



In the early 1960s
an adolescent male was watching TV
in the middle of the day.
What he saw rocked him to his foundations.
A man in a classroom setting was talking about
the 'Silent Messiah', Meher Baba.
Thus began one soul's
incredible journey.

Meher Baba and me
presents a refreshingly different perspective
on the lover/Beloved 'play'.
By turns poignant, irreverent, earthy and zany;
the book clearly conveys the joy and wonder
... in having the God-man as one's
intimate Friend and confidant.

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Preface



When ***Meher Baba and me*** was first published I expected to be addressing a Baba lover audience exclusively. It turned out that a number of relatives and friends who were not Baba lovers liked the book very much and the lack of knowledge regarding Baba's Life or 'Cosmology' didn't seem to matter. This was a lovely surprise!

For those readers who might want to know more about Baba, I'd like to recommend this unusual, amazing web site:

http://www.meherbabadnyana.net/life_eternal/Life_Eternal.html

Of course Googling *Meher Baba* will bring up dozens of interesting sites – but this one is quite special.

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Purchase book:

Sheriar Foundation Bookstore 807 34th Ave. S.

North Myrtle Beach, SC 29582 USA

<http://www.sheriarbooks.org/>

Free ebook on-line:

<http://www.meherbabaandme.com/>

***Dear Jim, It just goes to show that it is possible to cross the Californian with the Aussie and come up with a winner! Your book makes life with Baba feel very real and immediate. We have both read it and enjoyed it immensely. It is full of good things and we are so grateful that you have gone to all the trouble to share them with us. Tian knows how much is involved (as she has published her Chinese translation of Discourses). We hope you can come up this way before long and drink some Queensland red with us.

Jai Baba! Geoff and Tian

***By chance this is the second time I saw your name in a week so I decided to read your book. I hope you don't mind but for now I

skipped the poetry, I lost all my poetry so when I read others I get sad about my own. I want to say thanks, and thanks again, I think you've started something though I can't put my finger on it. Some words do come to mind like a fresh breeze, open and honest, a beautiful wife, and I've been there. In His love and hope, Marc

***Over the years I have read most of Jim's poetry & stories, but once this book was published, I thought I had better read it seeing as I am his wife. So I picked it up, started reading, and couldn't put it down until the final page. It is a delightful read, with a glimpse into the heart of a wonderful soul. Baba's Jim.

***I enjoyed your husband's book then I went to your site (*Tricia's Art web site* <http://www.dancingdust.com>) and enjoyed your pictures. I really loved your work. Thanks for putting yourself out there. Marc

***Jim, wonderful! Wonderful! Wonderful! I enjoyed reading your book very much. In His love, Katie

***I only just looked at this link. Wow, you put the whole book online! That's really generous of you, Jim. I prefer to read it as a "real" book, in my hands. I'm enjoying it enormously. There are some truly great anecdotes. At the moment I'm just reading the prose sections consecutively. Kendra

***Dear Jim,
I've been perusing your book and am very impressed! You have written honestly from your heart to great effect. Thank you so much for taking the time and making the effort to share your Baba story with us. Love in Him always, Frank

***Dear Jim, Jai Meher Baba!
I recently came back from visiting my family in the USA and upon arrival I found your book waiting for me. It was very kind to send it to me. I would read it every day after lunch. You have not only written your story but our story as well for when it comes to the life of a lover of God, and as beginners as we are, we all kind of start out at the same place. I could find myself thinking and feeling as you in so many of the instances you recalled.

Thanks for making the effort of putting it down on paper. It was a joy and fun to read.

Keep well and strong in Baba's Remembrance.

Yours lovingly in Baba, Craig



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An oil painting by my wife, Tricia,
entitled 'Master and Disciple'.

Based on photos of Meher Baba and me,
when young and beautiful!

Back Cover Photograph

Photo by Tricia

(an older, funny-lookin' me and the older
but still Most Beautiful Beloved)

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Dedication

Based on a quirky principle,
I don't believe in dedicating things to Avatar Meher Baba.

Who is dedicating what ... to whom?

(As per Bhau Kalchuri's poem, 'You Alone Exist',
from *The Nothing and The Everything*.)

Therefore, I'd like to dedicate this book to all those
who've enjoyed my poetry
and encouraged or inspired me to write more:
especially, my wife, Tricia ('Biki'), Michael Rohan,
Meheru Irani, Robert and Sosi Malta,
Mark Hutchinson/Braun, Ray Kerkhove
and Francis Brabazon.



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Introduction



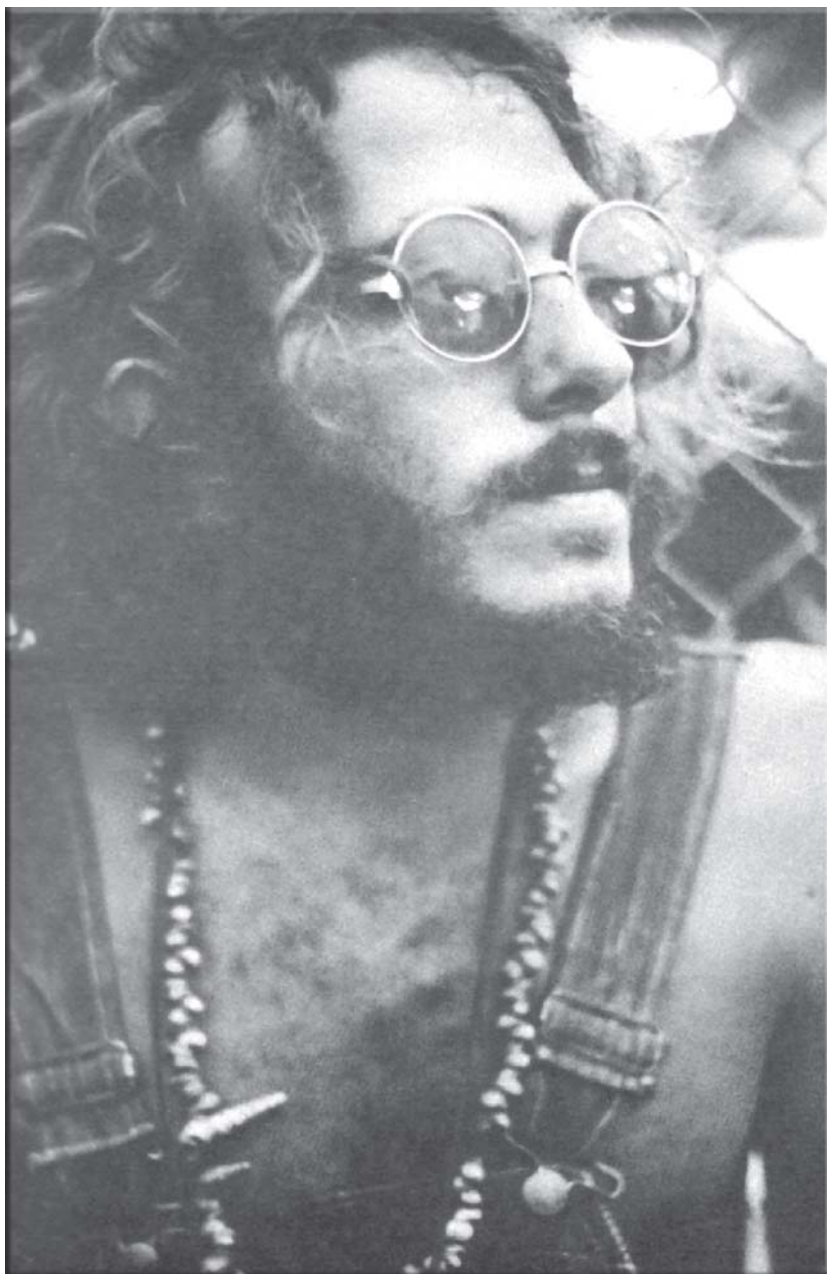
For many people, sometime after they reach fifty years of age, the reality of their mortality takes tangible shape. Today, Sunday 12 June 2005, in my fifty-seventh year (whilst the Australian Anniversary of Baba's visit is in full swing), I've finally decided I will leave something behind.

I hope and pray that someone out there is inspired to love and remember Him a little bit more and repeat His Name, still yet more. I hope there are teentsy-weentsy flecks of His Glory leaping up and off, at least some of these pages.

NON-AUSTRALIAN READERS: As an expatriate American, I trust the colloquialisms, slang and unique 'Aussie' ways of expression won't be a stumbling block to understanding and enjoyment; since 'Baba's poet', Francis Brabazon, has paved the way.

I've added a few footnotes for non-Australian readers but I've lost track of which expressions would be known or used, in America or England. Australia, like England, has an amazingly vast arsenal of slang, colloquialisms and idioms. One example of a word that I struggled over, trying to imagine if there was any way Americans would know this word – it's tucker. Tucker=food (now I don't have to put in footnotes for tucker).

I've included many 'non-Baba' poems because I like them and feel they are some of my best. Most of the 'work poems' were written during the first ten or eleven years in Australia, and my business was outdoor work: rubbish removal, gardening, land clearing, tree pruning etc. Later, the work poems were written while driving taxis or jobs I've had delivering food supplies.



The hippie 'seeker'

When I first met Eruch and he asked me how I came to Baba, I basically told him it was a long, drawn-out game of Hide and Seek. How very many hints and signs Baba gave me and yet how long it took to finally come to Him.

Eruch replied, "Why didn't you just run to Him?"

My mind went blank for a few seconds and my reply seemed to just spring spontaneously from within, "Well, I suppose I did – but in *His* time."

Eruch beamed! Reinforcing my theory that he had an uncanny knack of asking the perfect question, which would allow us to come up with the perfect answer! I think all of the Mandali did this.

Hide and seek

In 1961 or '62 an adolescent male in Kettering, Ohio, was home alone in the middle of the day, watching TV – something he *never* did. A man in a classroom setting was talking about the life and work of the Silent Messiah, Meher Baba. The young man was rocked to his foundations, inexplicably very angry, confused and torn up inside. He didn't remember the incident again until some years later.

After dropping out of my second year at Memphis State University, I hit the hippie trail with great expectations! Woodstock, the Chicago riots, Haight Ashbury, Greenwich Village and so on. I swallowed the psychedelic utopianism chimera – hook, line and sinker. Really believed in lasting enlightenment through drugs! In 1967, while hitchhiking in California, I saw His Face for the second time. The *Don't Worry Be Happy* card. I just *had* to have it. The driver of the car was reluctant to part with it and I had to almost beg him for it.

From that moment on He was with me. During many lost drug moments I would pull the card out with a flourish and show it around. It was one of my prized possessions throughout the hippie years.

In 1968, a longing to go to India reached a point of obsession. The desire was so strong that I determined to *even cut my hair and get a job!* I only stuck it out long enough to raise the money for Mexico. Thus began the greatest adventure of my hippie career. Living on a vast, wild and unspoiled beach of great beauty; we surfed and smoked. My best friend shared my obsession to get to India. And we would lie awake under the stars making pacts to get there, no matter what it took. This soul-deep desperate longing took place precisely during the Last Darshan! We did return to America and got jobs but then spent the money on drugs.

It's easy to say, "Well, the time wasn't right." But I actually feel if I could have mustered up the strength and courage necessary to get to India by hook *or* crook, He would have drawn me straight to Guruprasad.

In early 1970 it was time to flee the polluted city. Set up a commune. Grow organic food. In the desert outside Phoenix, Arizona, were some abandoned gold mines called the Robot Mines. (The eccentric owner designed robots to fight wars so men wouldn't have to!) As with so many 'communes', the drug lethargy meant that only one person really worked. The total darkness within those caves was a metaphor for our collective consciousness. Dull, confused and stoned.

One day light appeared! A large man in a VW van came to spend a night or two. He kept repeating that he was, "going to Alaska to find God," and he would proudly show how he'd outfitted his van for the journey. Initially, I was completely repulsed by this guy. He was big and loud and laughed very hard. Stomped around the place laughing. It was quite disruptive to our 'cool', our spiritual torpor and drug haze.

BUT ... slowly my repulsion changed to awe. Here was a

child in the Biblical sense. Spontaneous, happy and radiant. One day I saw him reading and decided that whatever it was I'd find it and read it. The first chance I had I snuck up to his backpack and rummaged through for the aqua-coloured book, *The Discourses*, by Meher Baba. Subsequently, I found someone who had *The Discourses* and I borrowed it. But, just as with the *Don't Worry Be Happy* card (where I would attempt to read the quote on the back, 'To penetrate into the essence'), the material simply wouldn't penetrate! It's impossible to explain but I just couldn't comprehend what I was reading. It was as if Baba had erected an invisible barrier to intellectual understanding.

When Yogi Bhajan came to America from India, with a mission to get young people off drugs, he sent one of his first students (BabaDon) to Phoenix, Arizona, to teach 'Kundalini' yoga in 1970. It was the beginning of the end of my search for God through drugs.

I was detoxed by hours and hours of intense yoga and breathing exercises, vegetarian diet, fasting etc. We held yoga classes at the University of Arizona and every time I'd go there I would first stop at the library, get the copy of *God Speaks* and open it to the photo of Baba on the tiger skin. I would stare and stare with an almost blank mind. A deep, deep, wordless questioning – kind of like, who are you ... and why am I drawn to sit here and stare at your photo? Then I'd turn a few pages, attempt to read some, shake my head in confusion and go back to staring at the photo.

After about six months, my yoga teacher ordered me to go teach on my own. I picked Memphis, where I had lived through high school, college and the early hippie years. Thus I began a short career as a mini-yogi guru! Actually, in retrospect, I can see Baba's hand in those free yoga classes in the park. Overweight housewives, lawyers, hippies, children and athletes – we were all one. Chanting to God, Sufi dancing, hugging and doing yoga. The most beautiful group experiences

I've ever had. Almost all of the students immediately took to heart my message to give up drugs and they did.

One of the students was a very eccentric, leprechaun-like fellow. Bradley approached me one day before class in a virtual frenzy. He was so excited as he ran up to me and started tugging on my yoga whites, repeating over and over, "Jim, Meher Baba's God. Meher Baba's God. Look, I've got all the information here. I wrote off to California. Look Jim – Meher Baba's God."

This cool, unaffected 'yogi guru' finally calmed Bradley down with the promise that he'd read the literature (the info packet from PO Box 1101 in Berkeley). Again, it simply wouldn't penetrate. I tried to read it but would just drift off. (By this time the reader may be thinking, My God, what's it gonna take for this guy to open his eyes and ears.)

