

The Way and the Goal

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Avatar Meher Baba the way and the goal

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Talk given by Kitty Davy—Myrtle Beach, Easter, 1971

I would like to share with you some of our experiences with Meher Baba during the period when we were in personal touch with Him, both in India and in the West. Try and imagine these scenes of daily contact with Baba in the family atmosphere that He allowed us to share. Baba told us from the beginning, "It is not practical to have spiritual ideals without putting them into practice. To realize the ideal in daily life, to give beautiful, eloquent form to the Living Spirit—this is being practical in the truest sense of the word." And Baba continued, "I will teach you to move in the world and yet be at all times in communion with Me as the Infinite Being."

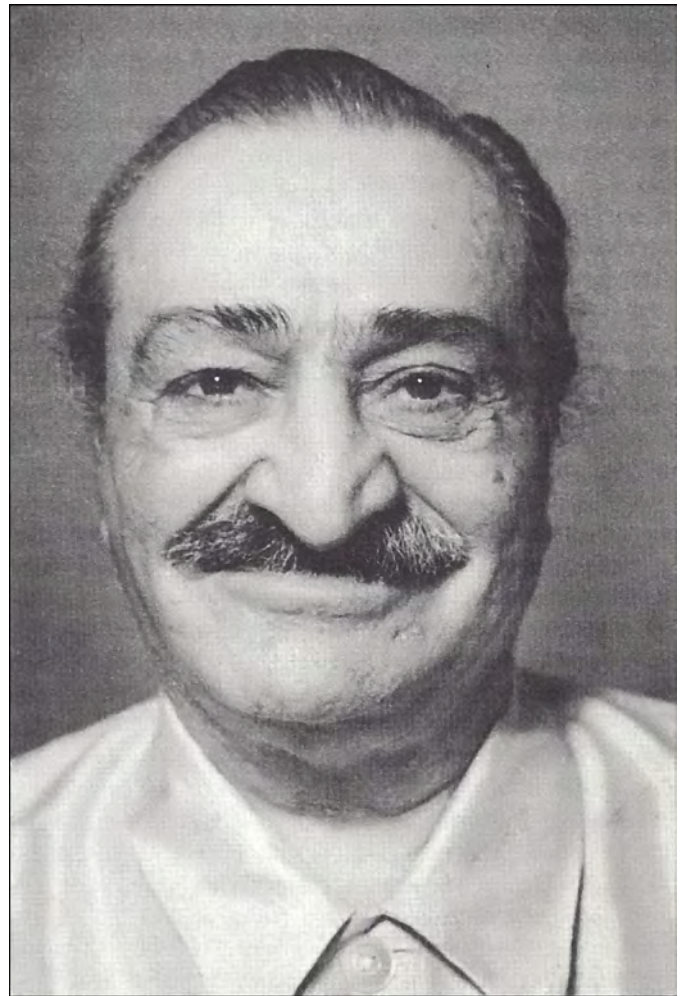
To begin with, let me tell you very briefly how I came to Baba. My first meeting with Meher Baba was on a platform in Victoria Station, London, on His first visit to the West in 1931. He stayed at my parents home in Kensington, London before proceeding to the retreat at East Challacombe prepared there by Meredith Starr. Thereafter, at short intervals, over a period of five years, Baba called me and others to follow Him to Italy, to Spain, to France, to Switzerland, and finally to India. I recall Baba standing by the doorway on the first evening of His stay in London. He turned to Margaret Craske and to me and spelled out on His board, "Are you Happy?" "Oh yes, Baba," we replied.

"Are you worrying?"

"I don't think so."

And Baba spelled out on His board: "Be happy; don't worry. I will help you." In this first hour Baba brought us toward the spiritual path with a positive thought and an invitation.

Next morning Baba gave us light tasks to perform. They were seemingly unimportant, but in these services we found an inexpressible joy and happiness. This spontaneous desire to serve Baba must have been our unconscious response to Baba's Love which was soon to awaken in us a kindred love for Him. But apart from these small



acts of service, Baba seemed to have a deeper spiritual experience He wanted to share with the group before leaving for America, and that was to strengthen our love for Him. Baba would call the group together and ask for music. The Indians played Qawalis which are one hundred percent spiritual. We in turn found some Negro spirituals sung by Paul Robeson, and these had their own appeal to the heart and to the emotions. As we sat on the floor

and listened, with Baba in our midst, we experienced a deep warmth and love. My experience can most truly be expressed in the words of Pir Fazl Shah, an adept pilgrim, who on seeing Baba said, "No one, until You came, has touched my heart with the arrow of Divine Love."

