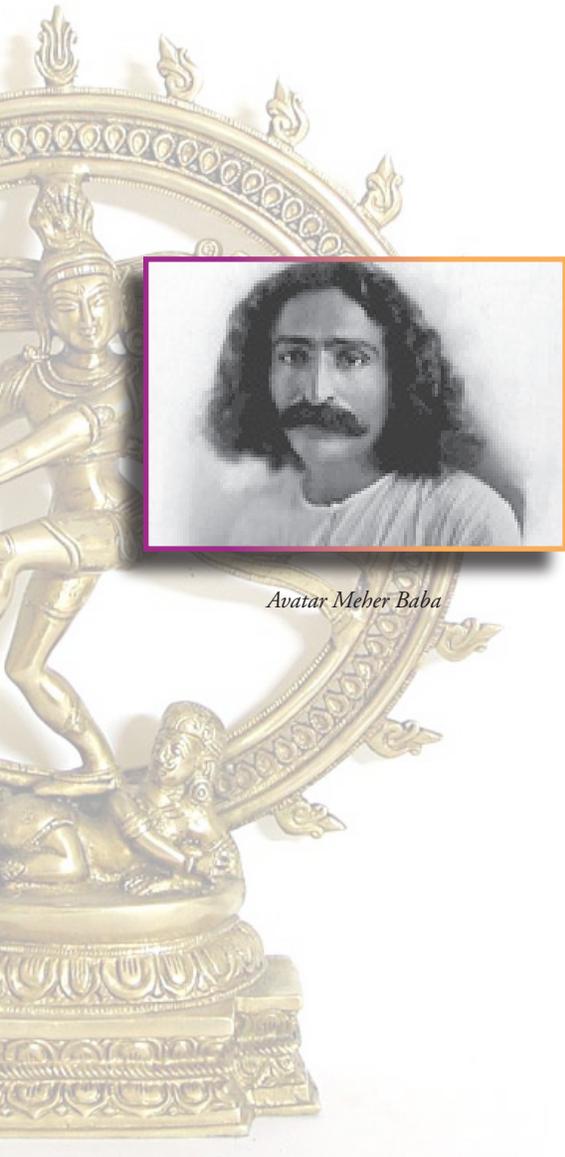
“Whether it manifests as creation or disappears into Oneness of Reality, whether it is experienced as existing and real, or is perceived to be false and nonexistent, illusion throughout is illusion. There is no end to it, just as there is no end to imagination.

“There are two aspects experienced in illusion—manyness and oneness. While manyness multiplies manyness, oneness goes on magnifying itself. Manyness is the ‘religion’ of illusion on which illusion thrives.

4 “In the illusory beginning of Time, there was no such state of mess in illusion as there is today. When the evolution of consciousness began, there was oneness, in spite of the diversity in illusion. With the growth of consciousness, manyness also went on increasing, until now it is about to overlap the limit. Like the wave that reaches its crest, this height of manyness will dissolve itself and bring about the beginning of oneness in illusion. Suffering at its height will cause the destruction of this climax of manyness in illusion.

“The time has come for the preordained destruction of multiple separate-ness which keeps man from experiencing the feeling of unity and brotherhood...To affirm religious faiths, to establish societies, or to hold conferences will never bring about the feeling of unity and oneness in the life of mankind, now completely absorbed in the manyness of illusion. Unity in the midst of diversity can be made to be felt only by touching the very core of the heart. This is the work for which I have come.” [Message continues.]

From the *Clarification of the Final Declaration*, in a circular dated November 20TH, 1954 (see *Lord Meher*, p. 4585 at: www.lordmeher.org/index.jsp?pageBase=page.jsp&nextPage=4585):



“It is really very difficult for anyone to believe and understand what I say, because no one can grasp the meaning underlying my words. It is natural, even for my intimate mandali, not to understand my Final Declaration. But I want you to take everything that I said in Meherabad during the meetings very seriously, because all that I said was the truth; they were words of God, and all the things said must come to pass exactly in the manner described by me.