Baba gave me hints, clues and signs in abundance and I still stumbled on obliviously. There are only two possible conclusions: 1. How could anybody be so damn thick? So blind? Or 2. Meher Baba's timing is precise and Perfect, so much so that He can temporarily suspend the entire workings of a *reasonably* healthy mind and intellect, until He deems it the *right* time. Hopefully, it's the second alternative.

At some point I decided that Memphis had to have a vegetarian restaurant and we, the yoga class, would open it. The husband of one of my students, who came religiously with her two young daughters, happened to be a multi-millionaire, so he bought us a restaurant!

We transformed a southern-style rib shack into a vegetarian restaurant. (Purifying the oven that used to roast the pork by sitting inside it and chanting!) For the first month or two of business, Patanjali's Pure Food Restaurant had the purest energy and most exalted 'vibes' of any place of business I've ever been in. It really was a temple. I'm sure it was due to our 'unknown guest'.

Before opening, I wrote to Meher Baba Information in

Berkeley, and bought 500 *Don't Worry Be Happy* cards and every single poster that they had. I think we also bought *God Speaks* and *The Discourses*. I decorated the restaurant and, besides the hundreds of photos of the yoga class, I put up all of the Baba posters. One wall in particular became a saint/master/guru collage. From Yogananda to Jesus and Mary. Sri Ramakrishna, Yogi Bhanjan and any and all pictures of spiritual figures I could get – all went up on this wall. I arranged it personally. Guess who ended up on top? The *Don't Worry Be Happy* poster and the *Not We But One* poster! I used to gaze up and silently ask, Who are you and why are you on top?

I directed Mark, the cashier, to be sure that every single person got a *Don't Worry be Happy* card when they paid. Mark had gradually slipped into an exalted spiritual state that he wouldn't discuss. He would just radiate love and light! Quite extraordinary. I used to secretly watch him from a distance and feel uplifted. Now, what do you think he was reading? *Discourses* of course! I asked him about them and Meher Baba – but he was so tight-lipped about his inner life that I couldn't get much out of him.

One day I got a phone call. The operator said, "I have a collect call from Meher Baba, will you accept the charges?" It was a Baba lover living in Oklahoma who had heard about this restaurant filled with Baba's photos. (I later found out it was Max Reif.) Imagine his chagrin when I insisted it was a yoga ashram restaurant. It reached the absurd point where I asked Malcolm, the cook, to read *God Speaks* for me and tell me who or what Avatar was!

Eventually, the tiny seeds of hypocrisy in me grew enormous. Having set myself up as a spiritual figure, I had to pay the price. I won't go into the gory details but I experienced first-hand the terrible dangers of trying to be a 'guru' or spiritual teacher. In desperation, I decided to go back and get 're-inspired' by my teacher, who was a very strong and disciplined man. When I got to Phoenix, it turned out to be auspicious

timing. A huge yoga gathering was being held in the Arizona desert at a place called Crown King. Students of this 3HO Yoga group came from all over the country. We chanted, yoga'd and got high, naturally.

Three days later, coming down the mountain, we stopped at a country store for lunch – the only store for miles around. The proprietor was not an ordinary country store proprietor. She was a large, radiant woman whose skin shone. She exuded a powerful, spiritual presence. In fact, she was probably the most beautiful and powerful person I'd ever met.

We all immediately began to talk about God and spirituality and she recounted the numerous ashrams she had lived in and the gurus she had met and studied with, during the 40s and 50s.

I don't remember how it came up but since I had been asking people for years what they knew about Meher Baba, I must have said something to her. At one point she looked at me and said, "And that's when I met your friend – in San Francisco."

My heart was hammering. I was dizzy with anticipation. I felt my search was at an end. At last, here was someone who had actually met Baba. She would tell me all about Him. I struggled to regain my yoga cool and tried desperately to ask in a casual fashion, "Uhhh, could you tell us about the time you met Meher Baba?"

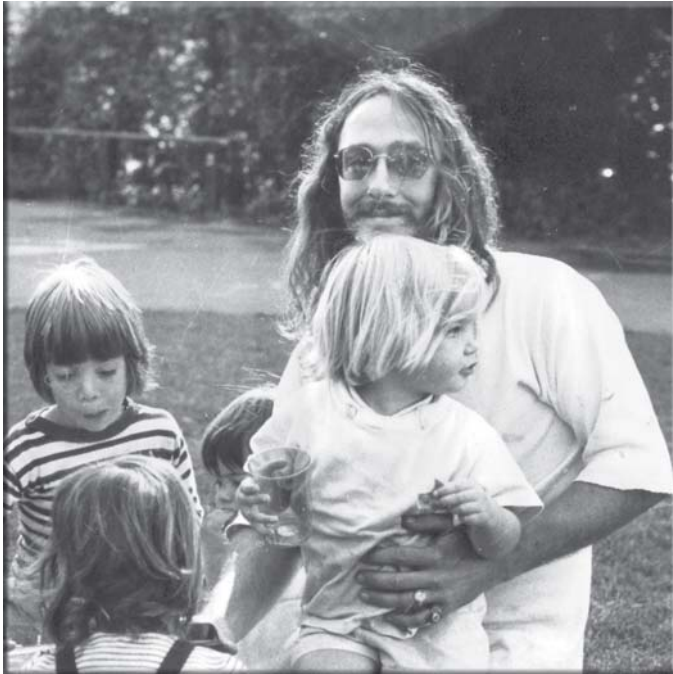
She looked deep into my eyes and a smile grew bigger and bigger across her face, as she slowly shook her head from side to side. Wouldn't say a word! We went on to other things.

My God, the lengths He will go to, to insure His perfect timing.

When I returned to Memphis, the restaurant had gone downhill. People were smoking pot again. My friend-students gradually turned against me. It all fell apart and I left town in shame. This tiny payback for being a hypocritical 'teacher' was so small compared to what it could have been. It was Baba's Grace for sure.

I fled to San Francisco and put the *Don't Worry Be Happy* poster from the restaurant up on my wall. I would stare and stare at it, knowing and feeling intuitively that His eyes were tunnels to Infinity.

I kept procrastinating about going to Berkeley to get a book and finally get to the bottom of this. Eventually, I did go and bought *Listen Humanity*. Every word sank deep into my soul. My heart opened. He came in. We started our honeymoon together. My life began.



*Berkeley 'honeymoon' 1971
Berkeley Campus Pre-school*

The Beyond Beyond Hotel

(Dedicated to Michael Rohan)

Let me be
like the dog
chained outside the pub

his attention doesn't waver
when strangers pat him,
his eyes and ears remain alert
for the One.

His Master fills his instinct/mind
sniffs the air
for a whiff
of the One he loves,
his bark is every lover's sigh

make me like the dog
Baba – to wait and long
for Your return
from the pub
of the Beyond Beyond

My chain is short,
strain and pull as I may
I can't reach Your Abode
So Beloved
when You've drunk Your fill
of my tears of separation ...

You must come to me
and unchain this mangy self
outside The Beyond Beyond Hotel

Giving up on this world

the way an infant falls asleep
ripe mango snaps off in summer's heat
a helium balloon rising from a child's careless grip
the scrawny beaten burrow on the mountain top,
his heavy load lifted at last
a cat walking haughtily away,
after a long loving pat
cud-chewing brown cow watching bright pink sunset
like morning mist vanishing without a trace
a hang-glider's leap from the cliff face
when the sacred sweet forgotten NOW
obviates and defeats future and past;
with a shrug of the shoulders and a soul-deep sigh,
I'll be surrendered to the 'Powers that BE'
when a kick is as good as a kiss
having given this world a miss



The stone solution

Some days everything goes wrong

I bang my head on tree limbs
and rose thorns hook me and tear flesh,
my chainsaw resists pull after pull
and won't go into violent action

I slip on dogshit and fall to my knees,
there's nowhere to hide when I have to pee
It rains when I start the lawnmower,
then stops when I get home and close the door

Other days go so well
I wonder what happened to yesterday's hell ...
that passed away as it had to

Meher Baba said the solution was poise –
equipoise in every situation.

To become like a stone! (He 'said')
What? ... round and fat? ... lying low?

No, I think He meant unaffected –

Whether trod on
worshipped

or thrown

a stone is a stone is a stone

Woolies-the great leveller

(Woolworths, small town supermarket in Byron Bay, Australia)

if you were psychic you could hear the air
tremble with mantras – minds churning over:

light globes, milk, rubbish bags ...
juice and bickies and chicken snags
brows furrowed ticking off lists

miniature humans on the rampage
frenzied grasping for candy and chips,
wailing addicts in sugar withdrawal ...
disembodied voices on the PA
floating and garbled;
something about aisle checks, specials
and Peter wanted in produce

It's like limbo

suddenly you're face to face (or cart to cart)
with the nasty ex-boss or neighbour ...
the one-night stand you didn't kiss goodbye
in the hung-over morning,
or the hung-over morning itself –
when of all the carts you picked the handicapped one,
limping and squealing past bickering couples

everyone's alert to the possibilities:
who will be in the next aisle?
can I avoid empty, polite conversation
and get the hell out of here in a hurry?

Barmen and bouncers – ockers and ferals
Councillors – developers – European backpackers
slow-motion pensioners and Aboriginal trackers

We're all One at Woolies
We're all filling our carts

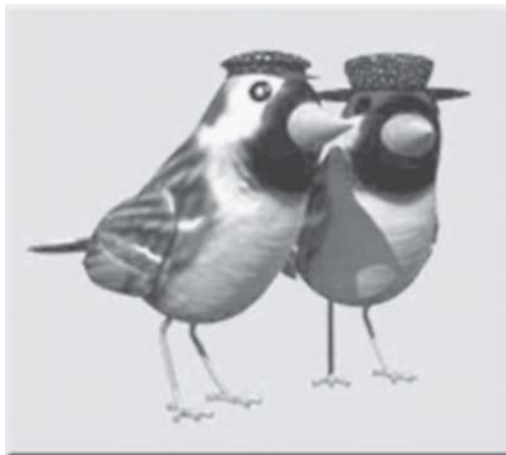
The mutant McDonald's birds

It looks like they hop crooked
and their colours are washed-out

Scrawny, dusty little birds grovelling at my feet
for bits of junk food to eat ...
begging for Chicken McNuggets,
chirping off-key for bits of bun –
trying to sing entreatingly for Big Mac morsels

Next to this thunderous busy road
I doubt there is a bug for miles around ...
or worms ... or grubs ... or any fresh tucker at all

I see generations of stunted, handicapped birds
mutating at McDonalds around the world;
And I see legions of do-gooders knocking on doors,
collecting money to purchase fresh worms –
re-educating the little buggers to eat real food
saving the whales
and the McDonald's mutants



Mel Gibson meets Baba!

In September 1987, my wife, Tricia, and I were at the Sydney, Australia airport. Tricia was off to India on pilgrimage. Suddenly, she exclaimed, "Look, there's Mel Gibson, let's go talk to him." As we approached, he was squatting down looking through his carry-on bag and the first thing I noticed was how completely ordinary the bag and its contents were! The same jumbled mess anyone would have in their carry-on bag. Next, I noticed his clothing. Even if one tried to 'dress down' it couldn't be that authentic. As Tricia gripped my arm, trembling nervously, we mumbled something really stupid and embarrassing, like, "Hi, we really like your movies."

I expected an exasperated, half-hearted, "Thanks." Instead, he looked up directly at us with a big smile and genuine energy (a 'real' person!) and intensely responded with an Australianism, like, "Good on ya, thanks a lot, appreciate that." Not a note of phoniness in it. So we wandered away.

Several minutes passed and Tricia said, "Hey, we should have given him a Baba card." I agreed and felt frustrated that we hadn't thought of it. So then Tricia said we should go back and do it. He was still there in the check-in line.

I argued that it would be imposing and stars were exposed to enough of that stuff but Tricia insisted it would be for Baba (and Mel of course)! "OK, you do it."

"No, you. Come on Jim, you're better at this sort of thing – I'll feel too embarrassed."

"Yeah, but it will be less threatening from a woman."

Well, Tricia won out. I got the *Don't Worry Be Happy* card from my wallet and started back across the terminal. I felt very apprehensive about how Mel might react. How could I present Baba, via this card, without being pushy or intrusive? Suddenly, the perfect line popped into my mind.

"I'd like to give you this. It's in appreciation of your work."

After I said my line and handed him the card, I expected to make a clean, quick getaway! But it was not to be.

Again, he looked directly at me with a big smile and said thanks. Then he held the card up, focused all of his attention on it, and said very clearly and powerfully, "Don't Worry ... Be Happy ... Meher Baba." He did it with the sort of vitality he would project if he were on stage on Broadway! Incredibly, he pronounced Baba's Name perfectly – just the way that the Mandali pronounce Meher.

Well, mission accomplished, now I could be off.

Nope. After a second or two of staring at the card, he looked at me intently and in a very clear and direct manner said, "Who is Meher Baba?"

I answered roughly, "Well, you know how there are all these so-called gurus around nowadays who ask people for money or collect lots of cars? Meher Baba is a genuine Spiritual Master."

Again he smiled and said something like, "OK – well, thanks."

When I got back to Tricia, we decided to keep watching him to see what he did with the card. We could see it clutched in his hand as he waited in line. Then, after check-in, as he walked to the escalator, still held in his hand. Up the escalator and out of sight – still holding onto Baba!

PS: Tricia and I both decided he was much more handsome in person than any photo or movie we'd ever seen. Incredible eyes.

PS2: The Baba card was one we had printed in Sydney and it had the Sydney Meher Baba Information postal box address on it. We used to collect the mail and for weeks afterwards I had an ongoing fantasy of getting a request for more information – and then we'd casually invite Mel over for a cup of tea! Several years later, when the *Don't Worry Be Happy* song swept the world, I would wonder if he still had the card.

AFTERWORD: Submitted to the on-line, *BabaTalk*, following the release of *The Passion of the Christ* film:

I'd like to share something with you all about this film and Mel's 'contact' with Baba. When I first came to Baba the notion of His using 'ordinary people' in His Work was a very attractive and romantic notion! I can remember back then, speculating with other Baba lovers about how he might be 'working through us', in little life incidents in His Work. (Based on the many stories where Baba either directly, or indirectly, revealed that He *had* used his 'ordinary' lovers to work through them for greater purposes.)

As the years rolled on I began to feel that thinking about these things, trying to read into small, life incidents something larger, was a bit of escapism and/or grandiosity.

I mean, why use us 'ding dongs'? When He has the whole Spiritual Hierarchy to work through. And yet we know that He *did* use, and work through, for some of His 'important' work, those ordinary people who knew and loved Him.