In these very early years with Baba, one thing was very noticeable—not the spiritual talks—not the do's and do not's—but Baba's apparent joy and happiness in keeping us happy and in a good mood. He seemed to want us to feel that love was something cheerful and bright, not heavy and dull—a time to be gay, yes, and also a time to be serious; both being aspects of the same Divine Spirit.

I recall a particular day in March, when we were all in Lugano, Italy, and Baba took us by boat across the Lake of Lugano to Mt. Generosa. At the top of the mountain was a small hotel which we made our headquarters. There was a ping-pong table there, and when we arrived, Baba immediately began playing a game. Soon, He put down the paddle and ordered us to the main room. He took down a man's felt hat from the headstand and held it sideways, the brim touching the table. Using the hat as an illustration, Baba began explaining how we must look within, pointing to the inside of the crown, to find our Soul, God. But before Baba had time to finish, one of the group burst out laughing. Baba returned the hat He had used to the stand, and we all left to walk in the open. There was no rebuke, but we could sense that Baba was displeased. Dr. Ghani, one of Baba's earliest disciples, came up, and looking very crestfallen, said, "Try and prevent such things happening. Baba is so rarely in the mood for spiritual talks these days, and if His mood is spoiled, then we miss the lesson."

Later on, when Baba left us and returned to India, He would write and tell us to write to Him every two weeks—long letters, not short ones—and if we forgot, a cable would come saying, "Are you all right? Why no letter?" And our letters never went unanswered. Here are a few passages from some of Baba's letters:

"I know you better than you know yourself, and I will teach you, in My own way, all the things concerning your Real Self. Seek and strive to know Me, your Beloved, and bit by bit you will know your Real Self, for am I not your Real Self?" In another letter Baba wrote: "Realize Me and you will know God. No other purpose is worthwhile after you have seen Me, the Beloved." And Baba would, of course, end with "Be happy, don't worry." Baba was to tell us later that few things are more harmful and more detrimental to one's progress on the spiritual path than worry. While dissipating so much energy worrying, you make it difficult for the One helping you. Be happy. Baba disliked nothing more than to see someone despondent and miserable.

Part of Baba's training is to develop a peace within that you experience though in the midst of active, pulsating life. We had seclusion at times, but Baba would emphasize that it was for work, not for personal

satisfaction. Our life with Baba was active, not a cloistered existence with inward contemplation. Baba led us along the path in service to others, each contributing what he or she was capable of, in art, writing, or by directly participating in Baba's external work amongst humanity. Others gave personal service at close range, to their parents and other members of their own families. I think of a quote from Saint Theresa as very apt in connection with our work in early Ashram days: "If obedience employs you in outward things, know that even if you are in the kitchen, our Lord moves even among the pots and pans." He is there both within and without, so whatever the duty, the first step in the field of service is to think of others more than oneself. Baba has emphasized to us that to work for Him we must be steady and firm as a rock in our faith and love for Him. "I can then use you as a channel for My work, the work of Divine Love for the upliftment of humanity. "