“From the day I declared in Meherabad that there will be the destruction of three-fourths of the world, that a strange disease will attack my body, that I will suffer humiliation, that I will break my silence and speak One Word, the Word of words, that there will be my glorification, and that finally I will drop my body when I shall be stabbed in the back, my lovers and others have been trying to interpret my words in different ways.

“Everyone is free to interpret my words in any way he thinks and feels. But one thing I tell you, whenever I say a thing, I naturally use my own ‘language,’ and whatsoever is said by me is Truth. But my ‘language’ is such that no one can understand or grasp the underlying meaning of what I say. Therefore, when I want to say a thing, I have simultaneously to make use of your language also, knowing well that you would understand nothing whatsoever if I were to make use of my language alone.

“In order to help you to understand my Final Declaration and to put an end to your confusion and worry, I want all of you to know that when you saw me dictate on my alphabet board during the meetings at Meherabad and heard about—

1. A strange disease attacking my body: it was said in your language.
2. The humiliation that I will suffer: it was said in your language.
3. The breaking of my silence and uttering the one Word of words: it was said in my own language and simultaneously in yours, because when I utter that Word, it will be an audible word to you.
4. My glorification: it was said simultaneously in my language & yours.
5. The destruction of three-fourths of the world: it was said in my own language alone.
6. The stab in my back: it was said in my own language alone.
7. The dropping of my body: it was said in my own language and simultaneously in yours.

“Consequently, whatever is said by me in your language, you are able to understand and know what is said; but that which is said in ‘my own language’ is impossible for you to understand, however much you all may try to interpret and grasp the underlying meaning behind my words. Only the fulfillment of events can unfold to you, in due course, the meaning of what is said in my own language....” [Message continues.]



The *Confirmation of the Final Declaration* on February 3RD, 1955 (From *Lord Meher*, p. 4594 at: www.lordmeher.org/index.jsp?pageBase=page.jsp&nextPage=4594):

[Message starts before I start quoting] “...Each and all things as intimated, declared and clarified by me are all fixed and ordained facts, and God will see that everything happens and is done as foreordained by Him...” [Message continues.]

Then lastly, from *The Final Decision*, (which was issued as a circular on Sunday, April 10TH, 1955), from Meher Baba:

“This universe has come out of God. God has not come out of the universe. Illusion has come out of Reality. Reality has not come out of illusion. God alone is Real; the universe by itself is illusion.

“God’s Life lived in illusion, as the Avatar and as Perfect Masters, is not illusory, whereas God’s Life lived in creation, as all animate and inanimate beings, is both real and illusory. Illusion, illusory life and God’s Life in illusion are not and cannot be one and the same. Illusion has no life and can have no life. Illusion is illusion, and is nothing by itself. Illusory life means life in illusion, and though it is life, as experienced by the Soul in creation, it is illusory life. But God’s Life lived in illusion is not illusory because, in spite of living the illusory life, God remains conscious of His own Reality.

**...WHATEVER IS SAID BY
ME IN YOUR LANGUAGE, YOU
ARE ABLE TO UNDERSTAND
AND KNOW WHAT IS SAID;
BUT THAT WHICH IS SAID IN
“MY OWN LANGUAGE”
IS IMPOSSIBLE FOR YOU TO
UNDERSTAND...**

“God is absolutely independent, and the universe is entirely dependent upon God. Yet when the Perfect Masters effect the ‘descent’ of God on earth as the Avatar, they make Reality and illusion interdependent, each upon the other. And thus it is that His Infinite Mercy and Unbounded Love are eternally drawn upon by those who are immersed in illusion.

“Between God and the universe, Infinite Mercy and Unbounded Love act as a prominent link which is eternally made use of by men who become God (Sadgurus, Perfect Masters or Qutubs), and by God Who becomes Man (Avatar, the Christ, the Rasool); so the universe becomes the eternal playmate of God. Through this prominent link, the Avatar not only established life in his Divine Play, but also established Law in illusion. And this Law being established by the God-Man or Avatar is the Law of the lawless Infinite, and it is eternally real and at the same time illusory. It is this Law that governs the universe; all its ups and downs, construction and devastation are guided by this Law.