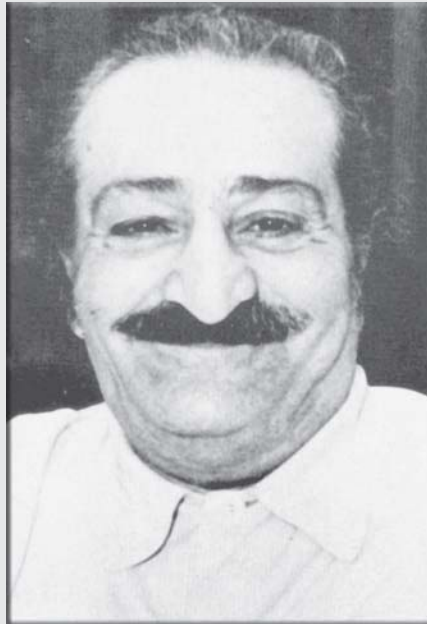
To the point: Since the huge kerfuffle about this movie, *The Passion of the Christ*, I've thought back to those shared moments with Mel in the Sydney airport and I can't shake the feeling that it's actually a remote possibility that, in prompting us to give him the Baba card, Baba set in motion the train of events in Mel's career that led to this watershed in film-making.

When I originally wrote the story, I didn't want to go 'over the top' about the moment that he held up the Baba card at arm's length and read, "*Don't Worry – Be Happy – Meher Baba.*" And then, after several seconds of gazing at the card, turned and looked directly in my eyes and asked, with incredible focus and intensity, "*Who is Meher Baba?*" But, I'll tell you now – it just wasn't normal or natural. When he asked who Baba is, it was wholehearted and direct. The only thing I regret in the contact, is the wishy-washy answer I gave to his one hundred per cent sincere question!

And the way that he said, "*Meher*." I wasn't exaggerating when I wrote that it's how the Mandali pronounce Meher. Obviously, never having heard of or seen a photo of Baba, how could he do this?

The other little thing is how he continued to clutch the card in his hand for at least five minutes afterwards. That isn't 'normal' either. You'd expect him to have thrown it away or at least put it in his pocket or carry-on bag.

Anyway, it's kind of a delicious spookiness to wonder how this fleeting 'contact' with Baba may have eventually led to Mel's passion to produce *The Passion!* We'll probably never know.



*DON'T WORRY
BE HAPPY*

Meher Baba

Francis Brabazon doesn't give a damn

I first met Francis Brabazon in India in 1980 on a Meherazad visit. When I heard he was there, I felt great excitement and anticipation – like I would have felt going for dinner and drinks with Jack Kerouac when I was a hippie! ... or to Elvis' home for go-cart racing when I was a kid! I had read all of Francis' books and actually carried *Stay With God* everywhere for about eighteen months.

Since moving to Australia in 1982, I've come to appreciate his profound impact on Baba lovers here. Whereas, Americans tended to admire and know him through his poetry; there is a core group of perhaps fifteen–twenty people in Australia who were *profoundly* influenced directly by Francis – his wit, humour, 'toughness' and deep grounding in Baba.

I've heard many wonderful stories from these people who spent so much time with him. In return, here's my favourite 'Francis story'.

So. It's 1980 in Meherazad and I'm going to meet Francis. Wow. I approached the room directly across from the veranda, where we eat our lunch and there he was – alone. He greeted me warmly, brewed a cup of tea and we drank and smoked and talked. Fantastic.

As the contact warmed up and we seemed to really be hitting it off, here comes Mani. Eyes wide in exaggerated horror, "What's this, Jim? You can't be hogging Francis all to yourself. C'mon now, come over to the veranda so the others get a chance."

I thought Francis would be mobbed and it would be my last opportunity to 'hang out' with him. Instead, somehow Paul Lieberon from Canada was the only person who joined us.

We then proceeded to have a wonderful spiritual talkfest. Lots of laughter, with meaty and juicy bits of Baba's cosmology. As things proceeded it became clear that both Paul and Francis were exceedingly witty; and that their knowledge of Sufism and poetry was way beyond me. So I sat on the sidelines

witnessing this amazing, intellectual sparring session, interjecting a few tidbits but mainly acting as a sort of referee. Gradually Paul was leading Francis deeper and deeper into more purely intellectual and esoteric territory. Not so much laughter now!

Just as I thought I could sense Francis becoming ill at ease, he suddenly blurted out very forcefully, *"I don't give a damn about nothin' ... 'cept Meher Baba."*

The conversation came back down to earth!

Several years later, Melbourne c. 1983 or 84 – Tricia and I picked up Francis and Patricia Saunders at the airport. He had come to visit his brother who was very ill.

I'd heard vague rumours through the Baba grapevine about a strange disease called Alzheimer's that Francis might have. He *did* act differently from the first meeting in India, and subsequent contacts at Avatar's Abode and he didn't seem to remember me.

Francis and I sat in the back seat of the car pretty much in silence. My mind was working away, searching for a conversation starter. Finally, I said, "Francis, remember in India when you and I and Paul Lieberon were talking and you said, 'I don't give a damn about nothin' – 'cept Meher Baba'?"

Silence. More silence. What to do? Is he going to ignore that? After about thirty seconds, which seemed an eternity, with gut-wrenching sadness and poignancy in his voice he said, "What a pity."

My mind really started whirling then! What pity? Life itself? That we're incarnate in Maya? Where's the connection to what he said in India? Has he lost it to such an extent that he can only talk in non-sequiturs? What to say now?

After another infinitely-long thirty seconds, I asked, "Francis, when you said 'what a pity' a moment ago, what did you mean?"

He replied, "That it isn't true."



Poem for Maltas

Our cat lives outside in a half-wild state
he hunkers down thoughtfully in drizzling rain,
catches mice and flying insects
and rolls in the dirt

He's resigned to the natural surrounds – yet always longs
to 'come inside'
to scratch couches perch on tables and lie by heaters
we let him in very rarely –
(and then only to run from front to back
out onto the feeding porch)

These rare glimpses of the inner world's wonders
sustain his hope for entry,
and so when we open doors to leave his head
gets knocked
we must put a foot up and sidle out –
or he'd rush past ears flat tail cautious

We like him wild and don't want hair or fleas,
so he has no chance for permanent inner dwelling,
with the warmth, smooth fabric and soothing TV drone.

His plight reminds me of mine ...
the brief and rare excursions – into Father's Mansion
of many rooms

The quickly passing exhilaration –
of His Holy Name's comfort;
Then tossed into the fray
of the world's back porch ►

tantalising forays into heart's cosiness
brief respites from mind's Wild Kingdom
hoping against hope
that one day
the door will open wide,
and a slit of light – will become Total Bright

Ensnared by His hearth
Toasting with wine the cruel joke's end

Naked animals #2

('Inspired'? by the African genocides of the '90s)

when humans go haywire ...
chop each other up,
rape and pillage

who bears witness?

horrified horses
confused cows
dogs in distress

the innocent, ethical beasts of the field,
hooves stained with blood,
wander in the carnage –

awaiting the arrival
of sane, and undead men and women
to re-establish peace and order
in the Domain

What cows want

they lumber along
seeking sweet grasses,
chewing philosophically

cyclical excitement:
mounting – or being mounted
and mating

slimy kicking calves
staining grass with fluids
suckling and following the herd,
on the greener grass
endless quest

to be left alone
their only desire –
chew, listen and watch ...
lumber along

people intervene
disrupt the lazy flow –
nipples hooked to loud machinery,
injections, branding and tick baths

then the end:

hammer to head

power saw carving

human molars

My dog can't read

my dog Lali
(short for Lalita – beautiful girl in Sanskrit)
can't read,
can't sex either –
she's fixed

but she can eat –
an ecstatic event
drooling on the dog-eating rug
tastebuds on fire

her play with Obi, a blue-eyed devil dog,
is holy joy
they nip each other just so ...
ears, neck flab, and legs
alternating dominance,
perfect pressure bites
bring sensual yes yes
a Swedish dog massage

but she can't read

so the gaps between food and play,
joy of our return after brief absence ...
remain unfilled

slumped in a chin-on-paw
marble brown-eyed, empty stare
waiting

Always Waiting
for the next food, walk, play
or human affection display

since I can read –
gaps are filled
between foodsexplayfun

Critical gaps too ...

between Zen empty mind
(which I know and remember from times past)
and the infill of holy spirit Meher Baba
(yogic chest – explosive bliss)
felt in years gone by

Now
biding my time on the couch reading
(escapist literature)
waiting ... for a return of exalted consciousness
waiting waiting

I agonise over Lali's lack of reading skills,
so that she too
could fill the voids
in-between

First poem after long dry spell

Two birds came very close to me
and eased my hopelessness

black and white – medium large
with rudimentary consciousness

I tweeted and whistled in and out,
said, "Hello," with love in my voice

they were interested,
seemed to get the point ...
showing me what they could do,
flipping the leaves aside
to uncover their beloved bugs.

aaaaahhhhhhhh ... those birds' eyes
marble emptiness

Horse's ultimatum

*(This poem is dedicated to all you 'hobby horse owners',
and to the noble creatures you've put out 'agisting' ...
more like barely existing.)*

If you won't brush me and talk to me
hand-feed me grains,
mount me and thrill to my gallop
or whisper the secret language of affection
when we're alone together ...

Then release me
to the wild whims of a life in nature;
where I can buck and snort with the herd,
our manes' tangled with burrs

In psychic accord we roam the earth
big eyes alert to the horizon's surprise:
hyenas, dingoes, wolves and men ...
we encircle our young
flanks poised toward the danger –
the power of our hindquarters

If you won't give me work
to justify my natural dignity,
then turn me loose – I'd rather fight
for my rightful place in the herd hierarchy.

I'm meant to *either* be
humanity's intimate charge
or else – completely free

Left in some paddock till the weekend ride,
makes me morose – crushes my pride

With only three types of grasses,
and two specie companions ...
this situation is unsatisfactory.

I'm unhealthy, bored – and ready for the glue factory



Attending to Him

You listen to Eruch talk about his attention to detail in seeking the Beloved's comfort. You hear the stories of how he provided a walking, talking comfort station for the God-Man. His pockets and luggage and heart filled with aids and remedies for Baba's daily life in illusion. See Eruch in the films always anticipating, noticing – almost fussing about! – in a highly-strung state of awareness regarding Baba's needs or wishes.

To see to His comfort. This is a game, which we all can still play. The Divine Beauty of His Body is missing; but the invisible Universal Body lives on within all creation. Our awareness of His 'In-dwellingness' gives us the chance to see to His comfort. *Now*. Now ... during His Manifestation we all can see to His comfort in our hearts.

Internal cleanliness will keep His House in order
we fluff up the pillows of kindliness
empty the ashtrays of lust
spray air freshener in Arti and song
wipe His darshan weary brow
with billowy bright sheets
of laughter and light heartedness

The sweet incense of His Name's repetition
fills the Mandali Hall of heart

He's watching

(A paraphrase: Baba said that His burden was lightened by "humorous incidents that arise at no one's expense.")

With half-Polish ancestry, my brother and I have often joked about the Polish carpenter genes we've inherited. We're hopeless. This Polish gene extends to any mechanical/building/engineering task. One time in San Francisco, we embarked on some sort of do-it-yourself project and ended up rolling on the floor laughing hysterically.

Our shared fantasy is to do a video of one of our 'projects' and hire it out.

It would be second on the bill at the annual Builders' & Carpenters' Union bash in Las Vegas. (Following the naked lady who jumps out of the cake.)

After everyone had a snootful of drink, our video would have them rolling in the aisles!

Recently, whilst performing the most basic home maintenance task and realising how completely backwards what I had been doing was – the Polish gene was in full flight. Along with the uncontrollable laughter, came a sudden awareness.

How much Baba would enjoy watching this totally focused but doomed attempt.

I could just see/imagine Him rocking with laughter – with me, not at me – and love.

And then: A forceful realisation.

He *was* there with me. Enjoying the humour that He said lightened His burden.

A feeling of peace and joy came upon me.

Love story

INTRODUCTION: It took me nine years to finally understand the dual significance of making the pilgrimage to Baba's tomb and meeting His Mandali. As the story 'Hide and Seek' pointed out, sometimes I can be a bit 'slow off the mark'! So I missed out on all those glorious times throughout the 70s when the Mandali were available for extended and intimate contact, and Meherabad/Meherazad were relatively uncrowded. Reading Ivy Duce's, *How a Master Works*, specifically what she wrote about 'Pilgrimage' to the God-man's tomb, convinced me that I must go as soon as possible. Although, it took another two years for the time and money to come together, I finally made it for Amartithi 1980.

30 JANUARY 1980. Late evening, Meherabad Hill. We are all gathered in the 'chai tent' awaiting midnight. *I see her*. It's not love at first sight; but it's certainly very strong attraction, interest and determination to talk to her ... get close to her ... find out about her! A typical California bachelor Baba lover, I definitely want to get married and can't imagine marrying a 'non-Baba lover'. So, there is always some segment of consciousness 'on the lookout' at Baba gatherings! The chai tent is pretty crowded. I'm trying to choreograph a subtle move to her table and searching for a good opening line.

When I do finally work my way over to her table, Robert Dreyfuss is telling his story of coming to Baba, so we're all listening, not talking amongst ourselves. When he finishes – she's gone. I don't see her the rest of that night. The next day, Amartithi, and the day after that and for several more days, I don't see her. I finally asked someone. All I knew was that she was Australian. Given that and a vague physical description, this person said, "Oh, that's Patricia. She's desperately ill. Just laying in bed at the Sablok Hotel."

(This little aside is too good to leave out. Tricia left the chai tent to be in the tomb right on midnight and when she

bowed down, an incredibly powerful appeal came from deep within. She said, "Oh Baba, cleanse me." Several hours later she began to have intense diarrhoea and vomit simultaneously. It went on for days. The sickest she's ever been. Of course, she meant 'spiritual' cleansing! It just goes to show how carefully and *specifically* we should phrase our requests to Him!)

Since I hadn't even spoken to her yet, I didn't feel it would be appropriate to visit her at the Sablok, so I just kept my eyes peeled at morning and evening Arti, Mehera's porch, shopping in the bazaar, etc. Finally, she re-appeared. I thought of an opening line and as we talked my interest in her grew. It gradually developed into one of those terribly painful experiences, where one instinctively knows that they are the more interested party. So I began to sort of just follow her around! Couldn't help myself. I'd find any excuse to be with her. Tricia did enjoy my company and liked me 'as a friend'. (God, how men hate *that* line!) *But*, as I found out later, she was more interested in someone else there. I persevered. Even went to the lengths of using that hackneyed Americanism, "I really feel we have a connection ... do you feel it too?"