One of our first tests with Baba occurred soon after we arrived in India, in response to His first call in 1933. He had told us to be prepared to stay for one year in India, to travel with Him through India, and then go on to China and Hollywood where He was going to break His Silence. To let you know how thoughtful and Loving Baba is, before we started, He sent us many letters telling us what we were to do on the boat. One letter from one of His disciples dated the twenty-sixth of February, 1933, explains that there are two groups known as Kimco and Jeneco. Jeneco was the American group, and Kimco the English group. Since the letter was addressed to the British group, it begins, "Dearest Kimco: I hope your preparations for coming to India are getting on alright. Baba too is very busy planning and arranging for your Indian tour. And there are two things that He is worrying about: sea sickness—for He knows that some of you are rather bad sailors—and the heat. It will be terribly hot at the time you come, for then it will be the full summer season. April and May are the hottest tropical months. But you needn't worry a bit about that. We'll do all we can to keep you cool. And Baba says, while on board, try to be on deck as much as possible, in the shade. And don't sunbathe after Port Said, because after Port Said the sun will be fierce and sunbathing will be distressing, so don't attempt it. And we have fixed up a very interesting and as cool as possible itinerary for you people, and you have no idea how excited we all are to have you come over here. As I wrote to Quentin Todd, 'It's the realization of my fondest dream to see you with Baba in India.' Baba has ordered me to write this to you. signed, Adi, Junior. All my Love. Baba." Can you imagine our excitement at all this? Now I'll tell you briefly what happened.

Ten days after our arrival in India, each one was called by Baba. We were in famous Agra, and Baba said that it might be necessary for His work for us to return to Europe or home, and would we all go and



obey His instructions? Delia wrote, "I never saw Baba quite so unhappy as when He said this." All, of course, said they would obey. After a short visit to Kashmir with Baba, we returned to our homes and jobs with a certain sadness, having made the first of many surrenders along the path we had now embarked upon with Baba. Our stay in India was a short three weeks and not a year.

Three years later came another call from Baba inviting us to stay in His new ashram in Nasik, being especially prepared for His Western group, this time for five years. He wanted us to share in His work. Now Baba must have known that we might hesitate after our last test, and Baba always emphasizes that He never calls people for their pleasure but only for His work. Baba paid a visit to England a few months before we were scheduled to visit India to explain His reasons for calling us a second time. After hearing the conditions-complete obedience, no going out of the ashram without permission and to stay for five years-we all agreed happily and enthusiastically. Baba returned to India to make the final preparations for our coming. This was in the summer of 1936. But shortly after Baba returned to India, maya stepped in and warned us of the prospect that we might be sent home early again, and what would happen to our jobs, what to say to our many parents and friends, and the possibility of a postponement. I, on behalf of the English group, wrote to Baba, in not too good of a mood, explaining how we all felt about the possibility of being sent home early again. I received in reply the following letter signed by Baba, from Rahuri, dated November 26, 1936. Now, I only include it because I want you to know that we who came to Baba so long ago had so many weaknesses and so little understanding of Baba. Even after He had worked so patiently and given us so much, there still remained so much to be learned. How far we were from being Baba's

Mandali whom Baba has said are His close disciples who follow the instructions of the Master implicitly. This is His letter: "When I received your cable at Port Said that a few of you, Kimco, were not amused, I felt disappointed that in all their love for Me, Kimco wouldn't understand in spite of many explanations of some important things so clearly given—and when I think of the suffering I had to undergo to take this trip to England only for them. Otherwise, had I wished it, I could have drawn you all to Me without all that trouble and suffering. But there were reasons that had much to do with you all, Kimco, for whom I did undertake this trip, and I was so happy that you all eventually agreed to come. But that peculiar attitude of Kimco, always so typical of them, taking all things, however serious, so lightly. even if I want them to take it seriously. And understand that time causes Me much pain as in the case of the personal and private affairs of My own family, and how I managed to have things done as I willed. That these that I tried to explain under special message through Kitty should be so misunderstood by those My near ones like Kimco who are so dear to Me, makes Me sad indeed. Especially when Jeneco, the American group, takes it so admirably. And now I read your last letter in which you write something of your feeling depressed and worried over the words of a psychic who is a genius, and so on. It breaks one's heart to hear such childish talk after so much contact, explanation, and all that I gave you to feed on all of these five years. And I should like you all to once again consider, before you leave London, to come here only if you are prepared to obey and not to worry over things that are meaningless—of my sending you away again in a short time as I did before. Let me assure you that I want to keep you all with Me to stay for the entire time of five years—and if you could all stay—but if you could not manage to stay for the entire period, I would permit those who cannot stay to go back after two years and come back again if possible. Your heart is wonderful always feeling so deeply, truly and responsive to the call and understanding, but the peculiar mind of yours at time wobbles and tries to shake your faith, and then your love revives it all again, all afresh. One moment you feel quite prepared to do and stand anything. The next moment you hesitate with 'ifs' and 'buts', and feel depressed and worried. But I will see that this eternal struggle between the head and the heart, for you as well as for all others who suffer from the same weakness, ends eventually in a victory of the heart over the head and brings about a blending of the two. In fact, I am working at it, suffering Myself, almost all the while, and being misunderstood every moment, and in every act of Compassion in raising the consciousness and understanding of humanity to a higher level. Just a little individual effort to understand and do as I say, and it would save so much trouble and pains, for Me and for all. My Love to all in Self."