Shiva

“At this cyclic period, God’s independent Absoluteness is made to work upon this Law by the God-Man as God’s Will. This means that anything and everything that the Avatar wills is ordained by God. Consequently, all that I stated in the Final Declaration and Confirmation is ordained by God, and must and will happen.

“I was in Khuldabad for nearly a week from the 22ND of March. There, night and day, I did my work most intensively. The intensity of my spiritual work caused great pressure on my physical body and mind, and it was there that I decided that all that I had declared in my Final Declaration must come to pass exactly in the same sequence and with the same intensity of effect, but with modification in the time factor. Therefore, with change in the time limit, the intensity, scope, shape and size of the chain of events will take place without any moderation whatsoever, to bring into effect the destined plan.

“In the meantime, mankind must await, as it must according to my Final Decision, the witnessing of all that is to come to pass as ordained by God. This is the time when man must love God more and more. Let him live for God and let him die for God. In all his thoughts, in all his words and in all his actions, love for God alone must prevail.”



FORGIVENESS *at* AHMEDNAGAR

Adi K. Irani was one of Beloved Meher Baba’s foremost men Mandali, coming into Baba’s circle during the early 1920s in Pune and Ahmednagar. His family was of the Zoroastrian faith before coming to know Baba.

Bhau Kalchuri writes in Lord Meher: During 1945, Adi’s father, Khan Saheb Irani, had been ill and bedridden for the past several months. Baba went to see him at his home in Khushru Quarters, Ahmednagar, on September 19TH. Khan Saheb had always had great reverence for Baba, but no love. Now, much to his wife Gulmai’s delight, he genuinely felt drawn to Baba.

Baba asked him, “What do you wish for?” “Good health for two months and, thereafter, liberation,” he said. Baba promised: “Do as I say for two months, and I will definitely fulfill your wish.”

Baba gave him some instructions regarding personal matters, and Khan Saheb was happy. He garlanded Baba, and a photograph was taken of Baba, Gulmai and Khan Saheb. Before leaving, Baba took Adi and Gulmai aside and remarked, “He will be relieved of his agonies in October.”

This was to be Khan Saheb’s last meeting with Baba, and his last wish was fulfilled by Baba. He merged in God’s infinity eighteen days later on Sunday, October 7TH, 1945, at noon, with Baba’s name on his lips.

A few days before Khan Saheb died, Adi was surprised to find flowers strewn on his bed when he went to sleep at night. The next night again, his bed was covered with flowers. When the third night he waited and caught one of the servants in the act, he demanded to know who had instructed him do such a thing. The servant told him that it was none other than the ailing Khan Saheb.

Adi confronted his father the following morning and Khan Saheb admitted that he did it. “But why?” asked Adi. “All these years,” said Khan Saheb, “you had been telling me how great Meher Baba is—how he is like Zarathustra, our Prophet. I did not believe you and tried to thwart you in your efforts to serve him. But now I know that you were right all along, and I ask your forgiveness. I honor and worship your love for Baba. You were right, Adi. Meher Baba is God!” And his father folded his hands to a picture of Baba kept on the wall opposite his bed. Adi burst out weeping and fell into his father’s arms.

Note: From *Lord Meher*, by V.S. Bhau Kalchuri, Volume 9, page 3063.

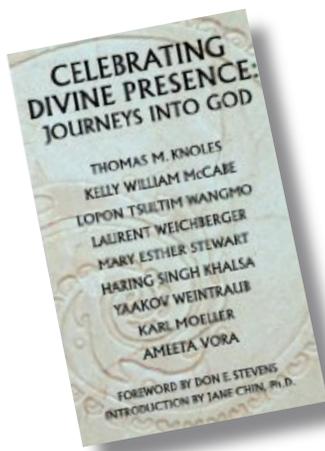


BOOK ॐ REVIEWS

Celebrating Divine Presence: Journeys into God

Compiled & Edited by Laurent Weichberger

Review from Sarah McNeill, Brighton, England, April 2009



It is a wonderful read! Laurent Weichberger, the book’s compiler and editor, authors chapters on ancient mysticism and mysticism today and gives an account of how Meher Baba became the focus of his own life. These chapters offer a breadth of well researched detail and provide the reader with an invaluable starting point for the rest of the book which presents a clear picture of how Avatar Meher Baba is the culmination of millennia of continuous spiritual development. For a reader seeking to understand other