It was very frustrating because I *thought and felt* that my feelings of connectedness were a genuine, deep intuition. Anyway, I bore up under the sadness and jealousy (the other guy she was more interested in) as best I could. We had some good times together, for sure. She liked my poetry, we laughed together, a few rickshaw rides and some market shopping. I tried to resign myself to ... 'it's just not going to happen'.

As the time neared for me to leave India, I began to dread saying goodbye to Tricia. I decided that I would go to morning Arti early and then leave immediately after the prayers, so that I could avoid a formal goodbye.

Meanwhile, Tricia had decided to be sure and get up early that day so as not to miss saying goodbye to me at morning Arti! After prayers, I avoided looking at anyone, just in case

she was there and I caught her eye, and both of us might feel the pressure of an 'official' goodbye. I did it.

I'm walking down the hill almost to my rickshaw when I hear, "Jim ... Jim!" She's running after me! Since no one was around and my rickshaw driver wasn't looking, she ran up and hugged me. Of course, it was the first time we had embraced and, in that instant I had what is probably the strongest and deepest intuition of my life. Actually it was Baba. A message from Him. A comforting message that lifted all the sadness and frustration of the past ten days. It went like this:

You have a very deep connection with this soul.
That connection will come to fruition ... soon.
If not this lifetime – then *definitely* next lifetime.

In that two-second embrace, this soul-deep message from Him lifted all the pain, impatience and frustration. I was completely resigned. We looked long and deep into each other's eyes and said Jai Baba ... and we'd write.

In my first letter to her I 'spilled the beans'. I explained the intuitive message He'd given me at the bottom of the hill and asked if she had begun to have any similar feelings. She hadn't! Her answering letter was rather reserved. She was taken aback by the intensity of my letter. From then we entered into a nine-month letter-writing see-saw. Back and forth. My letters would heat up – I'd advance – she'd retreat!

Then, some warmth and intimacy would creep back into her letters, which would then cause my letters to overheat!

Two things happened, exactly simultaneously. Firstly, I was slowly getting involved with someone. A Baba lover. We had dinner together a few times and went to a movie. Things were just reaching the point where both of us were wondering if there was a future in it and how to proceed. At the same time, whilst writing a letter to me, completely out of the blue, an overwhelming feeling of love for me welled up in Tricia. It was so strong she decided to call me immediately. Never mind that it was 4.00 am California time! Since I was a milkman,

I'd already left for work, so all she succeeded in doing was waking up my roommate, Ron Greenstein.

When I got home that day and heard she had called, I called her back. She told me her 'news' first ... how this overwhelming feeling of love had erupted within her. Then I haltingly and gently told her that I'd just begun to maybe, sort of, get a little bit involved with someone. It must have been embarrassing for her but she graciously and honestly said that was wonderful and she hoped I'd be happy. Because of the intuition I'd had, I tried to play down this involvement with the other woman. It was a damn awkward conversation!

Anyway, I immediately sent her a bunch of flowers with a note that simply said, 'Come and see'. At the same time I wrote and poured out my heart – to the effect that life was just too short not to investigate feelings of love. She should come to California and we would 'check it out'. Did we have a deep connection or not? I offered to pay her way from Australia. Predictably, the maybe, almost-developing relationship with the other woman, within a day or two of our phone conversations, was clearly shown to be 'not on'.

At first, Tricia objected and said she couldn't possibly accept the money from me. But then she decided to ask Baba. She used that delightfully simple method of decision-making (which some of the Mandali have used) – ask Baba and then flip a coin! So she did and it came up heads. And then she said, "Are you sure, Baba?" How about two out of three? Heads again. And then one last time ... heads again! So she came to America.

It was a turbulent, exciting, dramatic, intense, loving and *full* two weeks. Yes, we fell in love. Yes, we argued. We packed several years of emotion into the two weeks and, at the end of it, we still hadn't made a definite decision about our future together. I know it sounds really silly now but part of our problem was the fact that two other Aussie/American Baba marriages had already happened. Not only that but Sue Fowler, Raine Eastman and Patricia Mooney all knew each other well (Sue and

Tricia had even lived together) and Jack Mormon, Harold Jamieson and I also lived in the same area and knew each other (Jack and Harold as good friends). It all just seemed a bit much!

During the emotional farewell at the airport, I said, "I'll give you three days and you'll realise you don't want to live without me." We both laughed. I had said it jokingly but at the same time I had a slightly scary feeling when I said it!

When Tricia got back home, she decided to go spend a couple of days at her parents' home in Melbourne. She was sad and confused and thought the time with her family might help her sort things out. She took her little portable Baba altar with her – *and on the third day*, as she sat in meditation in front of Baba's photo – this is what He said from deep in her soul, *'What's it all about? It's all about your path to Me. Marry Jim.'*

She walked out in tears to her father who was watching TV. She told him, "I'm going to marry Jim."

Her dad said, "Oh, I'm happy for you, love (or words to that effect)." Then he said, "Look, the lottery draw is just coming on. You never know, maybe you'll get a wedding present." They both watched the numbers drawn. Tricia's numbers came up!!! Second prize – providing the \$700 we were short for her return trip to America and our wedding.

About two months later we were married at Robert and Sosi Malta's home in Sonoma, California.



INTRODUCTION: Both these poems were written in December 1980. It was during the time that we pilgrims were only allowed to spend four days in lower Meherabad itself, in one of the older buildings there. Jal Dastur told my wife, Tricia, that Meherabad had been used as a prisoner of war camp in WWI.

Meherabad Jail

Meherabad's kinda like being in jail
The sloppy food served from old tin pails,
Bars on the windows and cold slab floors
Tiny brass locks on narrow wood doors

You're only allowed two hot baths per week
Someone's always in bed sick or weak,
The kitchen's playing cards old and worn
The mattresses hard, lumpy and torn

Plenty of idle time to look within
Ponder life patterns and recall past sins,
The exercise yard is a road to God's tomb
Chapel is Arti in that holiest room

The inmates all tell the same old story
Nabbed for their crimes by God-Man's Glory
Padri shuffles round with a determined air
The Warden's right hand – upright and fair

The Jailer Himself is suspiciously absent
We suspect that heart's lock-up is where He went,
His directives and orders come down very clear
Through intuitive channels His Silence we hear

Even though Meherabad's kinda like jail
His sentence of Life – giving Freedom can't fail –
We'll happily trade these passing restrictions
For eternal liberation given through conviction

God's Room

(Baba's Meherazad Bedroom)

How strange that God allows me
to sit alone in His room

Of four billion inhabitants on this dusty orb,
alone I sit almost absorbed
in His living Presence
Yellow and pink bordered by a clock's tick
smelling of roses and some unidentified sweetness –
God's room ... where He rested, ate
and guided the Universe
now a sanctuary for the tired and world-weary,
the lovers He's picked from the crowd's thick press
to focus on Him and leave the rest

Just one embodied atma alone in His room,
while the wailing wall gets drenched in Jerusalem,
and the Kaaba deluged by fervent hordes ...
Samadhi's of saints all over Asia
the goal of unnumbered pilgrims
and busloads of nuns and priests
pursuing His scent in the Middle East

While here a single male sinner sits
by the table where He ate His dinner;
and some say He lacks a sense of humour!

Re-remembering without regret

Beloved I've finally found rules to hang my hat on
in a tenet-less, chaotic relationship with You.
Two rules only will suffice till the endless end
1. to remember – as soon as I notice
I've forgotten You that whatever made me forget,
isn't worth remembering anyway ...
Then ... to immediately re-remember. ►

2. to realise that my forgetfulness
is forgiven and forgotten by You,
both during forgetfulness ...
and indeed even before I'm aware I forgot –
thereby forgiving myself,
refusing regret's seductive power ...
and re-remembering You
in the love for me
which You never forget.



In actuality, God is not far from the seeker, nor is it impossible to see Him. He is like the sun, which is ever shining right above you. It is you who have held over your head the umbrella of your variegated mental impressions which hide Him from your view. You have only to remove the umbrella and the sun is there for you to see. It does not have to be brought there from anywhere. But such a tiny and trivial thing as an umbrella can deprive you of the sight of such a stupendous fact as the sun.

Brolly

(Australian for umbrella)

It's taken aeons for my brolly to wear thin
holes appear and Your reigning Grace dribbles in
Love's heat from Your Son
burns my skin,
and I await the gale force
of Your silence-breaking wind ...
to blow the spokes inside out,
wrench it from my grasp –
then uncovered, unprotected and alone I'm home



'I have not come to be in your dreams, but to awaken you from them.' This is either an exact quote, or a paraphrase, attributed to Baba; that I either read – or heard from someone. On the other hand Baba discusses, in *The Discourses*, special types of dreams that are spiritually significant. One such type of dream is when The Master first contacts His lover, devotee or disciple.

I've heard some of the Mandali say we should cherish our dreams of Baba ... actually write them down. Conversely, there is a Baba lover here in Australia who recounts how Baba told him not to pay any attention to dreams.

Undoubtedly, the measure of the importance and significance of dreams, wherein our Beloved Baba appears, must be highly personal – a case-by-case evaluation.

Putting this all aside, I simply love to hear people's Baba dreams! Here are just a few.

Awakened by an elbow

About ten years ago, my wife Patricia was 'grizzling' about how she had *never* had a Baba dream. After I'd related a particularly wonderful Baba dream I'd had, she went to sleep a few nights later with her mind working along these lines, 'Baba, I would love to dream of You. Why do so many other people get to have You in their dreams? And I've *never* had *one*? Please let me dream of You, Baba.'

THE DREAM (that very night): Eruch is standing at the end of a long hallway. He's excitedly gesturing to Tricia and saying, "Come, come quickly. Baba will see you now." As she walks down the hallway she gets more and more and still yet more excited. Thinking, I'm *finally* going to get to see Baba. She

peeks around the corner of the partially open door, sees Baba's elbow in His pink coat ... *and she becomes so overpoweringly excited, so filled-to-bursting with anticipation and joy. Just so overcome – THAT SHE WAKES UP!*

Tricia has not had a Baba dream since and has concluded (half-seriously) that if *just His elbow* could do that; then if she were to actually see Him and be with Him in a dream – she'd probably have a heart attack and die!

Tiger Baba

I had this dream at a time of particular mental and emotional distress. One of the tough times.

THE DREAM: I was in a huge expanse of natural emptiness, like an African semi-desert plain. No trees or buildings. Nowhere to hide. Suddenly a *gigantic* tiger (say four or five times the size of a normal tiger) is bounding towards me. I begin to run in stark fear. The tiger is gaining rapidly. There's obviously no hope of escape. I'm absolutely petrified.

When it's just about upon me, I fall to the ground and curl up in a ball, repeating Baba's Name as quickly and intently as I can. The tiger puts its gigantic head *right up to my ear* and makes a deep, powerful, growling sound. I'm frantically saying Baba's Name and appealing to Him to help me. Even out loud I'm saying things like, "Baba, help! save me!"

All the time, as the tiger continues this low, deep and powerful growl, I'm waiting for the pain of his first bite. Gradually, the growl becomes softer. I can feel his breath on my ear. Then the growls become an internal psychic communication. The tiger is not talking out loud but words are translated internally from his growl.

It's Baba.

Who do you think this is? You're praying to Me to help you – but I *am* the tiger. All the fear you have in life in facing your difficulties ... who do you think is the instigator of those

difficulties? I can devour your ego-life at any time. You are powerless. Helpless. Best just surrender to Me. Be brave.

I slowly, slowly relax ... with His warm breath/growl caressing my ear.

Darshan

This was a 'real' dream. It was Darshan. (The type of dream Baba mentions in *The Discourses* where the Master actually contacts His lover.) When I awoke the next morning I knew that I had actually been with Baba. This 'real' dream sustained me for months.

THE DREAM: Suddenly we are there. Together. Just the two of us sitting on a sofa. I see nothing but the sofa and Baba. *Immediately*, as soon as it dawns on me that I'm actually sitting right next to Him, *my mind starts to go about a million miles an hour*. Mentally, and emotionally, I'm 'spinning out'! Basically, what I was trying to do was to figure out how to make the *most* of this moment with Him. (Since I had no idea how long it might last.)

At first, I tried to calm myself down, sort of meditate. Then decided I should hug Him. No ... kiss His feet. No ... no, just stare directly at Him. I was even arranging and rearranging my body on the sofa. Trying to be in the most receptive and comfortable position! Every possible option raced through my mind at incredible speed. Interestingly, I didn't feel any inclination to speak or ask anything. All this had only taken maybe ten seconds. Baba had been just like you'd expect throughout. He's smiling. Love is radiating from Him. When I look directly at Him, He's looking at me. But internally I'm completely befuddled. Just don't know what to *do*.

Finally He says (internally not aloud), "*Just be with Me.*"

Slowly, gradually, I relax. My mind slows down more and more. I'm getting closer and closer to simply being with Him. The darshan fades.

Mehera/Jesus

THE DREAM: I'm in an open outdoor area with a fairly large crowd of people. In the middle of the crowd is a high platform, perhaps fifteen feet. On the platform radiating Divine Love is Baba. I know it's Baba. I'm craning my neck to watch Him and feel His outpouring of Love. The only problem is that Baba looks exactly like Jesus! And then, over several seconds, physically transforms into Mehera! And then, a few seconds later, appears again exactly as Jesus would most likely look ... and again slowly becomes Mehera. This transformation occurs two or three times – and I'm riveted to the sight of Him/her.

The whole time I knew it was just my Beloved Baba.

His Name on a plane

THE DREAM: We are in serious trouble, us planeload of people! It feels like we're going down. I quickly grab my *Don't Worry Be Happy* card out of my carry-on luggage and do my best to focus completely on His Face ... and to keep repeating His Name. As people begin moaning, screaming and so on; a beautiful voice comes over the PA. A most angelic and sublime voice of a woman, "There is no need to fear because the living Christ Himself is on board this plane."

The turbulence subsides and people calm down a bit. I jump out of my seat and run to the rear of the plane thinking it will be Baba. I burst into a room and there is a circle of Eastern men surrounding 'him'. But it's *not* Him! A physically unattractive Indian man (obviously meant to be the 'living Christ' announced) is sitting there looking at me with a big smile. Emanating a strong spiritual presence ... *but* he isn't Baba.

With great conviction and authority, I march straight up to him and loudly declare (as I put the *Don't Worry Be Happy* card right up in his face), "You're not the Christ and you know it. Meher Baba is the Christ."

The disciples are restless and want to grab me but he just calmly smiles.

Next scene, I'm back in my seat and the turbulence returns. This time I really feel we are going down. Once again, I stare intently at His Face on the card and repeat His Name with all I've got. Then *suddenly* I get overcome with the primal fear of death. As everyone is scrambling and screaming, I'm caught up in elaborate thoughts on how to survive. Ridiculous thoughts like using a rope to lower myself out of the plane. In the final seconds, His Grace pulls me back to centre ... and I realise in a flash this is the end and I can still grasp the opportunity to die with His Name on my lips.

