

To The Friends of Meher Baba

Spring 2023 by subscription



“All that is noble, beautiful and lovely, all that is great and good and inspiring in the universe is just an infinitesimal fraction of the Unfading and Unspeakable Glory of God-Realization. ... If a person accepts, without reserve, from the bounty which the God-Man showers, he creates a link, which will stand by him until he attains the goal of freedom and God-Realization.”

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From The Editor

It just gets to be a thing when one reaches a certain age. I’m at that age and I guess a few of you are too. So, with a sigh, we bid “Hail and Fare Well!” to another of our close ones Chris Cook, fondly remembered here by Dudley Edwards. A Baba lover of more recent vintage, Philip Larkin, shares some personal thoughts about Holding On To His Daaman. We have an early Francis Brabazon poem, shared by Rosie Jackson, and another powerful gem from Jan Coutu. Baba Himself shares some stirring and powerful insights, and your Editor sounds off on a topic that gets his dander up! Finally, Aude Gotto shares a profound prayer that came to her as response to Baba’s (and Bhau Kalchuri’s) Prayer **YOU ALONE EXIST**. Thanks to Richard Cork for his Formatting flourishes, to the Proofreading team for their eagle eyes, and to our President, Meher Baba – for His care, guidance and unstinting involvement in every aspect of the Friends of Meher Baba. *“Onward!”*

Paul Birchard

Photos of Meher Baba courtesy of MN Publications - used with kind permission.

A Few Words From Our President . . .

Meher Baba answered the following questions during interviews at “The Links”, Bangalore in 1938. F.H. Dadachanji (“Chanji”), His secretary at the time, recorded them in his diary.

Question: *What is true spirituality?*

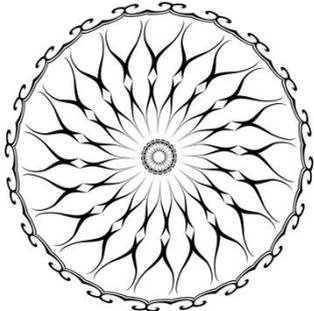
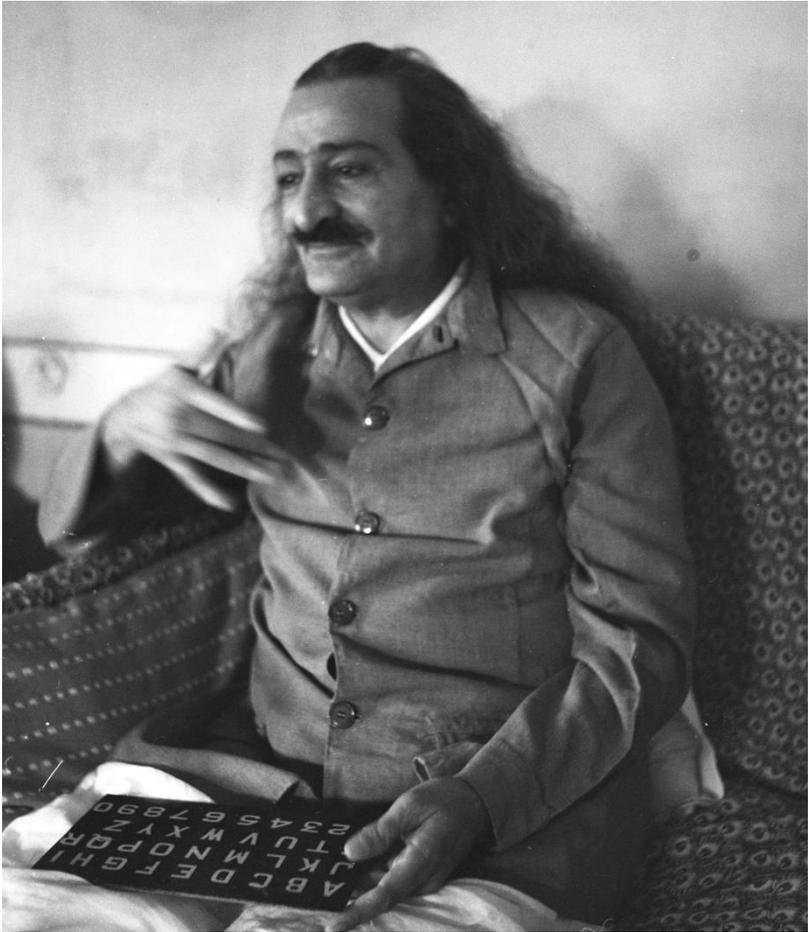
Meher Baba: “Spirituality truly means the life of the spirit. It is to be lived and experienced. It makes you firm like a rock and neither worldly sorrows nor pleasures upset you. You attain to the state where desires end and you want nothing. Look at this mast (Chatti Baba). He is so innocent, always so happy and so loving – for the simple reason that he wants nothing; and strange as it may seem he has everything – happiness, eternal peace of mind and contentment.