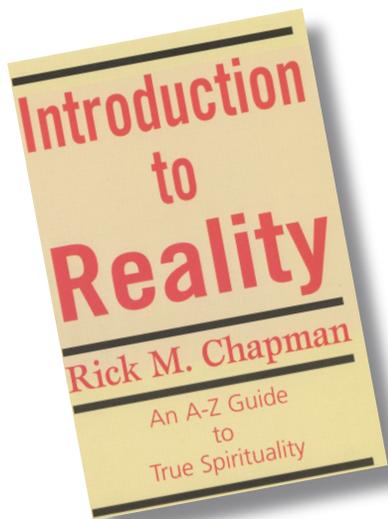
faiths, the book presents outstanding testimonies from Sufi (Karl Moeller), Vedanta (Thomas M. Knoles), Jain (Ameeta Vora), and Jewish (Yaakov Weintraub) adherents. Other writers describe their lives and their spiritual journeys as Buddhist, Sikh, Christian and Hindu celebrants.

Each chapter is written in an uncluttered style, free from theological dialectic. As a reader I felt I’d been able to learn a great deal. In his end chapter on Modern Mysticism, Weichberger writes: “That Beads on One String analogy is very potent because the string is the Truth that runs through each bead... If you look at the bead, somebody may say, ‘No, no, this bead is orange, that one’s red, this one’s square, that one’s round.’ But

the string that goes through the core of the bead is the Truth. So if you look beyond the surface, you find the same Truth inside the bead. I experience that Truth as Meher Baba.”

It seems to me that this book is especially important because it is so relevant to the whole interfaith movement now starting to gather impetus all round the world – surely evidence of the Avatar’s stated aim slowly becoming a reality. By making the book available on Amazon the author ensures that a wider, general readership can be reached, and in this way, Meher Baba’s specific role will certainly come to the attention of people who may not have heard about Him.





Introduction To Reality: An A-Z Guide to True Spirituality

by Rick M. Chapman

Review from Laurent Weichberger, Flagstaff, AZ, September 2009

A Google search for “A-Z Guide” yields over a million results, guiding you in every subject from “Recycling” to “How to grow organic food.” For those who are entering the spiritual path, what could be better than a guide to “true spirituality.” Rick Chapman traveled and studied on a Fulbright grant in India after he graduated from Harvard College in 1966, and it was at that time that he met Meher Baba. This book is actually three books in one, as Chapman deftly moves from one spiritually important subject to another, and provides three levels of understanding to those in need:

1. His own hard won wisdom is shared very personally and in a unique style which immediately draws the reader in, the way a pipe smoking Gandalf would slowly draw on his pipe and when ready, expound on exactly what the fellowship around him needs to hear.
2. The wisdom he has gathered from others on his spiritual journey, with sharing about great Masters, such as Milarepa, Ramakrishna, and Hafiz, to name just a few. We quickly find that Rick has been around the spiritual block many

times, and is capable of saving us a lot of research. In fact, he lays out a scrumptious smorgasbord of just what a real seeker needs in the way of nourishment at base camp.

3. For those already familiar with the ways of the Masters, the voice of God speaking can clearly be heard in these pages.

A great example of Rick’s personal shared wisdom is from the chapter “Intuition” in which he writes, “Once you sort out that intuition is not just ‘that great idea’ or a vague notion or feeling, you will make friends with it in the same way you make friends in everyday life. Listen to it; listen for it.” There is a positive & powerful force coming through Chapman that cannot be denied, although some may find it hard to digest. As Rick himself suggests in the chapter, “Narnia, The Land of,” the sincere seeker has discovered, “A steady diet of ‘heavy’ reading & the constant effort of your quest can eventually give you a case of spiritual indigestion.” This book is not heavy reading, it is condensed understanding delivered in short, easily consumable portions. The longest of the “chapters” is six pages, on “Consciousness, Planes of,” and the shortest is much shorter than that. What Rick accomplishes with this guide is to touch upon most (if not all) of the things that any spiritual seeker contemplates, or should contemplate on the way to Oneness.