With just seconds to go, I get completely focused on His Face and Name. I'm blissfully awaiting the moment of liberation. (In the dream I know with certainty that that's what will happen when we crash and I die.)

Baba dream, June 2004

I had a really unusual dream last night.

THE DREAM: Sitting with a small group of people (none of whom I knew), I was sort of singled out to say the Master's Prayer. From the first words, "*Oh Parvidigar ...*" I projected very loudly, clearly and with total focus on what I was saying. Each line I spoke became more passionate, louder ... and was more intensely felt within.

Eventually (by about the seventh or eighth stanza), I was transported into some kind of spiritual/ecstatic, out-of-control state! Until finally, I just broke down completely under the tremendous emotion and fell to floor weeping uncontrollably!



Work Poems and Miscellaneous

Glimpses of the garbageman #1

the hollow echo of my boots on the dusty wood floor
as I make one last trek back for a filthy rug
The agent called about a tenant skipping –
told me to clean out the joint ... 'strip it'
they'd left a dog behind but the agent already removed it
(I suppose 'cause it couldn't pay the rent)
so all I found was his legacy:

yellow plastic bowl of water ... round nameless protein
hunks, and hard dry droppings on the bathroom floor
What these sub-human types leave behind
amazes and distresses me

Who lives like this? Why?

Dust ... fleas ... cardboard furniture

Sometimes I take home their leavings –
home to my garage already full of junk;
this time I scored lots of plastic buckets (no holes)
and some rope

I vent my frustration at the wretchedness of these
'homes' by laying into the furniture,
gleefully pounding away with my twelve-pound
sledge-hammer, smashing items to bits
(taking up less room on my truck so I can fit on ...
the next job's shit)

jars of relish, mustard, bug-ridden flour,
plates and glasses ...

Sound of breaking glass – music to all rubbishmen's ears

It's empty now

and the vanished man and dog may never have been.

HARK! Here comes the upstairs neighbour lady

She:

"What happened to all his furniture?"

Me :

"I was told to take it all away and so it's all smashed up on my truck."

She (wide-eyed regret):

"That sideboard that was here? They're worth a fortune."

Me:

"Oh no, not this one – it was like a fake copy – like cardboard."

(No mention of how I relished the tinkle/crash of the glass front)

"What kind of man was he?"

She:

"Oh, I think demented in some way. When his wife was in hospital he didn't go see her. Hey! Where's the dog?"

Me:

"Gone – the agent got rid of him."

She:

"Gosh ... he really cared for that dog. A Besinji, ya know? They don't bark, so's it used ta just cry and whimper."

We further exchange notes on the shame-iness of *it all*

Last Sunday the door was open a crack and this maybe demented man was gone.

Perhaps a John Doe in the morgue?

... but I hope a sunbather on the Gold Coast

One day

I'll meet the world
with an unfurrowed brow and a slack relaxed jaw
opened heart for bird's sonata –
tuned to the shimmering morning dew

One day,
the One in the many
will remove His many masks,
I'll glimpse Unitarian Being
in God's private striptease ...
 my inner eye the only audience
skin limit fades gimme-gimme gambit
replaced by Love's game
an Infinite Who's Who
of the Cosmic Oversoul

One day there will be a Love flood

One day #2

one day my Beloved will return
and plant mines in heart-field
His Name will emerge
from Maya's cacophony ...
His Form titillate my inner eye
Consciousness captive
to the longing for Love,
confusion clouds breaking
thunderclap laughter
torrential Bliss soaking and wet
floods intellect's choking, dry plain
a floral passion perfume spill

Soul itself seeping out
escaping restrictions through cracks of Joy

A Divine indifference ... an Ignorance
can't tell where 'you' end ... and 'I' begin

One-day time will stand still,
and I won't know or care what day it is

Evidence

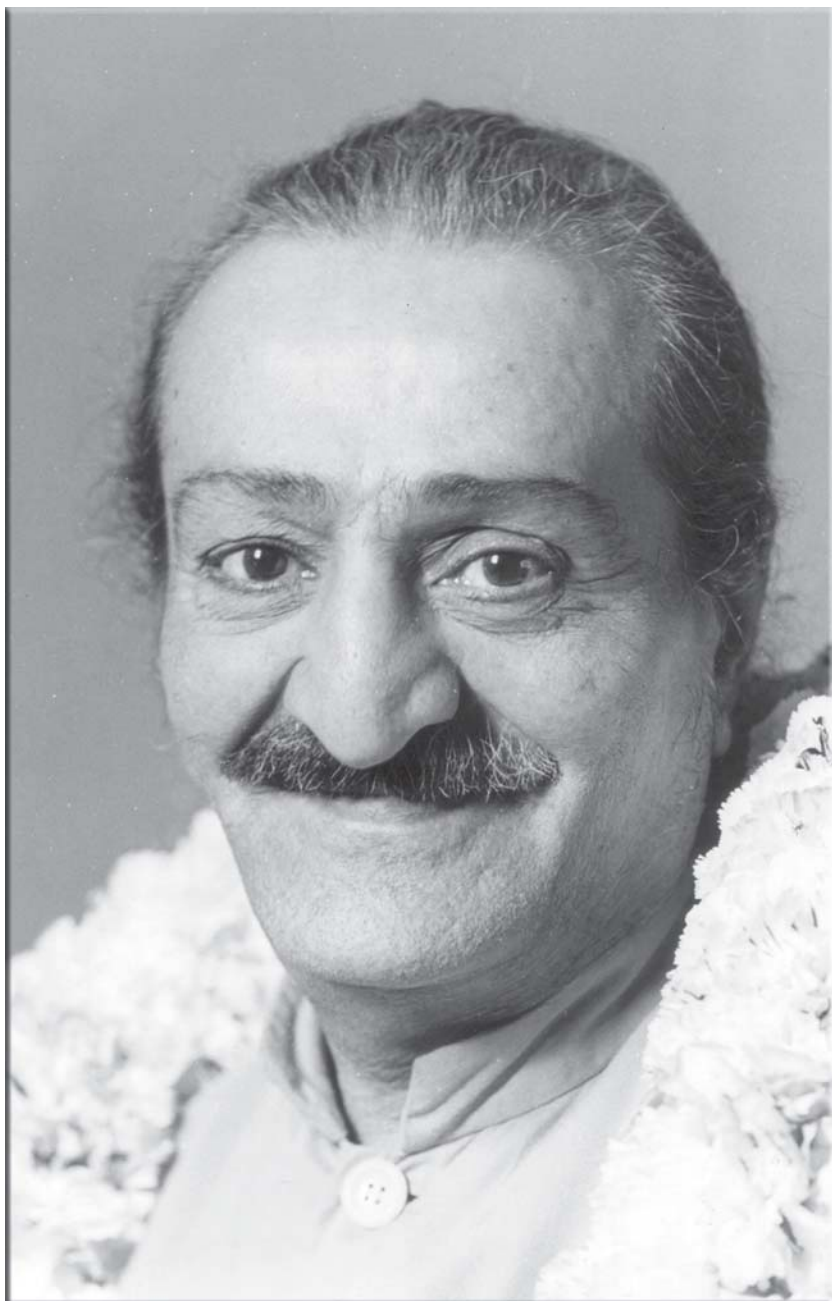
compelling evidence
of a Supreme Being's Existence

kookaburra's call
water in a parched throat
the change of seasons
a horse's jaw power,
graceful neckline
The Collective Unconscious
and the Dreamtime

panoramic vistas o'er valleys green
new lovers' mindlessness
and their altruistic ways
real angels felt – if not seen
a good dog's loyalty
waterfalls wind chimes
fire dance

a heart chakra opens
and the orchids bend to a cooling breeze
a photo of Meher Baba ... where He's lookin' right atcha

Note: Non-Australian readers – The Dreamtime is a body of oral history which contains the Cosmology of the Aboriginal Race, the oldest existing culture on earth.



His smiling face

for thirty years
the Face of God
has stared at me,
from dashboards and refrigerators ...
bedside tables, wallets and bookmarks

the ever-loving Face of God

smiling out
His love comes forth
a face as close as my own
my real face

The Mother comforter
my Father in heaven
the beaming and bright

the *Don't Worry-Be Happy* man

for thirty years His injunction,
His order and Wish ...

His simple advice
has dogged my psyche
haunted my heart

thirty years on
I'm still worried

Glimpses of the gardener #2

(Melancholy introspection)

A truck laden with harsh steel implements
carries me to gardens
where I interfere in Nature's Perfect Chaos,
meddling in shrubbery
disturbing the worms while digging
roaring about slaughtering innocent green grass

I'm intent on money – for – labour
and hope the clients are happy

Worries about time ... (to write this will cost me \$10)
are challenged by a magnolia that stands and waits;
she was a spindly, bare thing when last I looked,
and today her Purple Majesty took my breath away
Her gene's wisdom accept rain ... or the lack of it,
and spring's Grand Opening comes right on time.

The rhythm and light of earth's adornment
Mock my mental convulsions

Next door a ninety-two-year old woman hobbles out,
with cane and rake
to meet Nature on Her terms ... easy/slow/delighted
(I'm not yet forty and already stiff of body)
Smiling broadly, this ancient female says,
"Perfect day. Couldn't be better."

I agree
and then drive away
to murder by chainsaw
two proud trees

Sophie

I've given away most of my lawnmowing jobs
but one of them I've kept because of a little girl
named Sophie.

She's three – and she helps me pick up
the leaves and dirt and grass
we rake and sweep together.

Childless myself – I cherish these moments with her
After all How many Zen conversations does one
get a crack at in a day?

We chat about lunch the scratch on her nose
today's picnic with Mum or how adept she is
at picking up the sweepings.

Today she asked me the best question I've heard,
since the time I played with little ones for a living:
She said, "What if I was dirt?"

I said, "If you were dirt ... then plants would stand in ya"

Guido the greengrocer

Guido's health-conscious and hungry clients would never
suspect the true nature of his occupation. He appears as a
friendly, ethnic greengrocer. In reality he runs a morgue, funeral
parlour and cemetery – all in one.

Donning his purple-black, beet-stained apron, his first
job in the morning is to release the dead and dying from crates,
boxes and hessian bags. Like a coroner he establishes the
cause of death – always obvious – DME. (Disconnected from
Mother Earth.)

He hears the yellowed cries of the carrot; wrenched from
the warm, nutrient rich soil. Dazed and confused, "Where is
our tap root?" He can feel their gentle pull to be upright, like

the diviner's stick is drawn to earth. Beetroot and parsnip also whimper and murmur as he unpacks them. But the surgical cuts on broccoli stems, asparagus – and the snap-off of zucchini leads to a comatose state without sound or sensibility. They passively await human molars.

After the post-mortems, it's off to the funeral parlour front room. He lays out his charges in parsley-lined caskets. The artistry begins. Guido snips the last remaining untidy bits, sprays the rainbow-laden mist and arranges the bodies in the most comfortable position (for them) ... and the most appealing to the human buyer's eye. A Sicilian ancestry filled with psychics, magicians, witches and sorcerers guides his arrangements. This psychic flair gives him vision of the vegetable's journey between incarnations.

He sees the flecks of Oversoul sparkle and leap out; latching onto persistent flies and catching rides with wily roaches. Each has a unique method of release. Knurled Brussels sprouts roll out. Parsley's sharp edges dance an erratic Irish jig, and the carrot springs straight and true like an arrow from its tip. Eggplant's spooky purple hue indicates its true nature as the occult one in the bunch. Her powers allow a direct huge leap up into the trees.

Human handling quickens the transmigration and that's why Guido converted to self-serve. The avocados are almost always the first cab off the rank. All that squeezing brings numerous opportunities. Human transport – under wedding rings, in hairclips or buzzing watches reminiscent of the bees back home – takes the fortunate veggie-atmas to suburban gardens; with a chance for the dream body. A perfect rose.

As the day wears on, Guido sees sparkling life-force ebb in the fading sunlight. Most micro-bits of soul having moved on by now. He dreads the closing time with its mass burial in the bin out back. Limp, exhausted and unwanted – he carts the empty bodies and dumps them gently into what *should* be the final resting place.

But Guido knows the roving bands will come soon. Nightfall brings necrophiliac pensioners, impoverished punks, ferals and deranged health nuts. Ghoulish grave robbers digging through his bin.

The psychic

In 1976 I was living in Lahaina, Maui, Hawaii. A lovely young lady named Julie was staying in my home temporarily.

One day a nice-looking, affable black American man came to the door looking for her. I asked him in to wait for Julie's return. Within minutes, after exchanging a few social niceties, he transformed from a 'regular guy' to a frighteningly powerful force! Without any prompting on my part, he was suddenly in what appeared to be a deep 'psychic trance'; and he started telling me things about my relationship with my mother! It was very scary and fascinating at the same time.

I became a passive participant to his self-induced trance. Everything he revealed was accurate! Certainly the most psychic person I've ever met.

Just before he came out of the trance, he was looking all around me but not directly at me, with fluttering eyelids half-closed ... and he said, "Meher Baba – He's all around you."

I glanced around the room where Baba's photo was hung in several places on each wall and replied, "Yes, I love to have lots of His photos up."

He replied very excitedly, like he was amazed, "No ... no ... I mean He's all around *you*, filling your aura."

My god what a thrill! I felt happy to bursting. Baba in my aura. Wheeee! Every time I remember this incident it provides a lift. Confirmation of what I know intellectually – He's always with us – taken to another dimension: His Image visible in the aura?! Wow.

Lost Baba items

Speaking of 'lost Baba stuff': Back in the 'good ole' days, Jal (Baba's brother) used to give out (or sell) buttons and pendants that had been touched by Baba. In the early 70s I got several of these via post from India. One of them in particular felt extremely powerful.

It was a pendant with a photo of Baba when younger. I immediately began to wear it all the time. As time passed I started to use it as a sort of Baba talisman.

When I felt stressed, sad, angry or some fearful moment arose, I would hold it. In a matter of seconds I would feel His Presence quite strongly and the negative emotion would pass. After many times of turning to this talisman ... it started to spook me! It just didn't seem like 'Baba's way' to provide such a simple antidote to life's normal stresses.

Eventually, this spookiness gave way to awe. I just couldn't believe He had given me such a powerful physical thing, which could muster up His Presence simply by touching or holding it. (I should stress here that this went on long enough that it couldn't be attributed to some fleeting imagination on my part or a particular susceptibility of the moment. It was unmistakably His Presence in a forceful, powerful and immediate balm of Love.)