—Signed M.S. Irani

We went to Nasik, leaving in December, arriving just before Christmas Day which we and the American group spent with Baba in the newly planned ashram. However, it was only for six months and not for five years, and our training was strict, and we changed much. The Nasik ashram, called the 'luxury ashram', which Baba provided for the Western disciples, was, as He said, situated in its beautiful surroundings with splendid scenery all around. And with us in Nasik, and the Eastern men and women in Meherabad and Baba in Rahuri, He said, "These comprise the nucleus of My activities for the next five years. Nasik's special feature will lie in its having My personal living guidance as Jesus gave to His disciples. "

As the group was comprised of strongly individual personalities, there were various clashes, complaints of food, though excellent, many wanting special diets, and national egos arose among us who were from many countries. Charles Purdom, writing in *The God-Man* says, "Baba permitted these discords to develop. He would then confront those involved with the situation and make them face the issue, and without compromise or easing over the troubles, bring them together in Love. He insisted on harmony, though He provoked differences. It was an experience often repeated that those who passed through never forgot."

Baba's great mission to each one of us has been to show us how to love, and our great privilege has been to live with the One who is Love itself. And when we failed to learn through His example, then Baba used the drastic method of rebuke and humiliation to guide us to the Truth.

Calling us one day in Nasik and telling us to be seated, He took His board and began, "It's time we started dying the death of no desires. It is all Bliss yet all are miserable because of ignorance which causes desires to be fulfilled. Try loving—loving more and more—and then you will want less of what is beyond your needs. All you have suffered today is nil. It was all in illusion. Just long for Union or Real Harmony which is Union in diversity. Why not really try it? You cannot love each other, but try to give in to each other. This you do not do because you are not honest. Now, that is why I love the mad ashram at Rahuri. They are honest in their insanity. And you come from afar to love Me and to realize Me, and you become fighting cocks and hens. I think I will have to leave you all and go to Nepal, or send you all to the Himalayas. If I find disharmony and unwillingness to die, then better to have you all go. It is not for fame or name that you have come here. Baba does not need anybody. I am always alone and always will be until Eternity. It is you who need Me until you become Me. But if you do not try, what is the use? There must be Harmony, Love, Peace—Real, not forced." And thus by Baba's personal living guidance did He lead us along the path He had chosen for us. While we were in Nasik, Baba gave us many opportunities to go to famous shrines and the

tombs of very holy people, particularly around Nasik. On a trip to Trimbak, Baba gave a talk in which He said, "True sanctity does not lie in the dead walls of brick and stone, or even in the waters of sacred rivers, but in the living beings who fill the environment with the fire of their devotion, love and worship, and in the great spiritual forces released by the Masters during their stay there."

During this trip to Trimbak we had to walk up the seven hundred steps to the top of the hill where the shrine was. Perhaps Baba saw us lagging—we had been up since 4 A.M.—so He signaed for us to be seated and to unpack our picnic boxes. Everyone being rested and replete, Baba had us repack what remained to be eaten later. We wandered for some time among the ruins of the old temples, admiring the views and hoping that at any moment Baba would tell us to rest a while as it was getting hot. Instead Baba said we should make tea and gestured as if He were hungry and why not eat. I said, "But then there will be nothing left for the next meal." Baba said, "Never mind. We will eat." Baba motioned all to be seated, the boxes unpacked and the food distributed to be washed down with the tea. So by now, we'd had lunch, tea, and supper and it was still 8:00 o'clock in the morning! It was too hot to do more than seek out a shady nook and doze. But no. Baba spelled out on His board, "There is nothing else to do. We will go home." The sun was at its reddest by the time we had descended the seven hundred steps, and Delia, who suffers from headaches and was noted for her constant applications of eau de cologne, dabbed her left ear then her right, exclaiming, "Oh Lord, what a heat!" Baba, smiling at Delia after seeing the bottle, told her to give some to all.