“The state of desirelessness or of wanting nothing is a faculty latent in everyone. It is within you and you must find it out. I have found it and experienced it. I know that everyone has this faculty, but being latent it has to be found and experienced. The difference between you and Me is that although this faculty in Me is also present within you, I have actually experienced it and felt it, while you have yet to experience it and feel it. I see Myself in you all as palpably as you see all these material things with your eyes. It is a fact for me.

“With your eyes you see everything external. At the back of this external aspect there is not mere hollowness or spacelessness, but also pure nothingness. When you realize this pure nothingness you see how it has come out of everything which is in you. When this experience is gained, the faculty of wanting nothing is developed and you begin to experience it.”

Question: *How could a confirmed sinner be redeemed?*

Meher Baba: “From my point of view no-one is so bad as not to improve and become good. Everyone, however depraved, can improve and become better till he becomes the best example for mankind. There is always hope for everyone.”



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Chris Cook

An Appreciation by Dudley Edwards

On the 16th of December, 2022

Christine Cook fell into the arms of Meher Baba.

Chris was born in Bradford in Lister Park where her Father was the head gardener, known for his creative flowerbeds. This must have had some influence in Chris's passion in later life for her own garden, and it may also have been reflected in her paintings which were very bright, colourful and exuded joy.

I first met Christine at Bradford College of Art. She had just broken off her engagement to David Oxtoby (the pop-artist) who had left to go to the Royal Academy in London. I began dating Chris for a short while before her husband-to-be Martin Cook came along. Then Chris and I used to meet early in the pub so that she could grill me on the names of Modern Jazz musicians so that she could impress Martin. This was not typical of Chris, as otherwise she never felt the need to impress anyone. But I remember clearly the two of us repeating the names Miles, Mingus, Parker and Monk like she was swotting for an exam.

Christine was one of the first of the London Baba group along with Martin Cook and myself. In 1967 I was staying at their household in Hampstead. Just prior to that I had what can only be described as a vision, and not long after *that* experience I acquired an underground magazine that contained the image of Baba on Arthur's Seat in Mahabaleshwar, Western India. The accompanying text was illegible but I could just make out words to the effect that this 'man rules the Universe'. I'm sure with any other photograph I would have reacted with a sarcastic, 'Oh yeh', but I was left feeling that in this instance it could be true, and I had a strong impression that this was the being who had come to me in the vision.

Then one morning Martin entered my room and said, "What are you doing with a picture of Meher Baba by your bed?" I jumped up and said, "Who?". Martin went on to explain that there was a little old lady who used to visit his family home when he was a child and all she ever talked about was Meher Baba. They would never take her seriously; every time they saw her

approaching, they would say "Watch out! Ali Baba is coming". I said to Martin I would like to meet her. Just then Christine entered the room, without a second thought she said "So would I". So, the three of us went on the three-hundred-mile trip North to Mary Parry's house.

We were struck by the amount of love she had for Baba when she hadn't seen him for 15 years. She gave us a copy of Purdom's **The God Man** and told us there was a meeting taking place of Baba devotees at the Poetry Society in London (There was no Baba Centre at that time). A few days later we found ourselves outside these huge doors in a very palatial building. We were nervous about entering because we were late and we expected to be interrupting a large crowd of devotees. To our surprise when we finally plucked up courage to enter, we startled four elderly people: Delia DeLeon, Fred Marks, Tom and Dorothy Hopkinson. We soon discovered this was almost the entire British group who had been with Baba since the 1930's. Little did we know we were to be the beginning of a new, younger British group from the 1960's onwards.

At the end of the meeting Delia invited us to her home in Kew. When we got there Christine was shocked because she recognized the house. When she was a child, she had stayed there while on holiday with her parents. I presume they had come to Kew because of her father's interest in gardening, the place being directly opposite Kew Gardens.

Following this we began to introduce more friends. It always amazed me how they all seemed to readily accept Baba with little doubt as to who He was. I introduced Kate and Mike McInnerney who in turn introduced Pete Townshend, then we introduced Barbara Allen (now Celia Barbara Freije). We all moved out to Richmond. Our motives might have been few. The need to get out of the metropolis, to be near Delia or because Baba had spent a short time there. The now enlarged group used to meet at Delia's to listen to her reminiscences of Baba, while we sat round her in a circle on the floor much like children gathering about the teacher in a nursery.