Finally, I stopped touching or holding it, except in real moments of need. Just knowing it was there was enough. The day came. I couldn't find it. Reeling with shock and panic, I whimpered and cried as I searched for thirty-six hours (time out just to sleep). I knew I had it in my house, with me, the last memory – and I knew I hadn't left the house. So the thirty-six-hour search was within that limited area. When acceptance finally came, it was with two conclusions: 1. I was right. It just wasn't 'His Way' to provide such a piece of magic! Too easy. 2. To this day I believe in my heart that Baba supernaturally 'disappeared' the locket!

His hair is there

When I first came to Baba (or more accurately He revealed Himself to me) in 1971, Berkeley, California – I felt like a fish out of water as far as other Baba lovers were concerned. They were talking about real estate, restaurants and business. I was blissed out! Just couldn't relate to them. And then Jack Small came along. I'll never forget it. A group of us went out to eat and during the meal Jack seemed to zoom in on me. At the end, as we were saying our Jai Baba goodbyes in the parking lot, he approached me and said something along the lines of, "In appreciation of your love for Baba, I'd like to give you something."

He placed a piece of plastic in my hand and said, "This is Meher Baba's hair."

I looked down and could see that there was indeed some hair within the plastic. The thought that I was holding hair from the Head of my Beloved just overwhelmed me. I may have looked up at Jack and said thanks – but internally the world had stopped.

After Jack left, I must have stood there for ten minutes with my heart pounding. Stunned. Unable to move. What to do? My first thought was to carefully remove the hair from the plastic package and eat it. Upon further reflection, I decided to keep it!

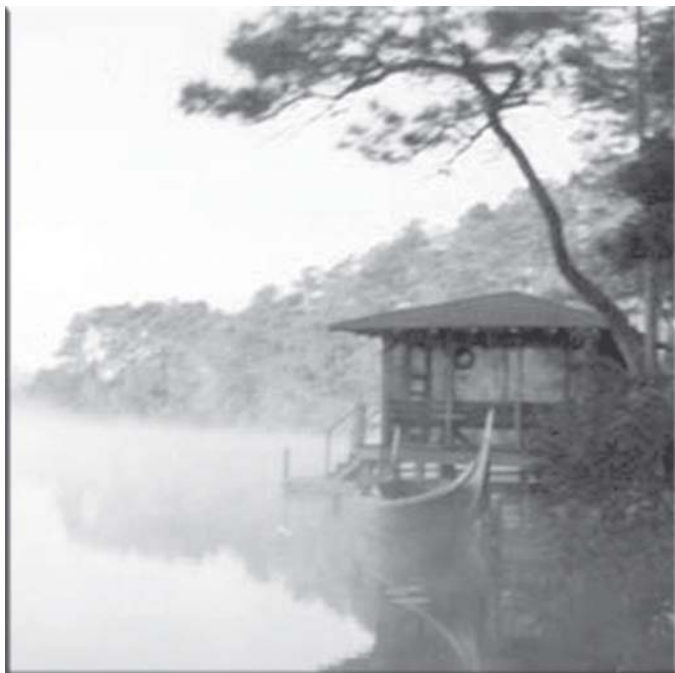
Three or four years later, on either my second or third trip to Meher Centre, Myrtle Beach (I went every time I had the time or money after coming to Baba) – during the hitchhiking trip there – I lost His Hair! This is the first and only lot of hair I had. You can imagine my distress.

I searched all my bags, pockets, wallet, locket I wore etc. It was gone. I may have cried – or at least whimpered!

When we arrived at the centre I was pretty depressed. Wondering why Baba would lose this most precious possession that I had, while on my way to Him?

Within fifteen minutes of check-in, and the very first person I remember seeing – it was Jack Small walking over the lagoon cabin bridge! Couldn't believe my eyes. I rushed up and said, "Do you remember me? You gave me some of Baba's hair in Berkeley several years ago and you wouldn't believe it! On my way here I lost it!"

Jack smiled, reached into his pocket and produced more hair! A blessed moment to begin another happy and restful spiritual retreat at my favourite place in the world!



Boathouse at Myrtle Beach



**Submitted to Baba List-serve
in 'shortest poem' contest**

deny
the
I

Message From Baba

(on a perfect weather day)

you suffer
because you fear,
and you desire

if you try really hard
to become a little more fearless,
and a little more desireless

I can help you a whole lot

False start

He's not an Historical figure
or abstract 'Avatar'
not a social worker, in bathing Masts,
and feeding the poor

He's the ring of the bell
and the chirp of the bird
My best Buddy and confidante –
the charm of a dog's smile

Alive

Holy Spirit kick-start
butterfly tummy
flutter heart

the natural world
and sad citizens

hidden light
God's wake up call –
biochemical fright,
shrinking scrotum
repenting and moanin'

higher chakras
busted wide open,
kundalini piledriver

whirling dervishes
in the mosh pit

untitled

the heartbeat and breath are easy
honesty and forgiveness difficult

birdwatch and stargazing natural,
eating and shitting effortless

loving and laughing are blessed events
and tedious ... are banal poetic attempts

Temple graffiti

Combine Maya and Reality = Mayality ... My Ally's Titty

Pseudo Hindu haiku

the shroud I wear is self
and it is threadbare
You – Radiant Being – shine out from the tears

(Note: the last word of the poem, *tears*, is *both* eye water
and as in torn)

Untitled

sometimes you get stopped in your tracks
by the way a dog smiles,
how red blossoms and green leaves look
against a blue sky ...
and ya think, "Yeah – all this God stuff is really Real,
so how come I waste my time checkin' out
shapely rear ends,
or worryin' about money?"

An instant of Being Here Now
is better than a zillion trillion years of:
What's gonna' happen next?

Part II

After one has felt and understood
that Infinite Consciousness Exists
(meaning: There is an Awareness Which is Aware
of one's own awareness)

Then why wouldn't one
focus one's energy on
realising such a One?

Why not indeed.

Untitled

musical words like meadow and silk
heroes of old, protectors of the weak ...
the tender touch we humans seek

half-naked yogi on a rock by the road
chuckles softly – remodelling the inner abode

the wind of His Word that blows the world away

Dyslexic devotion

Oh Board
let me be designed to Your bill
and wrong to scrub Your sore

Dear Dod
rake me in Your trolley
and lengthen my promotion
 to bind the light within
 in muscular contortion

Ass kicker #2

He's the Ass kicker
He's the Boss
HE says, "Your gain is My loss ...
I'm the ONE to take – not to give;

Really love ME,
and I'll getcha' where ya' live.

Those whom I love most
I destroy"

Prosaic blessing count

I have a comfortable chair to sit in
hot water on demand,
a telephone, computer, sound system and television

My cupboard has food
and my stove turns on to cook
with the twist of a dial

My toilet flushes waste away
and my car transports me
anywhere I wanna' go
(as long as there's a road)

Light floods my house
at the flick of a switch,
there's incense to burn and music to hear ...
In my home

Most earth citizens don't have these things
many are unhappy without,
many others
are happier than me
with

The Meher Baba koan

How is it?
that in order to awaken from 'The Dream'
(Cosmic illusion, Maya, God's Lila)
One must Consciously dwell
in the Sound Sleep State?

(remain fully conscious while in the
Beyond Beyond State of God)

Seaside Shhhhhhhhh

Lace
lace with height and depth
that bubbles and hisses,
dancing sun-lighted mounds
that rise up to become
curved tumble-overs

it's in and then it's out ...
so's it can come back in again
people wonder why

the birds just fly
above the bubble hiss
and look for fish

Glimpses of the gardener #1

It's hot and humid

Wisteria's purple balls cover our fair city,
and a whiff of their perfect perfume
makes me want to stop work –
swoon in a hammock and read Shelley ...

or look at tits on the beach.

My reprieve comes while weeding under the lemon tree,
I cut one in its yellow heart and suck it ...
Surprise
it's a high-grade lime.

Almighty effulgence

hands pressed together
resting on my nose prayerfully
staring cross-eyed and slack-jawed
into the middle distance

crickets started sounding today
flies began coming inside –
Spring has snuck up,
we are all surprised

fresh smells and whimsy
the children's laughter taboo
flocks of golden angels

A February poem

the kitchen faucet stands nobly,
ready to deliver life-giving waters
birds out window
grapple with rosy-cheeked persimmons
kitchen cockroach on diligent patrol,
paddock grasses await bovine molars,
churches fill with holy rollers

words like bursting
 glorious
 exalted and transcendent
patiently await poetic fulfilment

The best of ORPS (ordinary romantic poems)

The ORP series was an attempt to bypass the rational, conscious mind: To rummage around in the attic of the unconscious and the basement of the subconscious. I only composed two lots of them, both around the mid-80s, and I've never tried again. It's humiliating to admit; but no one has appreciated or enjoyed my ORPS as much as I do! (I've only included the 'best'.)

There are two introductions.

1. A series of poems I started writing in August of 1985 and may stop writing when Great Danes mate with Chihuahuas.

2. A series of poems I started writing in August of 1985 and may stop writing when politicians become honest

#7

aesthetic repairs to the Grand Canyon
goldfish triumphs in the symphony hall
and fallen soldiers on terra firma

well-equipped nosegays in foxholes
discarded road maps in limbo
and derelict daisies sizzling in sin

buxom ladies in sackcloth nightgowns
phony gurus on the cover of Time
sad Chevrolets on the road to Cairo

#2

intelligent lettuce sneaks into town
Billy Graham's caught wearing a frown

Beelzebub puts in a hard day's work ...

I'll show you mine, if you show me yours

#8

China figurines of Chihuahua dogs
chewing gum gravy covers leprous wounds
and blue rap dancing in the Vatican's vault

#9

forsaken petunias in the penny arcade
swollen glands in the Easter parade
we're all being watched by God

the Marine Corps lands at Disney World
burning effigies of Pontius Pilate
and the inner light takes flight

#11

ecstatic twilight over Indianapolis
roughed up radios tremble in terror
forgiven reptiles on marble pillars

#1

household appliances in open revolt
Frescoes of Nixon hung in the Louvre
I like my porridge piping hot

omnipotent butterflies swallowed by gulls
poignant car bombs in East Beirut
treacherous trees caught in an ambush

#12

abandoned potatoes sprouting in drawers
Freemasons shopping Moroccan bazaars
while men of all races are locked in prison

#6

deliver the Trinity to Genghis Khan
forget the Math you learned in prison
and give more than you can to all and sundry
find treasure beneath the epidermis
trade potbelly stoves for diamonds and emeralds
read about TAO and get your car tuned

#10

omnivorous toilets that gobble the lot
fields of corn in a Bach cantata
OM SHANTI graffiti in downtown LA
the smooth moves of a Polish polka
empty words in the Gospel of John
cumulus clouds in open rebellion

Poem from the intellectually challenged

a bird and a bee
came to visit me
whilst sitting on my balcony

the bird was tiny
in search of spiders,
she hovered and snapped
under the eaves

the bee browsed
the 'Blushing Bride' –
(a protea plant – *serruria florida*) ...
sucking nectar and trapping pollen
on her furry feet

Dog whimper

left alone in the car,
a little girl reports,
"Your dog is squeaking"

and so she does –
when bored, hungry, anxious to go on the beach walk,
awaiting what's next –
Lali the Ridgeback hound
whimpers,
'squeaks'

and every time she does
it reminds me
of the incarnate burden ...
how we're all crossing 'Life's terrible Ocean'
(as Guru Nanak put it)

another moment, hour, day
asleep
apart from The One –
imagined separateness from the Perfect Man
God Friend Meher Baba

A photo and Name
Rather than wide awake Union,
Or joy or equipoise ...

Whimpering and squeaking

Holiday message 1982

(Note: Ena Lemmon really liked this poem!)

2000 years past You came as the Christ
Now You've come back
to pull the great heist
As the thief of all hearts who comes in the night,
twiddling Your fingers
and looking *so* Dear ...
setting worlds right while dispelling our fears
Baba Beloved as the Baby Jesus,
Embodied Love returning to tease us –
with the promise of Fana and full Realisation;
the genuine Santa whose gift is Creation.

As we sit 'neath Life's tree and unwrap our presents,
in God-Man's sight ... Company and Holy Presence:

His Holiday Message resounds in our ears,

"To my slippery Daaman hold tight ... hold fast
And ho-ho-ho ... together – as one –
we'll celebrate Christmas."

Buddhist poem

there's a mist in this valley at the break of dawn
my mind stopped spinning,
in a wide-mouth
mental yawn

I might smell eucalyptus
on a benevolent breeze
are pudgy koalas nearby
Munching their favourite ...
and only leaves?

Two Indian pilgrimage poems

He's become just the best that I have
and the better I am
He's abandoned the photos and books,
taken refuge in a glimmer of beauty in me –
a glimmer seeking fuller shining ...
to lighten dank caverns of self focus.

He's becoming the better and better I can,
the nicer and clearer I am
He's snatched away gifts of flooded heart –
disruptive joy,
left hints of integrity and stronger I be
He's become just the best that I am



walkin' down the hill from the Tomb
it feels good when the mind slows down,
your jaw is loose and you walk on the ground
slowly
when Meher's Name or Form halts
mental merry-go-rounds
(the futile ramblings past and future)
Slow mind
arms loose in their sockets,
when it doesn't matter what happens next
whatever it is
it will be interesting

Humble effort

(or ... I felt like I had to write something)

final solutions to Zen riddles
the pregnant glory of woman with child
dew sparkles in cornfield
grain of hardwood under beeswax polish,
and the drone of those bees who
'live to fly'

shopping mall at midday
stranger smiles for no reason

we're embarrassed

then ashamed that we didn't smile back

Lost in the here and now

I got lost in the here and now
wasn't found

past regret and guilt
a stiff sock the bloodhounds scent,
diligent noses to the ground
I remain unfound

future worry – pleasant plans
a tribe of naked Tibetan nagas
search frozen landscapes
with incense and prayer wheels,
miss me by a mile

The hidden dimension
Now
I smile

Public places

the fearful faces
reveal the burden
of name, form and social status

Humans in public

fat ladies behind trolleys
fill supermarket aisles
redneck workmen puff out chests and bellies
in belligerent bars ...
while yuppie Land Cruisers claim two lanes

Rock solid self-consciousness
Human beings in public

One smile –
a single upbeat “G’day”
blurled with authority,
validated in Goodwill ...
enters the frozen/fearful public arena,
like a grenade in a bunker –
like a bull in a china shop

blustering friendliness
 optimistic banter
the jangling keys to human hearts
in public places

Merry-go-rounds and pawpaws

When the children whirl fast on the merry-go-round
and stomachs start to churn
they must jump to the ground quickly
to avoid vomit disaster

The inertia on landing causes them to run
 very straight and fast
or else they fall down

lust, anger and greed precipitate
worry, fear and guilt ...
leading to a top-up of worry,
pushing the birth/death merry-go-round of this world
(Samsara as Buddha called it)

when I jump off the Samsaric merry-go-round
the momentum is gonna' run me
straight and fast into Your arms



Fruit falls when ripe and not before
if a fool stands in front of the pawpaw tree,
glares at the dangling fruit,
shouts and jumps up and down –
waving arms screaming,
“fall you bloody golden globes ...”
nothing happens
only when ripe (after millions of incarnations –
desires shaken loose)
when the DNA signal passes down to stem
(descent of God's Grace)
does the fruit fall then
exhorting Him – pleading ... whining,
“Oh God release me”
won't snap the stem,
attaching us to this world
He waits patiently for us to ripen
Watches desperate manoeuvres for release,
to fall from the tree of life
into His ocean
when we're ripe



Hand of Fate

An instructive story used in Christian primary schools in 2034 AD, to convey the principles of reincarnation and karma.