I think the trip to Trimbak was one of the very few occasions in Nasik when all were able to accompany Baba. Alas, one or another of us was sick with a minor ailment, and Baba felt this very keenly. If Baba planned an outing, He wanted the whole group to be with Him. "Yes," said Baba, "you are all very dear to Me." And Chanji put it thus: "Baba goes nowhere without His spiritual baggage—His group of disciples."

Baba told us the story of two yogis in the time of Rama, one who did penance for a hundred years and another who did no penance and no fasting. He only loved Rama. One day the Master went walking into the jungle and the first yogi opened his eyes and said to Him, "Oh, Rama, when will I see your formless face?" and Rama replied, "In fifty years." The yogi was frightfully disappointed and said, "I made penance for one hundred years, and I suffered much, and still fifty more years to wait?" Then, next day, the Master accosted the happy devotee, and this loved one lovingly asked, "Oh, Rama, when will I see your formless Face?" and Rama replied "After fifty more lives," and the devotee said, "So soon?" And there—upon he got into such an ecstasy that he died, and as he was dying, he saw Rama's formless face.

Kitty Davy's talk will be continued in a later issue.



Weak Tea with Strong Talk – Part 2 –The Role of Woman

Judy: Doctor, does Baba say anything about a woman being married and also having a career?

Dr. Kenmore: Well, you see, Baba doesn't object to your having a career as well, but women haven't been trained with the idea that it takes an awful lot of skill to be a wife and a mother—more skill than you'll ever dream. When you have a family, the idea is to have a home and a family that is made comfortable. Actually, the woman really steers and guides the direction of a family unbeknown to the man. It takes a lot of ingenuity—more than you'll ever dream. Your brain is more alert than you'll ever dream if you really want to use it—why, to prepare cookery and baking and keep a house clean and do the laundry and all of these items. Now, if you're trained to look upon these as being menial and say, "I don't like it," that's just a matter of habit. You say, "I like what *she* does sitting at a desk" or doing this or doing that. Then, of course, you're the victim of phony propaganda. After all, look at the anatomy of a woman. The things that she carries in front of her chest are not decorative objects. They're to be used by babies. She has a function. And to rear that child takes an awful lot of ingenuity. You've got to use your brain. You've got to do a lot of reading and studying to keep up. It's a big responsibility to provide an environment that is clean and lofty for the individual. Taking care of the clothing of the husband and the kids should never be looked upon as menial. It should be a lovely opportunity to serve others. She

has a marvelous opportunity to serve others and forget herself. A woman has the opportunity to think of others more than a man. You're losing yourself in remembering them. That's selfless service—Oh yes, if it's *really* undertaken. Now, if you're in search of prestige or you're in search for extra money so you can buy things because you want to have as many things as so and so down the block or across the way or what not, well, you haven't got the right values in life. That's why the family is torn apart. Women don't know their function. If you have a little ability, pour it into your children. That's what you want to do. So they can pour it back to you and pour it out into the world.

Francie: What happens if you have a financial problem in a family? Should the woman go out and work?

Doctor Kenmore: If a family unit has a financial problem? Well, there, you see, a marriage has been contracted where the unit was not ready for marriage. After all, if you want a suit of clothes that costs so much money, you can't buy that suit of clothes until you have that much money. Is that correct? Otherwise you'll have to do without the suit of clothes. You're going to get a suit of clothes that's going to cost half as much. But you're going to get for half as much what is worth half as much and what will wear only half as long as the other, you see. So, anyone can contract a marriage which at its very inception has a shaky foundation. When I was a kid, we

always used to say that unless we have thousands of dollars in the bank and a living wage, we can't ever think of marriage. In those days we *never* thought in terms of a wife going to work. A wife's place was in the home to take care of the home and the family. This was recognized.