Later Don Stevens arrived from America; in his case he showed no signs of being startled. On the contrary he had this look of recognition as he had experienced this '60s manifestation of hippies coming to Baba in San Francisco. Don took our group to his flat for regular evenings as the first 'Discourses group', later becoming the 'God Speaks' group. He became a much

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loved friend and mentor to some of us. Others chose their own personal mentors from the older ones whom by now we had come to look upon as a kind of 'outer mandali'. Chris's mentor was Hildie Halpern, a graphologist who had studied under Freud in Austria before fleeing to the West where she became a counsellor to the stars in Hollywood. A remarkable lady, built like a sparrow. She lived in Park Lane Towers overlooking Buckingham Palace. She had a room full of Chagalls and as you would expect she always had a huge selection of the most delicious cakes. She and Chris took to each other and must have had some wonderful conversations around Baba.

For a period, Chris and Martin returned to Yorkshire to reside in a remote cottage outside Ilkley. After a few years they returned to London, but Chris never forgot her Yorkshire roots. She loved the moors and she even named her two daughters Emily and Annie after the Bronte sisters. I always found it delightful to witness Chris's unique relationship with Emily and Annie - it was that of Mother and daughters but at other times due to her youthful spirit it was much more like three sisters.

Chris was one of the early British group who went to the Great Darshan in '69 together with Martin, Barbara and Dallas Amos, Craig and Georgina San Roque, Sue Lane and myself. Being only eight of us we were spoilt by the mandali. Chris, Barbara, Georgina and Sue were dressed in saris by the women mandali. We had a lot of one to one treatment, so different to the experience of the American devotees who later arrived in their hundreds.



Khorshed, Chris Cook & Mehera – Guruprasad, Poona, 1969

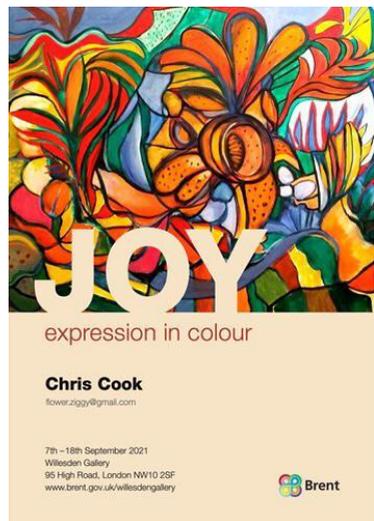
Eventually the early British group scattered far and wide although most keep in touch as Baba's is the golden thread that binds us. And I'm sure it's still there even though Chris has left her physical form.

Chris was extremely generous, welcoming others to stay for periods in her home. She was a haven for miners during the 1980's strike, a sanctuary for the odd individual with mental problems, and accommodated myself and my wife Madeleine on many occasions. She was an anchor who would make light of things, she always took everything in her stride, I can't imagine her ever panicking. She would keep her head when all around were losing theirs. That was Christine, she kept us straight.

Chris saw her daughters and their families on a very regular basis. She delighted in their company and also loved periods of isolation where she could concentrate on her painting. Thankfully she had a chance to exhibit her fresh, new work with a solo show in Willesden, London, in 2021.

It was during the lockdown that Chris felt inspired to express her reactions and attempts to override the negative effects of the pandemic, through a series of semi-abstract expressionist paintings. The exhibition was called **"Joy"**. Chris painted a number of canvases that express a positive mood though the use of colour, shape and movement. "I love using complementary and discordant colours," Chris said, "In psychology colour is seen as the language of emotion."

Chris's career was teaching art at local schools. Since retiring back in the early 2000s, Chris continued to paint regularly but she discovered a more prolific, colourful and joyful period as a reaction to lockdown. "I feel as though colour has exploded into my life!" she said. Over the course of several months Chris produced around 30 oil on canvas paintings of various sizes. "I could see all the paintings flashing before my eyes," she said, which led to her spending much of her time painting, usually while listening to jazz or reggae to inspire her creativity. These genres influenced what she painted: "I heard



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this music on the radio. It was Samuel Coleridge-Taylor's African Suite," and this related to the carnival theme that Chris was then painting.

After her solo show at the Willesden Green Library Gallery, September 2021, Chris reflected: "Enjoyed the private view, so many people and an amazing atmosphere more like a great party. The family were amazing with help and support. I'm glad I had the exhibition and am now ready for the next thing. There was an article in the local Camden New Journal with photo and front cover of British Journal of Psychiatry! Also, some sales".

I like many others feel blessed that I knew Chris and take comfort that our Karmic ties will be strong enough to ensure that we have more lifetimes to come in each other's company.

(This piece incorporates some material from an article titled "Expressions of joy" by Mark Newman.)