From *The Introduction* by Robert Malta,
Santa Rosa, California, 1984

It is a friend's successful attempt to console the grief felt by my wife and myself after losing the baby that we had waited so long for. You, the reader, will undoubtedly miss out on some of the humour that we laughed so heartily at, having been involved personally ... (the old 'you had to be there').

But one would find it hard to miss the love and compassion that the author had as he dealt with a delicate subject.



Once upon a time there was a couple named Robert and Sosi. They wanted to have a baby very much. They even prayed to Meher Baba to help them do it. Meher Baba was the same as Jesus. He was like Jesus returned. He didn't call Himself Jesus again, because in that day and age, illegal Mexican immigrants were the only ones named Jesus (pronounced *Hay-Suus*).

Robert was a very slender man who could dance funny. Sosi was a little woman who was very nice and a tidy housekeeper. Their desire for a baby was so strong (and their requests to Meher Baba wholehearted) that it happened. Sosi got pregnant. She was very happy and ate protein foods like salami to help the baby grow.

When Meher Baba decided to answer their prayers for a baby, He picked a soul for them. Her name was Frieda Zanowski and she lived in Switzerland with her husband, Otto. Frieda and Otto were followers of Meher Baba, too. They were old and Otto was very sick. He had leukaemia. Frieda took care of

him with a lot of love. She helped Otto in a selfless way and used to pretend she was serving Baba Himself. When she fed and bathed Otto, she knew that within his frail body was God. Meher Baba was very happy with Frieda's attitude.

When the conception took place between Robert and Sosi, Baba had scheduled Frieda to die soon. But then something happened.

One night Frieda became afraid. She had a premonition of her death and was upset that Otto would be left alone. She got this feeling the same night that Meher Baba answered Robert and Sosi's prayers. So Frieda went in front of her favourite picture of Baba and prayed from the bottom of her heart like this: "Beloved Meher Baba, please let me remain in this body to care for Otto until he dies." Even though it was very hard work, she wanted to love and serve Baba by loving and serving Otto. Since she asked from the bottom of her heart without selfish motives, Baba said, "OK."

Now what about Robert and Sosi? Well ... the physical part of their baby had started to grow but the soul doesn't enter the little tiny baby until about three months after it starts to grow. So, since Frieda was allowed to stay with Otto, the little foetus in Sosi couldn't live on to get a soul.

When it died, Robert and Sosi were very sad but Frieda and Otto were very thankful to stay together. Also, Meher Baba was pleased that Frieda would accumulate so much good karma by staying with Otto till the very end. Then, when it was time, Frieda would be able to join Robert and Sosi.

Sometimes, the way God arranges people's lives and connections is complicated. This story has another thing involved. Robert and Sosi had friends in Australia named Jim and Tricia. Jim was a macho Baba lover with funny hair. Tricia was nicknamed 'Biki' – cookies in Australian. Robert and Sosi and Jim and Tricia were good friends. Baba decided (and somehow Robert found this out) that they would have children who would grow up together.

Well now ... Jim used to twist Robert's neck and sometimes hurt his back. This was a karmic thing that went way back many lifetimes when Robert and Jim had been in wars against each other. To work out all the karma, Jim and Tricia's child had to continue beating up Robert and Sosi's child. Since Jim and Tricia's child had to be bigger and older to beat up on the reborn Frieda, Tricia had to get pregnant first.

I'll bet you can guess who Jim and Tricia were going to have?

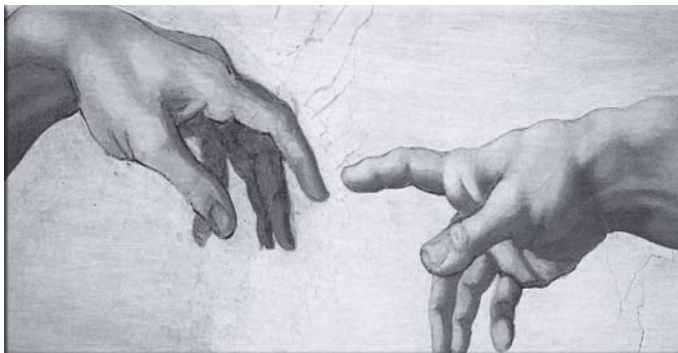
Yes ... Otto!

Since Otto would die first, he would grow in Tricia and be born first – before Frieda came to Robert and Sosi.

THE MORAL OF THE STORY: This story has two morals. One is that things always turn out for the best in the long run. And the other moral is that sometimes you have to wait for your child, so that another child can beat it up.

FOR TEACHERS ONLY: If any children in your class inquire as to why the reborn Otto would beat up on the reborn Frieda, since she cared for him so lovingly. Tell them that he didn't like her cooking.

The real reason is that all along Otto wanted to die and Frieda wouldn't let him.





Minor miracles is a tongue-in-cheek term for those little incidents whereby He lets us know – in no uncertain terms – that He’s with us. Particularly delightful are those ‘experiences’ where the Beloved utilises ordinary and worldly events (coupled with His perfect timing and Infinite Knowledge!) to move us deeply and fill our hearts. I cherish all stories in this vein; and to repay His lovers in some small way for all they’ve shared with me: Here are a few of my favourites. *JAI BABA*

Telephone message from Him

PHOENIX, ARIZONA. c.1973. Two brief points to introduce this story: there were very few ‘known’ Baba lovers in Arizona at this time and, secondly, Baba lovers just don’t write graffiti. Do they?

I’m working for a landscape company in Phoenix and one day the main driver, who drove a large truck to Tucson with supplies, was ill. When the boss offered me the chance to drive, it was a huge leap of faith for him and signalled a real move up for me in the company. I was very focused, excited and determined to do a good job and get my load to Tucson without mishap. About thirty minutes outside of Phoenix, pretty much ‘the middle of nowhere’ in 1973, the truck began to break down. I can’t remember exactly what the problem was except that it felt very serious. As I approached the only service station for miles I became more and more and still yet more desperately worried. My mind went into an absolute spin, imagining horrific damage to the truck and how I would be blamed for it all. My chances to make good in the company were quickly vanishing.

By the time I pulled into the service station, I was truly in a state. Cursing aloud and raging internally, I had completely

lost it! I leaped from the truck and stormed over to the public telephone, trembling with anger and fear to call my boss. I shoved in the coins, grabbed the receiver – and there right in front of my eyes, written on the phone box, *Meher Baba loves you.*

I almost fell to the ground. I almost cried. It changed my life – for about two weeks. (Of course, the truck was quickly fixed and I wasn't blamed.)

Baba picks me up

NORTHERN CALIFORNIA, c.1971. During, or shortly after, my 'first Honeymoon' with Him, I was hitchhiking on a major highway in California. The time dragged on. Even though I was used to long waits at the side of the road from my hippie days, it started to seem like a *long* time to be waiting for a ride. Eventually, anger, resentment and frustration made their appearance! At the moment I realised *how* upset I actually was, Baba turned it all around.

A calmness and serenity came over me with thoughts along these lines: Baba – You Know how long I'm meant to wait here. Why I have to wait here? Who is going to pick me up and where they'll take me? It's all in Your Hands. All I need is to be resigned to Your Will.

These intense and forceful thoughts had just solidified when my ride appeared. A Volkswagen van stopped. As I ran up to it I felt very happy. No sooner had I resigned myself to His Wish – His perfect timing – my ride had come.

I opened the van's side door and the *first* thing I saw, before anyone's face, was a Baba button on one of the people's shirt! JAI BABA!

That's what we all said when I related the story!

PS: It was either Charlie Morton or friends of his, who took me to his home in LA. Fed me well and sent me on my way.

McDonald's Muzak

PHOENIX AGAIN, 1977. I was working as a milkman again. My boss used to pick me up at a McDonalds, which was close to my house. I would get there about 3:30 am and have my morning coffee.

This particular morning, I was in a very deep and serious state of introspection; having an internal dialogue with Baba – an examination of conscience. The dialogue went something like this: Oh Baba, whatever happened to our intimate relationship? Why can't I feel Your Love as I did on 'the honeymoon'? How have I reached this point where I'm so distracted from all I really want – which is to *be* with You? I'm not saying Your Name enough. I can't feel Your Company, which is all I long for. What can I do? What should I do?

Remembering back to that moment, I'd have to say it was one of the most *serious* talks I've ever had with Him.

Stirring my coffee, totally absorbed in this empty McDonalds, a very forceful thought came to me. I thought: Baba, You are so compassionate. You love me *so* much that You would have 'Begin the Beguine' play on this stupid Muzak system! You *would* go to such lengths to prove that You are always with me.

As soon as I thought it, I felt embarrassed. Can you imagine being embarrassed in an empty McDonalds at 3.30 am? I felt ashamed to have dared my Beloved in such a ridiculous way. I tried to take it back – internally renounce such a silly and whimsical request. *But*, believe you me, my ears perked up when the next insipid tune came on. It wasn't 'Begin the Beguine'.

So, I went back to my serious introspection, which was interrupted by the very next selection on the Muzak system. Yep. 'Begin the Beguine'. (It changed my life – for about three weeks.)

A 'guru' gives me His name

After years of being with Baba (living on Maui, Hawaii in 1977), I still found myself drawn to the writings of a self-proclaimed, so-called 'master'. Even though this was after I'd taken to heart Beloved Baba's Final Warning, and I knew that any and all spiritual yearnings had only one appropriate destination – at my Beloved Meher's Feet! I still found myself seduced by the brilliant, intellectual and spiritual depth of this guru's writings. Each time I'd read his books there would be a feeling of discomfort. It was always a struggle. Even though I would replace references to 'the Master' or 'me' or God – with Baba; still I had to continually rationalise reading this stuff.

One day it came to a head. I was alone in my room looking at Baba's photo and carrying on an internal dialogue, which went something like this: Baba, is this a distraction from my relationship with You? Or can I continue to get inspiration from this guru's book? Could he actually have enough power to interfere with my relationship with You? Is it unhealthy that I look *anywhere else* for spiritual succour – but to You?

Then I went back and forth, from 'I'll just meditate on Your photo now' to, 'No, I really feel like reading '. Finally, the thought came: If I'm thinking of reading — this much, then I might as well do it! All this time I was staring directly at Baba's Photo.

Once I made the decision, I reached over to my bookshelf (still staring at Baba) and picked a book from the ten or so that I had by this 'master', opened it at random, then tore my gaze from Baba and looked down. My eyes immediately fell upon the words, *Meher Baba*. (It's the *only* place that Baba's Name appears in the thousands of pages of the books I had by this 'master'.) The very next day I sent all the books back to the 'master's' ashram.

He lives on in our hearts

Many Baba lovers I've spoken to share a common 'illusion' when they first come to Him. Baba emphasises the need for a *living* Master in *The Discourses*, and some of us have taken this to heart before we hear or read about the Avatar as the exception. The concept of God Man retaining His link with the created universe after He drops the Body, comes to us mainly through the Mandali (as they heard it from Him) and/or books published after He dropped the Body. It's not unusual for years to pass after coming to Him – before we understand this exception to the need for a living Master. Years before we read, hear and understand that the same Ancient One who is our Master is Ever Living.

When I first came to Baba, I suffered from this misunderstanding. Added to the belief that I needed a living Master were two other things. One is where Baba states that only a soul who has passed beyond the fourth plane can give safe spiritual help and guidance. Secondly, I knew that He had said Kirpal Singh was a fifth plane saint.

So in 1972 in Memphis, Tennessee, when I heard that Kirpal was coming to Virginia, I immediately decided to go. *Logically*, in light of the three concepts above, it seemed the sensible thing to do. What Baba would want me to do. Of course, I had not heard anything regarding Baba's repeated warnings not to visit saints (genuine or otherwise) and I also hadn't come across anyone yet to explain the Avatar's 'Ever-Livingness' and His Eternal Role as Master.

So about ten of us like-minded, spiritual seekers hopped in several cars and drove to Virginia. We arrived at the home where Kirpal was staying and were informed the master was resting and we were welcome to wait on the lawn. There we sat in great anticipation. It was so exciting to know that any minute a genuine fifth plane saint who had Baba's Darshan – and who Baba said was one of His seven favourite saints – was going to come and sit right in front of me. When we arrived

no one else was there, so we were 'front row centre', directly in front of his chair.

He finally came out and, by then, perhaps two hundred people had arrived but we were still right in front. There was a man who acted kind of like Kirpal's right-hand man. He talked loudly – and a lot! (While Kirpal himself just sat there radiating humility!) This fellow immediately started to interview our group and somehow I became the spokesman. When he learned we had come from Memphis, he said, "Oh, that is quite a distance. You are so blessed you have come to be in the august presence of the great master," etc. He ranted on in this vein and then asked me, "And are any of you interested in spiritual matters?"

I replied, "Yes, several of us are in Ananda Marga, a few study Zen and some follow Meher Baba."

The second Ba in Baba had hardly left my mouth before he loudly and viciously shouted, "He's dead."

It felt like a knife in my heart. Instantly, without any thought and from deep within, I replied with great force, "No, He is not. He lives on in our hearts."

Not missing a beat, Kirpal chuckled (a sound more beautiful than any bird song!) and said, "Then why come to me?"

I heard this on several levels at once and it gave me much food for thought over the next three days we spent there. We went to all the public gatherings and group meditations. Usually, we gathered in a church and after Kirpal gave a talk there would be a meditation. At the end of it, the 'right-hand man' would ask those in the large crowd to raise their hands if they had certain inner experiences. "How many saw the blue light at the third eye?" or "How many saw the radiant form of the master?" There were suns and moons and lights! And every time a number of people dutifully raised their hands. Poor me! I saw nothing! I was getting more discouraged and saddened. Feeling unworthy.