The “manyness” between here and there is daunting, and Rick obviously feels that he knows the way, or at least has met the Way enough to introduce that way to others. Along the way, he has experienced enough of the way to warn, encourage, laugh and of course cry about the many choices we have in the spiritual life.

This is the type of book that those on their spiritual path for decades give as a gift to someone new to spirituality to set the stage for an in depth conversations. For those already established on their way, it is a giant confirmation of all that is held near and dear. No doubt, some will be ruffled by the intensity of the declarations in this book, but Rick makes no apology for his forthright, honest assessments.

I caught up with Rick in August (via email), and he was gracious in responding to my questions about his book, for this review:

Laurent Weichberger (LW): Your book is titled *Introduction to Reality*. What is your definition of reality, given that most people in the West think of reality as that which is physically manifest, and think of spirituality as woo-woo, or fantasy?

Rick M. Chapman (RMC): My definition of Reality is...that which is Real. The whole point of this book is to

point the reader to something that the Great Masters have described for millennia but which the average persons in the world (that is, all six billion plus of us minus 56 God-realized souls) do not experience or comprehend. These Great World Teachers inform us, and have lived lives evidencing their wisdom, that we have no idea what “Reality” is. If, after concluding that we really do not understand “life” or “death” or the why-and-wherefore of Creation, we begin at least to understand the need for a “real” Guru to discover “Reality,” we make a huge step toward experiencing Reality for ourselves. So, to revisit my definition of Reality: it is that about which all I know is that I am ignorant of it, but which appears, from my study and observations of those considered to be Enlightened, to be eminently desirable of experiencing—I should say, the only thing worth experiencing.

LW You mention meeting Avatar Meher Baba in the late 1960s in India. What is the relationship between Meher Baba & Reality?

RMC My meeting with Avatar Meher Baba in 1966 epitomizes my understanding of Reality. Because I personally know absolutely nothing about Reality, my acquaintance with Meher Baba has provided the clearest possible awareness of my ignorance of Reality, while offering ample incentive to strive to experience it as it really is. Among the pantheon of World Teachers and God-Men, Messiahs and Prophets, Perfect Masters and Qutubs recorded in humanity’s history, Avatar Meher Baba is, you might say, the best evidence ever set forth on earth that Reality is indeed different from the illusory life we experience in the gross world, and that

the attributes of Reality include an unlimited knowing and an apparent seamless identification with the truth; a selfless love and a universal compassion that defy imagination and seem indeed to be “infinite”; and a sweetness and charm not found in any other facet of life on the planet.

LW Rick, in less than 200 pages, you managed to cover dozens of the most important aspects of the spiritual life in a delightful and human way, from Sex to Perfection, and Psychic Healing to Milarepa (the Great Tibetan Yogi). What inspired your choice of

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topics to cover, and why the alphabetical ordering?

RMC I wrote about topics that struck me as important to the seeker, no matter which path he or she might be treading. The alphabetical ordering was a brain-wave inspired by the most popular book in 1970 or whenever it came out—*Up The Organization* was a book about the most boring subject on the planet, business, and it made that subject both accessible and interesting with its short-chapter, alphabetical-subject format. I immediately had a notion to approach spirituality the same way.

LW The sub-title of the book is, *An*

A-Z Guide to True Spirituality. Is there such a thing as spirituality that is not true?