Poona, 1969 – Photo: Martin Cook



*Above: Chris Cook, Willesden 2021
(Photographer Unknown)*

Holding on to His Daaman

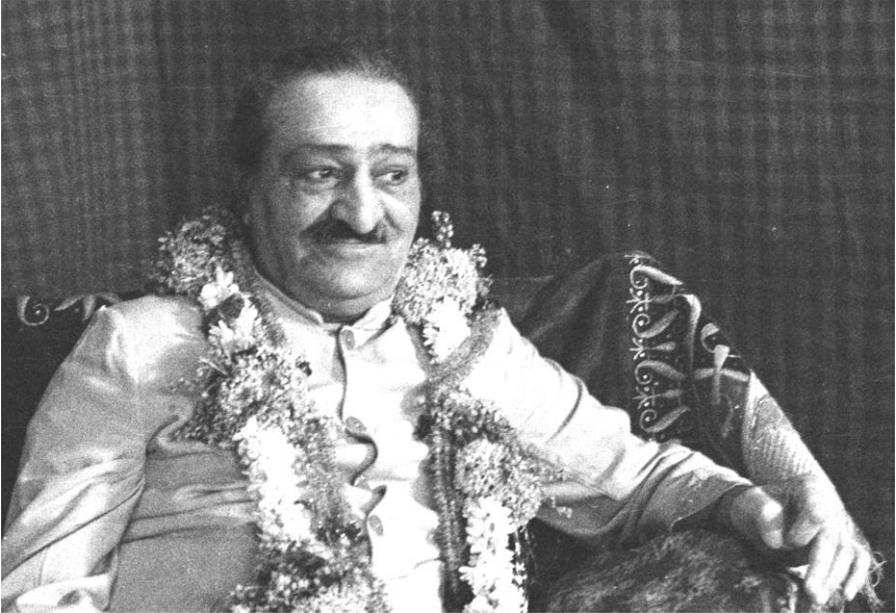
by Philip Larkin

Five years ago, what I thought of as my life and my life's work completely imploded in utter self-destruction. Faced with some harsh truths, I made the decision to step off this mortal plane and in the moment of action I found myself hesitating. Something brought me back from the edge, something changed the consideration that "I can't do this anymore" to "I can't do *this* anymore"; something, or someone, saved me.

A month or so earlier, I met an old friend to say goodbye as I moved on from Glasgow (my home for almost a decade), and before parting ways he gave me a book and a picture of a beautiful, moustached man beaming with a smile. The picture, as most of you will already have guessed, was inscribed with the words "Don't worry, be happy". Lost in my own egodrama at the time, I accepted the gift and wondered what cult my friend had found himself a part of. Little did I know, Meher Baba had just stepped into my life regardless of whether I wanted him to or not (at least at the time, I didn't). The thing is, for many years I knew I needed help. I knew I was on the wrong path and I turned away from God, Guru and in the end, even self.

But all of that changed, and my head is still spinning as to how or why exactly things ended up as they did.

The first moment I felt as though Baba was engaged in a dialogue with me was 6 months after I stepped back from the ledge. I was on a journey of self-acceptance and healing, but I was still very much lost. Until, one afternoon whilst staying at my parents' house, I took a copy of ***The Mastery of Consciousness*** with me into the bathroom as I settled into the tub for a soak. Something very odd happened in the hours that followed... I couldn't put ***Mastery*** down. I felt as though Baba was speaking directly to me in those moments, answering the questions that had gone unanswered for years prior. Finally, this God character everyone had been talking about all of these years, the one I'd rejected left, right and centre for the majority of my life... finally he'd shown up.



Maybe 'shown up' isn't the correct word, because what Baba revealed to me was that he was always there; suddenly I was making sense of some of the most tragic and bitter moments in my life and seeing them from a whole new perspective, not as unfortunate accidents but as design. These moments turned out to be seeds, from which my relationship with Meher Baba would grow; bringing me closer and closer to his love.

What unfolded and is still unfolding from there is a very strange game of cat and mouse, between myself and Baba.

Sometimes I feel him close, and sometimes I feel his absence... However, the latter experience I am aware is entirely my own fault, because I am still working on that sceptical, atheistic ego mind that I spent the best part of a quarter of a century cultivating.

When Baba does send me a signal that he's nearby and I haven't been walking alone along this bumpy road, it's as though I've found myself again... I fall into that ecstasy, the sense that I'm being watched over and that everything is all right. But when I lose sight of Baba, I always have to remind myself to not give up on my journey forwards. There is work to be done. And Baba has made that clear to me, on numerous occasions, as I find

myself placed in situations where it almost seems as though I was cued up to deliver lines in a play written by Baba. Maybe this is a product of my conditioning, having spent the majority of my career working in theatre and television; or maybe it's something deeper. Only Baba knows. All I know is that I am to continue walking along that bumpy road, until Baba ushers me onstage again to deliver his lines, to follow his directions. But like any creative soul, the time spent in the wings waiting is a time rife with anxieties and troubling thoughts... It's in these moments that I find myself remembering Baba's words:

“The aim of life is to love God. The goal of life is to become one with God. The surest and quickest way to achieve this goal is to hold on to my daaman by loving me more and more... Understanding has no meaning. Love has meaning. Obedience has more meaning. Holding my *daaman* has most meaning.”