Nowadays, a man who cannot support a family unit will engage in a marriage with a sense of semi-responsibility. He thinks, well, hell, my wife will help me out. She'll go to work. There's where the trouble starts. *Now*, where is the burden of responsibility? Instead of cooking a fine meal at home, she has to run to the canned goods, and she isn't feeding her family well. Their resistance will go down. They'll be sick more often if they're average people. If the husband or she is built like a bull, they have more strength to resist a deteriorating diet. Because to cook a fine meal you need time. She hasn't that time if she has to go to work. What about keeping the apartment clean? Her responsibilities are tripled in going to work. And the man usually expects her to carry that burden which is ridiculous.

So long as he works *and* she works, it's got to be a fifty-fifty job all the way through. But somehow the woman is sacked with the major burden of the responsibility. This becomes fatiguing, and you find their nerves become pretty sore, and they quarrel more. They misunderstand more, unless, one is of a nature which will always give in for the sake of maintaining the relationship. But it will take its toll in time. Something will break down some time. The best relationship *can* exist when the family gets real nourishment ... And giving the family real nourishment is a big job for the imagination: preparing a meal, setting it at night appetizingly. There isn't anything like having a real home life for a man and a woman instead of slapping things out of a can, here, there, chomping down, sitting down, gulping it and hopping over to the T.V. What the hell kind of a life is that? My heavens! When the man knows that the woman is dedicated to the home, to the kids, to him and to their common objectives and vice versa, there is a wonderful feeling of well-being. The woman doesn't have a career.

Now, of course, there are some women who do excel in ability, and they want to eat their cake and have it. They want their families, and they also want their careers. Well, a great deal of friction will occur between a man and a woman which they will have to put up with. And, usually, they end up leading separate lives. They tolerate each other, but they're not really, really happy. I don't know why a woman would ever want to compete with a man. Why would she want to abandon womanhood? No more than a man should abandon manhood .

But Baba didn't make any specific points on these things. It was understood that a woman, when she became a wife and had children, was responsible for their care. And the man had to provide for all of them as best he could. They each had their place. But

Baba never objected to women pursuing business or professional lives. If a woman is not going to be married, as in the case of those whom Baba ordered to be celibate, she has to go into business because there is no one to support her. She must go into business and pursue a career because she is not to be married. I'm thinking now of two or three of them. They are not to be married, and they are to lead celibate lives. So they had to go to business. But I wouldn't say they're following a career. What they're doing is following a program for self-preservation. They have to live. And they're supporting themselves in that living.

But those who lived near Baba pretty much came to understand that when a woman became a wife and a mother, her place was at home to rear that family and take care of the man and provide a home for all, adequately. Because at the root of all this career business with women is nothing but egotism, conceit, and being given the wrong view about marriage by parents or friends in the early part of their lives. I think it's a real heck of a job to be a wife and a mother. It's a powerful job to perform. It takes an awful lot of ingenuity. That's the way I feel about it. With Baba, if a woman were to be kept single, it was alright for her to go and earn her livelihood. And that, in itself, in India, is a radical shift from the past. Because in India those connected with the middle class or the upper bracket families never sent their women to work. They had to be provided for by the head of the household. I'm thinking now of Sarosh's daughter, Freni. She was in her early twenties, and she felt that so long as she wasn't getting married, at that time anyway, she wanted to go to work. Her father absolutely forbade it. Since when does a daughter of a prosperous Parsee family go to business? It's unheard of. So she came to Baba with the problem, and, yes, she could take a job. He permitted her. And she's working for the Air India airlines. So Baba, in giving her the permission to go careerwise, broke a very solid precedent in India, you see. So long as she is single, the woman can pursue the business career or the professional career. But if you are married, and there are children, you've got to be home to raise that family. That was an automatic understanding I believe. I think that makes it clear, doesn't it?

Associate Editors	Alan Berger, Robert Ganz Beth Ganz, Larry Greenberg Michael Levy, Chuck Magro
Contributing Editors	Jesse Ray Gilbert, Texas Kitty Davy, Myrtle Beach Center Mary Fornataro, California Curtis & Amora Smith, Pennsylvania
Composition & Design	John Fornieri, Jose Henriques Chris Riger, Larry Karrasch, Mary Marino

Society for Avatar Meher Baba
121 W. 72nd St., New York, N.Y. 10023

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