RMC Your question is a matter of definition: if you define “spirituality” as “true spirituality,” there cannot of course be spirituality that is not true. But in this world, dozens, hundreds, even thousands of “paths” described as “spiritual” range from bogus to misguided. So, yes, there is every chance of finding a “spiritual” approach that is not “true,” or at least less true. In fact, Meher Baba paid considerable attention to the possibility of His lovers—as well as spiritual seekers in general—being misled or deceived by the seeming infinity of so-called gurus, yogis, murshids, sadhus, saints, “sadgurus” and “avatars” who parade as advanced souls or enlightened or even Self-realized and unknowingly collect the inestimable burden of binding karma that comes from their posing as spiritual guides. He never tired of warning His lovers to beware of such false teachers, comparing them to “wolves” amidst the “sheep” of sincere seekers.

LW My favorite chapter is “Flattery, Beware of.” Which is your favorite chapter and why?

RMC My favorite chapter is your favorite chapter, whoever “you” may be. The book succeeds if the reader has a “favorite” chapter. My own personal favorite chapter, however, is “A is for Avatar,” because it is the real deal; its companion-piece or book-end is “Avatar (The Alpha and the Omega.” These two chapters, coupled with the brief biographical sketch about “Meher Baba,” are the heart of the book—the other chapters simply serve as appetizers to the main course of these three chapters.

Then, of course, I have many secondary favorites: “Air, Hot,” “Archery, Zen,” “Books,” “Clairvoyance,” “Consciousness, Planes of,” “Darshan,” “Ego,” “Ersatz Gurus,” “Feet, Lotus,” “Gnosis,” “High, Higher, Highest of the High” ... just look through the Table of Contents, plop your forefinger down on a chapter title, and that’s probably my favorite. But two I’m especially fond of are “Health and Success, the Truth about,” and “Suffering.” And “Name, Taking the.” And “Pilgrimage.” I am satisfied that the result is a goodly number of important guidelines and insights—points often of profound importance to the spiritual seeker—not readily available in a single volume elsewhere.



In the chapter, “Evangelism,” we read, “An authentic Master will encourage you to let your life itself be his message of love and truth.”

Then, in the chapter, “Trees, Fruit,” Rick shares, “By their fruits ye shall know them.” This is a quote from Jesus in the Gospel According to Matthew 7:16. This is also a clarification of the statement preceding it, also from Jesus, as he discourses to those gathered around him, “Beware of false prophets, which come to you in sheep’s clothing, but inwardly they are ravening wolves.” This is a direct correlation to what Rick shares of Meher Baba’s expressed wisdom. It is also true that he honors all faiths, as Rick shares in “Respect,” the words, “Every real guru respects every real path,” so to write that, he must also feel that way.

The fact is that those who are honestly seeking Truth, Oneness, Self-realization, and Reality, have to be quite careful and learn to discriminate between the various different spiritual offerings. Whether they come to us in person, or via the internet, or scheduled as seminars, workshops,

or retreats, and any other ways that these offerings may be marketed, if the Reality is to be known and realized, it must first be met, and then embraced, no doubt. This is such an introduction, and this book offers much to the seeker of the Way. If Rick Chapman as an author is to be judged by his fruit, he has done well, and I wholeheartedly recommend this level of Reality, these bunches of grapes, these nourishing figs, this Water of Life, on the journey across the desert of illusion.

Introduction To Reality (paperback \$14.95, clothbound \$23.95) can be purchased directly from the publisher (inquire at www.whitehorsepublishing.com) or through Meher Baba Information (www.MeherBabaInformation.org) and Sheriar Books (www.sheriar-books.org).



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Reported by Laurent Weichberger, Flagstaff, Arizona

Facebook helps you connect and share with the people in your life.