**(Meher Baba – Birthday Message 1964;
The Everything And The Nothing, p. 64)**

Holding on to Baba's daaman is a beautiful image to evoke, and one that has helped centre me through trying times. I got my first tattoo when I was 33 years old, to mark my journey and to etch reminders upon my fleshy notebook, so that when I needed a reminder... there it would be.



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My first tattoo was a surfing Shiva, to represent rebirth, as Shiva is the destroyer, the dissolving force in life. My second tattoo was a portrait of Meher Baba, with his hands clasped in prayer pose - I chose this one so that Baba would always be smiling alongside me. My third tattoo is Guanyin (or Avalokiteshvara) also known as Bu Ken Qu Guan Yin, literally “the Guanyin who refuses to leave”.

All of these depictions of the Avatar were drawn by others, but last year as I was struggling through a difficult period whilst hiking in the Yangshou mountains, I stopped at a cafe and began to sketch on a napkin. I sketched Meher Baba’s daaman, and a hand reaching out to grasp it.

As I left the cafe, I passed a local tattoo artist’s residence and a thought occurred to me... I knocked on the door and asked if they could squeeze me in that afternoon. They told me to come back in two hours, which gave me enough time to go back to my hotel and sketch the image into Procreate (digital illustration program).



The artist thought I was very romantic, as I explained the meaning behind the drawing. And that is what I think of as I continue on my journey along the bumpy road once more... this relationship with Baba is like a romance.

As I bounce between my love of others, finding love for myself, I realize that the ultimate form of love is to love it all, for it is all Baba.

“During its various lives as a human being the ego-mind can oscillate endlessly between the opposites, viz., indulgence and repression, secularism and religion, superiority complex , self-aggrandisement and self-humiliation, introversion and extroversion, virtue and vice, pain and pleasure, “I” and

“you” or “mine” and “thine,” without arriving at true poise - attainable only through right understanding of the Truth. The oscillation of the ego-mind through the opposites is reactionary; therefore, though it passes through extremes it cannot arrive at true poise.

“True poise comes when the ego-mind, with all its accumulated inclinations, melts away through divine love, thus unveiling the supramental Truth in which there is the realization that one is - oneself - one with all life. Here there is no duality or division of life and therefore the soul is free from the opposite attitudes.

“Having become one with the eternal and infinite divinity which sustains from within, the soul gains unending bliss, understanding, love and power, for the soul is free from duality.”

Life at its Best (*“Freedom from Opposites”*, p. 36)

Jai Meher Baba!

Philip Larkin is an Irishman currently living and working in China, doing his best to hold on to Baba's daaman!



Sahavas Reminder!

A reminder that Fiona Robertson is planning a **Sahavas** for Baba and His lovers this coming **October 6th, 7th, and 8th**, to take place in Shropshire. We don't have price details yet, but if you think you're going to be around and would like to attend, why not send Fiona (and also Jan Baker) an e-mail intimating your interest?

robertsonfiona7@gmail.com and bakerjan@hotmail.co.uk

“**Sahavas** is the intimacy of give and take of love. I am the only Beloved and you are all my lovers; or I am the only Lover and you are all my beloveds.” - Meher Baba

Poets' Corner

Rosie Jackson writes: *I remember finding this poem by Francis Brabazon when I was looking through old issues of the Awakener in the library at Upper Meherabad in the early 1980's. I copied it out carefully into my journal and have kept it ever since. I think it is my favourite of Brabazon's poems, full of his characteristic devotion, intensity, and humanity. The title also refers back to Walt Whitman's famous 'Song of Myself', 1891, but Brabazon gives it the twist of not finding but losing the self in the Beloved.*

Song of Myself

Going my way
with the Name of my Master
 on my lips,
with the presence of my Beloved
 (oh, beyond fairness)
 in my heart.

Behold me, one who loves adversity, who
 welcomes defeat;
who is bent upon loss,
and is eager to strip himself of possession of himself.