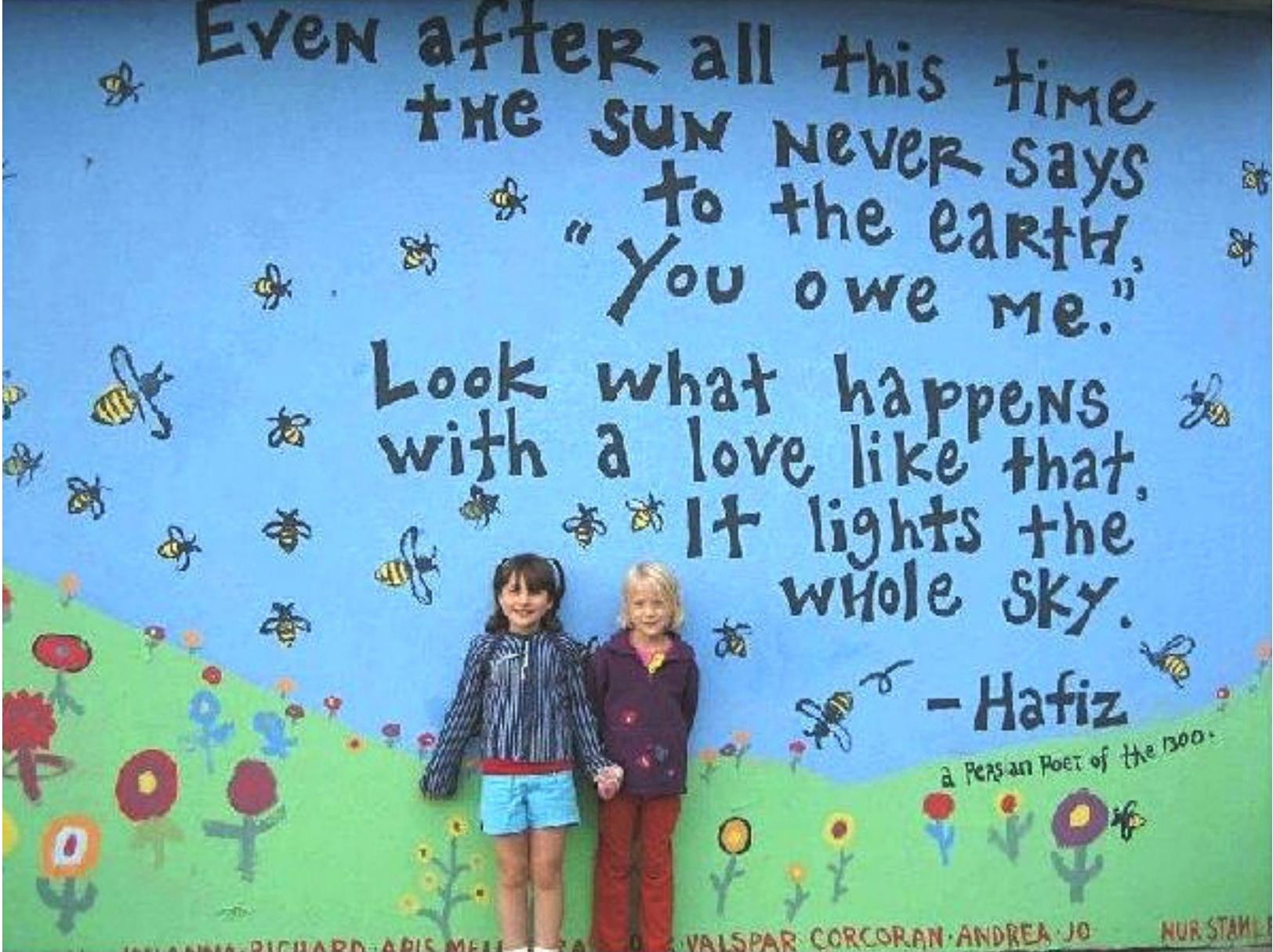
For those not familiar with Facebook, it is a “social networking” web application, whereby people can create a “profile” page, and write notes to each other, post photos, chat in chatrooms, etc. There is also a “Meher Baba” profile, and people go there and write to Baba, why not?

Well, on January 26, 2009, my old friend Jessi Slavich (with whom I just reconnected on Facebook), wrote this on Meher Baba’s Facebook profile, about her own Baba tattoo:

“Hey, Baba. Isn’t it funny when people see that I have your name tattooed on my arm and they say something like, “Oh no! What if someday you’re not that into Baba?” or whatever ... And to them I reply, “If I ever stop loving Meher Baba, this tattoo will be the least of my problems.”

English (US) Español Português (Brasil) Français (France) Deutsch Italiano العربية ?????? 中文(繁体) 日本語 »





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