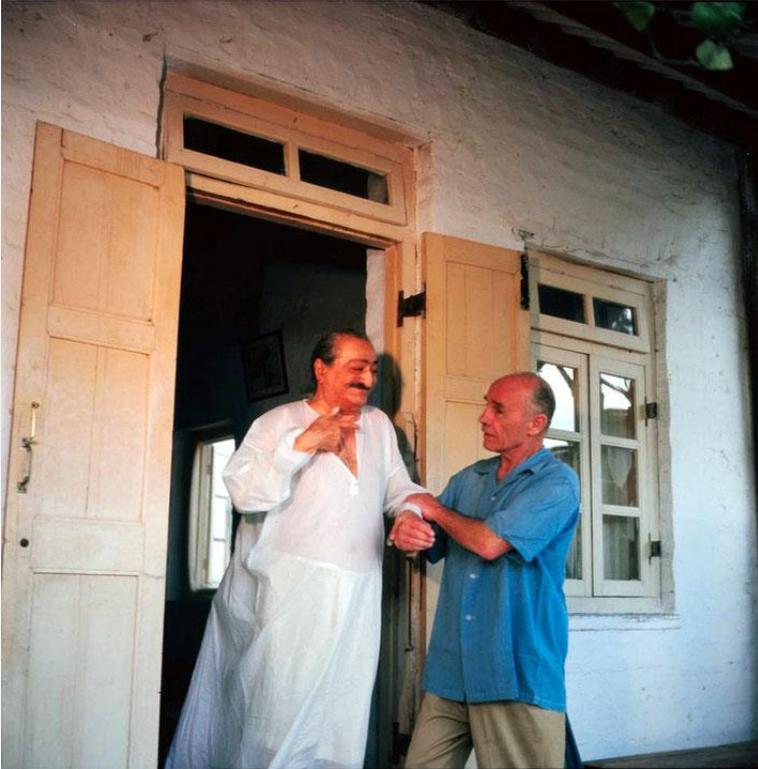
I am ready to laugh with you in your joy;
to weep with you in your tears.
But my laughter and weeping have no meaning
except in His love.

What I say from myself
 has not the minutest particle of value;
But what I say because of Him,
do not take that lightly,
 or be absent
 when it is said

And oh,
 tell GOD in your prayers
 (if you pray),
that I do not know how much longer I can endure
 this pain, ...
But that if He removes it, even for a moment,
 I will never again call him compassionate.



Francis Brabazon from “**Proletarians... Transition**” in **Awakener** Volume I,
Number III January 1954, p.10.



Baba and Francis Brabazon at the door of Mandali Hall, Meherazad.

THE AIR IS ELECTRIC

You are so beautiful and powerful and loving;
You come to me and everything familiar falls away.
At Your approach , as You come nearer
The air becomes Electric and I become so totally Alive.
You have Awakened me again.

You bring such an Atmosphere with You.
You raise all of the Frequencies so easily.

I remembered You right from the start.
Deep down I Know and Knew You:
It's just a case of gradual recognition.
The day we met, I started falling inwards.
And then I started flying upwards.

You know I am susceptible and sensitised.
You are opening my Eyes.

Now there remains no space between us
No, there is not the slightest shadow,
I am so open and vulnerable to You.
I can feel the Magnetic Radiation.
I used to say 'Don't come so near!'
You come so close, yet somehow I can bear You -
Exposure to Your Radiant Light.

I'm leaving all I know behind when I'm with You
You take me away from the familiar,
Then You are lifting me.
You are taking me to Different Realms.
You are removing all my burdens, I am coming undone.
I watch myself slowly unravelling.

And now You are filling me with Light.
I'm standing here exposed to You:

And You are setting me on fire with Light
As I am losing all my resistance
I have become so incandescent.

You are changing me with just one Touch, Your Divine Presence.
You open me to joy and colour and compassion
You are total Significance, Magnificence.

This is how it is being with You:
Beautiful, Loving, Powerful.
Coming undone.

Jan Coutu - December 14th 2022
(Dedicated to Betty and Barbara)



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“When you really wake up...”

All your pleasures and difficulties, your feelings of happiness misery, your presence here and you listening to these explanations, all are nothing but a vacant dream on your part and mine. There is this one difference: I also consciously know the dream to be a dream, while you feel that you are awake.

When you really wake up you will know at once that what you felt to be wakefulness was just dreaming. Then you will realize that you and I are and always have been one in reality. All else will then disappear, just as your ordinary dreams disappear on waking. Then they not only cease to exist, but they are found never to have really existed.

It is only when you wake up in the true sense that you find that you alone exist and that all else is nothing. Only after cycles and cycles of time can one attain one’s own conscious state of God and find that one’s infinite consciousness is eternally free of all illusion of duality.

The whole of creation is a play of thoughts, the outcome of the mind. It is your own mind which binds you, and it is also the mind which is the means of your freedom. You are eternally free. You are not bound at all.

But you cannot realize your freedom by merely hearing this from me, because your mind contrives to entangle you in the illusion of duality. Therefore you only understand what I am telling you, and mere understanding cannot make you experience the truth which I tell you...

For ages I have been telling people to leave all and come to me. That alone is the way to liberation from all illusion.

- **THE SILENT MASTER, MEHER BABA** - p. 31

(Compiled by Irwin Luck)





“Do not get disheartened and alarmed when adversity, calamity, or misfortunes pour in upon you. Thank God, for He has thereby given you the opportunity of acquiring forbearance and fortitude. Those who have acquired the power of bearing with adversities can easily enter the spiritual path.”

“Do not be angry with him who backbites you but be pleased; for thereby he serves you by diminishing the load of your sanskaras; also pity him because he increases his own load of sanskaras.”

- **Treasures from the Meher Baba Journals** - pp. 167, 246

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Baba lovers – Community? Or Family?

Editorial

More and more I encounter Baba lovers casually referring to “the Baba community”, and I wonder: “Is this how I experience Baba lovers?” Words have meanings, after all. Though Baba Himself – through His example of verbal silence – encouraged us to look beyond words. At the same time, Meher Baba was meticulous in His own personal choice of words when He felt it was important. As a Baba lover, it’s important to me that I “Say what I mean and mean what I say.”

How did Baba Himself use the word “community”? Most often He referred to “the Zoroastrian community” the religious and family milieu into which He himself as born. And in His **Message to India on His Fourth Voyage to Europe 1932-33**, He said: “...**the hatred between the leading communities, and their petty yet disastrous quarrels and fights, must cease – and the freedom and happiness of India are assured.**”¹ The “leading communities” presumably refers to Hindus and Muslims, and possibly Sikhs – in other words large groups of people united by religion, primarily. Did Baba ever refer to His lovers as a community? Not that I have found.

On the contrary, Mani, His familial sister, wrote the **Family Letters** to His Western family and the wider world. In 1962, at the East-West Gathering, Baba gave the message **My Dear Children** in which He said:

“You have come from great distances, not for some convention or conference, but to enjoy my company and feel afresh my love in your hearts. It is a coming together of children of East and West in the house of their Father.

“All religions of the world proclaim that there is but one God, the Father of all in creation.

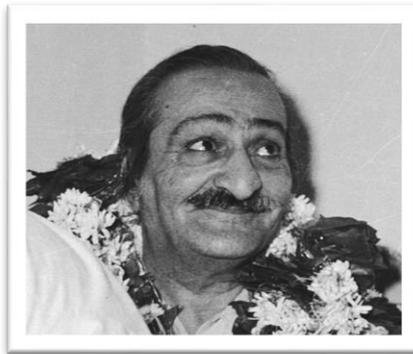
“I am that Father.

“I have come to remind all people that they should live on earth as children of the one Father until my grace awakens them to the realization that they are all one without a second, and that all divisions and conflict and hatred are but a shadow-play of their own ignorance.

“Although all are my children, they ignore the simplicity and beauty of this

Truth by indulging in hatreds, conflicts and wars that divide them in enmity, instead of living as one family in their Father's house. Even among you who love me and accept me for what I am, there is sometimes lack of understanding of one another's hearts.

"Patiently have I suffered these things in silence for all my children. It is time that they become aware of the presence of their Father in their midst and of their responsibility towards Him and themselves. I shall break my Silence, and, with my Word of words, arouse my children to realize in their lives, the indivisible Existence which is GOD." ²



I have discussed this Community / Family dichotomy with a few other Baba lovers – all, it must be said, “of a certain age” (like myself!) and one pointed out that in a community there is a degree of conformity in thinking, sometimes of apparel, behaviour. In a family there is no such consistency. There is the old weird uncle, the solitary merchant seaman family friend, the spinster aunt, the addictive son or daughter – and you are stuck with them, because they are your family.

There is little uniformity among Baba lovers. This same Baba lover – on his frequent flights to India – liked to play a game he called “Spot the Baba lover” – because unlike devotees of some other gurus, Baba lovers offer few outward signs and symbols of their pilgrim status! Each has her or his own unique, direct relationship with Meher Baba - as He has ordained - and He meets each of us on our own level. And our numbers are frankly so small, when measured against the billions of other humans on Earth, that we can't really help being a family!

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I personally do get the feeling, when I hear mention of “the Baba community”, that those using this term are unconsciously or consciously building an enclosure around Baba, putting Him at a safe, suburban distance. Baba Himself noted this phenomenon.

“Baba is also treated like a lion by his lovers. There is love, there is admiration, there is an intense desire to see Baba comfortable and happy, and Baba is also frequently fed by the love of his lovers. But all this is done keeping Baba segregated from one's own self. What is wanted is that the lovers should open the "cage" and, through intense love for their Baba, throw themselves inside it to become food for the Lion of Love.

“The lover should permit himself to be totally consumed through his love for the Beloved.”³

I am convinced that Baba wants to be part of our lives – our lives *as they are*, not necessarily as we think they *ought* to be. He wants deeply to share in our experience – unique, painful, joyful as it may be – as it is actually happening! Like...a father or a mother or a dear, dear friend.

I asked Rick Chapman, of *Meher Baba Information* in Northern California, what he thought about this question. His reply was disarming – and brought the focus back around to oneself:

“...I feel that a lot of the reference to “Baba community” is nothing other than the honest designation of either the local Baba-lovers or a more general indication of “people who love/follow/are interested in Meher Baba.” In fact, the only thing worth taking seriously is what we each, ourselves, do, not what others do. We may have a role with respect to others, of course, but the main course at His banquet table is the lover’s individual relationship with the Beloved.”

Whichever way one naturally feels inclined to think or feel about other Baba lovers, the important thing is to recognise Baba in each one. And community or family, we have Baba’s statement to guide us:

“I am that Father.”

1. **Messages of Meher Baba** (1945) p. 5
2. **The God Man**, p. 363, also **The Path of Love**, pp. 95-6
3. **Lord Meher** Online Edition, p. 4273



*Editor's Note: In clearing out my e-mail inbox, I found an e-mail from about a year ago, sent to the Newsletter from **Aude Gotto** in Norwich, offering something for us to include. But there wasn't any article attached to this mysterious forwarded e-mail! So I wrote to Aude. In my (over)enthusiastic way, I began: "I hope you and yours (His!) are well, busy & cheerful..."*

Aude replied: "I have no memory or record of any article I may have sent to the Newsletter. I am not well, not busy but trying to keep cheerful. Baba is in the process of taking away my memory, as well as many other capacities. But I will hunt around and try to find something to send you. More later . . ."

Not fifteen minutes had elapsed before Aude found and e-mailed me the piece – a Prayer she composed a year ago:

Is there anything that God isn't?

A song of praise

A personal take on "**You Alone Exist**"
the prayer Baba wrote with Bhau Kalchuri

There is nothing but God. This morning looking out of my window at the peaceful garden, I experienced this strongly in my heart. God is the substance of all things and without Him nothing exists. So this prayer rises from my heart.

Merciful God, You are everything and nothing exists outside of You. You are the dedicated individuals who carry out their duties and responsibilities whether noticed and praised, or invisible and unrewarded. You are those who sacrifice self-interest for the welfare of others, and believe in human brotherhood, whose lives are like an upright flame spreading light and warmth around them.

But You are also in the cruel, cold fanatics who kill for an idea, in a distorted quest for truth and purity; those who trample others in their pursuit of power and greed; those who indulge in unnatural perversions as they despair to find the happiness they yearn for; You are in all those misguided, skewed, destructive human beings; You know the sufferings of their souls which they abuse and do not recognise.

You are the Law that sustains the Universe, and the Law of Karma that rules

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human lives. By Your Will the planets and stars revolve on their orbits, by Your Will the trees blossom, grow and shed their leaves; by Your Will animals hunt, mate and play, and by Your Will human beings evolve through suffering to greater consciousness.

You are in the beauty of the wild places of the world, the red sky of dawn, the intricate architecture of the winter trees, the grace of the squirrel running along a branch, the fat pigeon sitting at the top of a tree. But You are also in the ugliness of all unnatural, man-created places: noisy, polluted, hectic cities, dead, soulless spaces in hospitals, offices and airports.

You are the moments of exquisite joy and the times of dark despair, physical pain and mental anguish, and You are the peace that descends when suffering is accepted and surrendered.

You are the Love that awakens our hearts, You are the longing for Truth. You are the reality beyond appearances, the bigger picture that we cannot see, and You are the multifaceted Illusion. You uphold the fragmented multiplicity of this illusory world until it will be time for it to disappear into the Oneness of Reality. You guide the whole of creation, in mysterious, often incomprehensible ways, towards its ultimate perfect goal.

All this I saw in a moment of insight. Dear God, help me not to lose this precious vision when I am again swept up into the whirlpool of Illusion.

Let Your Presence be my rock, my beacon above the waves, the fixed point where I can find my strength and my rest.

- Aude Gotto



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~Chair /⁺Secretary/*Treasurer

If you wish to bring anything to our attention, please e-mail us:

mbaboard@yahoo.co.uk

Share your thoughts, stories, poems & pictures with the Meher Baba Family and Friends. Newsletter Contributions:

meherbabanewsletter@yahoo.co.uk

Articles are edited and sometimes shortened to fit in with the length and style of the newsletter.

Our next issue should be out in Summer 2023.

All articles, submissions, notices to be in by 18th May 2023

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Local Meetings and Regional Contacts

Cornwall:

Keith Miles - 01208 816221

London*:

www.meherbaba.co.uk/eventslondon.html

Devon:

Jan Coutu - 01237 472169

Norwich:

Mary and Richard Turner - 01603 626636 meheramary@icloud.com

Monthly Meetings - Monday Evening /Sunday Afternoon.

North West:

Paul Smith - 07837 541964 slim_pilgrim@hotmail.com

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Sue Chapman - 01665 576957 suchapman@hotmail.com

Scotland:

Paul Birchard - 07811 601674

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Rosie Jackson - 01626 772520 / 07929 330097

East Sussex:

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Wales:

Sheila Bassett - 01639 830320

****Please note, when attending the London Centre, there is no longer free parking at the weekend in Astrop Terrace or in the Richford Street area. Always check before leaving your car.***

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