Of course, in hindsight, I'm overwhelmed by my Beloved's compassionate protection of me. His Nazar was certainly on me at that time. Imagine what a terrible distraction if Beloved Baba had let me be affected by that atmosphere ... have some of those 'cheap experiences'?

On my first trip to Myrtle Beach, I met Tony Griss who told me about a lover in LA, named Dana Field. Tony said that Dana had extensive intellectual knowledge of Baba's life and message and that he loved to correspond with Baba lovers. Tony emphasised that if I ever had any questions about Baba to write Dana. Well, I poured out my heart from Virginia and when I returned to Memphis there was a veritable tome waiting for me! About ten pages covering all aspects of Baba as the Only One, the story of Baba and Kirpals' contacts, Baba's Final Warning etc. I subsequently spent some quality time with Dana in LA.

He turns out the lights

On one of my visits to Myrtle Beach in the late 70s, I was sitting outside on a bench with one of the caretakers. I believe his name is Ralph Hernandez. I was telling him this story of my contact with Kirpal.

It was a lovely late dusk on the centre. Lights were coming on, night sounds starting up. Ralph and I were very focused on the tale. When I got to the part where the right-hand man shouted violently, "He's dead", I also said it forcefully.

Well, not quite! Because, in the very microsecond of saying the word 'dead' – all the lights and power in Meher Centre went out!

(A squirrel had crawled into a transformer.)

He breaks the law

(through the Power of His Name)

Baba made it quite clear that He didn't perform miracles.

Or did He? When He said such incidents were due to our faith in Him, was that splitting hairs? He states in *God Speaks* that from time to time the Avatar does perform miracles – but only when absolutely necessary – and on a grand scale.

But – a big but! We all have had so many demonstrations of His Divine intervention in our lives. His exquisite Compassion revealing His love for us – with inner guidance and perfect timing that goes far beyond coincidence. Who among us would deny these personal and intimate 'miracles'?

But what about miracles wherein the Laws of Physics are broken?

I was thinking back to one of these miracles the other day and I realised that it's the only '*Hard science/denial of the laws of physics miracle*' (besides the disappearing locket! Pg. 62) – through His Grace – that has ever happened to me. Amongst the many, personal 'minor miracles' during my life with Him, this is the only absolutely Supernatural one. It was a mundane setting (typical Baba!).

About twenty years ago at the tip (rubbish dump) in Melbourne, I used to unload my truck by pulling the rubbish off with a giant pronged fork. I would stand at the back, off to the side of the truck and pull as hard as I could, dragging the rubbish off in big clumps into a huge bin. On this day, the bin was almost empty, which meant about a twenty-foot drop to the bottom. At the bottom of the bin (I noted after the event) was broken glass and large pieces of sharp metal. In other words, a treacherous landing if one fell in. Especially back first.

On one of the very hard pulls with the fork ... I was gone.

Over the edge. Beyond a doubt – because my inner ear said so.

The inner ear is an unfailing, perfect mechanical device. It tells us exactly where the body is in relation to gross space. And my body was gone over the edge. In the microsecond that my fall began, into the life-threatening abyss of the big bin, I shouted BABA loudly from the depths of my being.

There was no firm, hard hand on my back. Just the subtlest of pressure – but enough that I remained standing. I knew immediately that it was a miracle – an event that transcended the laws of the gross world. My first thought, after the massive adrenaline rush subsided and my huge smile at my Beloved’s Personal involvement faded – was: Angel.

I still think it was an angel ... or some ‘agent’ of His. After all, there are plenty to go around! According to *The Nothing and the Everything*.





His Name and His Place

The name game: Confessions of a neurotic Baba lover

(dedicated to Wendy Borthwick)

Our Friend tells us to repeat His Name
audibly or silently as the case may be
MEHER BABA MEHER BABA
MEHER BABA MEHER BABA
heralding the sixth sense of His internal companionship,
revealing the threshold to unseen worlds
and oceans of Love

Some Mandali say, "The Name is the game" ... meaning:
whisper it, mumble it, say it, pray it;
until it subdues all inner noise
(like when a kookaburra is twenty feet away
and 'ya can't hear nothin' else)

He said to say it with feeling and from the heart
so's we would wake Him up within

I did that a coupla' times in years gone by,
and got an invite to the beggars' banquet
where me and Meher shared 'Bread of Life' for tea

Nowadays this Name Game carries on in a haze,
with the same zest and vital awareness –
of pushing my lawnmower up and down
and up and down

Meher provides a Baba backbeat Baba
to a Meher rhythm Baba
not as constant as heartbeat or breath –
but more Baba vital
than life itself

Cursed with a compulsive nature,
and because of habit and inertia,
I say His Name *a lot* – even more than I worry!

To the melody of TV jingles
while paying bills and doing the dishes,
steering a truck full of rubbish
(trapped within a body full of same)
on goes the name
chainsawing trees and raking up leaves
gardening on cliff faces – risking my life,
even while arguing with my wife
Maybe I'll get a mention in the *Guinness Book of Records*
– for total repetitions in one incarnation –
running a distant second to Kaikobad!

The moment of death is the one that matters
When your number is up
if the Name's on your lips
you succeed in giving Maya the slip ...
an end to birth, death and this world's fetters

Since every mechanical repetition betters my odds,
I could be playing the Name Game when I drop this bod
With a little luck and a lot of Grace,
on the very last breath I'll see His Face
and join my Beloved in the Beyond

Lament

(dedicated to Sosi Malta)

Some years ago the God-Man came and kept me company
'knocked me for six' with just a glimpse,
flooded my heart with the fateful mix
of longing's agony and the lover's bliss

He was the nearest and dearest
we were thick as thieves
I could see Him disguised in the citizens and in the trees
He etched His Form on my inner eye
blew wide open heart and mind;
and told me the secret of what He wanted ...
that I should die (to self)

Those wild and glorious weeks of ecstasy now give way
to a dull, throbbing awareness of His Presence
like a toothache/through hazy lenses of self-meditation,
a buried conviction coupled with His Name's repetition
I carry on like an automaton

There's never a doubt He's the Inner Dweller
in all I see and hear,
but it's a knowledge dry as dust and doesn't much allay
the anger fear greed or lust

Blast it Beloved Clear this murk
Rush into Immanence

I don't know what to *do* with Him any more
My constant Companion –

I keep in touch through calling His Name
during all of life's empty events,
which are framed in and surrounded by
those four syllables upholding the three worlds
Me Her Ba Ba

The word

(dedicated to Michael Rohan)

I turned a corner on a regular street,
and faced a blank slate
mind/heart wiped clean and clear
I'd spoken the Name of Meher ... Meher Baba;
and sanskaric sludge emptied into His Ocean's Love
worry, anger and fear left me alone –
the hounding of gimme-gimme ... I want ... I don't want
I like this, I don't like that
all fell into the sewer of His forgiveness

The garbage of life incarnate was recycled,
and my soul was intact
Peace bid me welcome back

The Name of Meher Baba is what is – was –
and ever shall be
The Name Meher Baba is beyond that too

Meher Baba is what subatomic particles whisper
in their union

It's the music of the spiral nebulae
and the essence of a lover's sigh,
sound of sunlight warming honey in beehives
They are the very words which God ...
(in His Beyond/Beyond State longed to hear)
and so He imagined us – and all this other crap

that He'd have a sound source and an ear

He's listening, listening and longing to hear
Baba Krishna Jesus Buddha
Meher Meher Meher

PS: The next corner I turned I noticed a pretty woman

His divine and incredible sense of humour

INTRODUCTION: Two times over the years I've followed Baba, He has showered His Grace on me via powerful internal experiences. These experiences lasted a couple of weeks both times and seemed to be a *direct* result of repeating His Name most of my waking hours. Perhaps because of this, I still find His Name echoing in my mind. Certainly not always with feeling! In fact, I'm often barely aware that I'm taking His Name; and sometimes I realise I'm doing it with absolutely no feeling at all ... or *even* with negative feelings!

THE STORY: About nine months ago I was at a low point, depressed and unhappy. This low was not due to externals in my life such as job, relationships or money. It was remorse, guilt and shame over personal attributes. My character flaws, temperament and certain personality traits were getting me down. I suppose it's typical that we find ourselves turning to Him more during especially bad *or* good times. And so ... I found myself repeating His Name *a lot* during this period; but often without feeling, or with a cringing/begging attitude – imploring Him to help me.

Eventually, I began to have an internal dialogue with Him that went something like this: All these years I've been turning to You to help me, and yet You've *shown* me that You really *are* me ... my True Self.

I should be surrendering to Your Will rather than taking Your Name as an attempt to escape this suffering You've ordained. (That trite saying, 'God helps those who help themselves' kept coming into my mind.)

Just *once*, why can't 'I' (which has no existence in Reality!) summon up the necessary strength of character to become a better person? I want to *think* and *act* properly to overcome these character flaws, rather than to just weakly, and sadly, continue repeating Your Name. I feel so ashamed.

(Again, the deeper inner voice reminds me that the ego-self is what must be destroyed eventually. So, what better way than through remembering Him and repeating His Name?)

But, *still* Baba, just *once* after all these years, instead of whining to You about these shortcomings, I want to dredge up the courage, discipline and strength from within 'myself' (which doesn't *really* exist!) to become a better person.

This internal turbulence finally reached the breaking point. I began to try *not* to repeat His Name! We all know how hard *that* is! The more one tries to forget Him, the harder it becomes. I tried anyway. Attempted to *stop* saying His Name, whilst I introspected deeply on my psychological make up ... longing to dredge up the strength from within.

One day, driving along in my work truck, it all came to a head. I suddenly was aware that I was repeating His Name with tremendous intensity and emotion ... *in order to beg Him to help me stop saying His Name.*

I had to pull off to the side of the road, I was laughing so hard. It was the beginning of the end of that particular crisis.

JAI BABA

His place

FOREWORD: After a Baba-full visit by Bill and Peggy Stephens today, I'm inspired to rewrite the original article, 'His Place'.

Bill and Peggy were visiting Australia for several weeks. Not having seen them in about twenty-three years, it was lovely to catch up again. Since Tricia and I live just off the main highway of Australia's east coast, Bill and Peggy were able to easily stop on the way to Avatar's Abode and spend the night. Their granddaughter, Lela, Michael Le Page and Cheryl La Rosa Longo, accompanied them. Rod and Josie Tyson joined us for dinner and afterwards we all went into 'Baba's room'.

It was a very unusual Baba gathering, unlike any I've ever attended. We just sat there in the room silently for a pretty darn long time! No arti or prayers. Total silence. Just

basking in His Presence. That night Bill and Peggy and Cheryl all broached the subject of how strong His Presence was in the room. Actually, they all seemed rather amazed. Hence, the prod to get this 'good news' to as many of His lovers as possible. The good news: His Compassion is such that He will Grace your home with His Presence.

Next morning after Arti in His room I noticed that Bill and Peggy both found their way back for a final visit!



THIS ARTICLE is dedicated to all those lovers who cannot get to His special places as often as they'd like. Due to lack of funds or family and business commitments, many Baba lovers don't get to go on pilgrimage to India, nor can they make it to Myrtle Beach ... or Avatar's Abode. The sweet and powerful sense of His Presence in the tomb, lagoon cabin, the barn, His room at Meherazad or Avatar's Abode etc., is denied to so many of His lovers because of worldly commitments.

If this applies to you – please carefully consider this article. If only *one* person, who misses being in His special places, takes this to heart and makes their own 'His Place' – it will be worthwhile.

Over the years I've been involved in setting up temporary versions of His Place via public presentations of Baba. Perhaps twenty-five to thirty times I've organised, or helped with, setting up film showings, information booths and such – in widely divergent environments – from tents in fields to the Palace of Fine Arts in San Francisco! Some of these events were incredibly successful, in a visible, superficial sense (of course we never can gauge success from His unlimited perspective) ... whilst others *seemed* to be real fizzers. But the one thing that all of these events had in common: He was there! *Every time without fail!* Once I'd put up His Photo and begun to internally dedicate the space to Him, His Presence would begin. As though He were saying, "OK – you are trying

to set up this temporary 'headquarters' for Me ... the least I can do is Be here!"

The second type of *His Place* is rooms, or parts of rooms, in my home that I've dedicated to Him. Four times I've had the good fortune of being able to set aside an entire room and as I write this, Tricia and I are almost finished with preparing the fifth in our new home. Three other times I've curtained off a part of a room.

Here are a few anecdotes I'll offer up as 'evidence', as to how it's possible to have a space in the privacy of your own home where His Loving Presence will greet and sustain you.

THE 1970s IN MEMPHIS, TENNESSEE. It was a low point in my relationship with Him. I was a disobedient and 'naughty' Baba lover. We had an extra room so I just put everything related to Baba in the room – decided it was His room – and then gradually began to feel so distant from Him I was ashamed to enter. It gathered dust. Whenever I did go in I was *astounded* at how strong His Presence was. It became unendurable.

The gap between the feelings of His Presence in that room and how I was living my life became a huge chasm. Eventually, I stopped going in. I would just poke my head in, then close the door and sadly shuffle away.

I started to think that the strong sense of His Presence must be my imagination. So I tried an experiment.

One night during a big wild party at our house, I waited until people would ask me, "What's in that room?"

As neutrally as possible, I would say, "Go and see." Many of the people at the party had no spiritual inclinations per se. The whole night there was a steady stream of them coming up to me, looking dazed and confused, asking, "What *is* that feeling in that room?" "Who is Meher Baba?" "My god, that room is *incredible*. What's in there?" I would laugh diabolically, while inside my heart was breaking.

A CLOSE BABA FRIEND FROM SYDNEY visited us at our last home that had a full-room Baba room. He used to go in regularly but never said much about it. This friend likes to be a bit mysterious sometimes! So when I'd ask him what he thought about Baba's room; he'd just say something like, "Oh, it's nice."

Two years later, out of the blue, he says to me, "Remember your Baba room at Goonengerry? You know, it felt just like the Tomb in there."

A LOCAL HANDYMAN came to our home in Goonengerry to install some window screens. The first thing he said when he walked in was, "Oh, Meher Baba." It turned out he had known a Sydney Baba lover couple over thirty years ago. He'd recently returned from living in India for seventeen years. His time in India was mainly spent in a 'genuine' yoga ashram, but he also travelled extensively and would always visit temples, Master's tombs and holy places. (After being in Baba's room he elaborated on the great number of India's holy sights he had visited over the seventeen years there.)

This man struck my wife and me as a very sincere spiritual seeker. When he'd finished his work it came up in conversation that we had a room devoted to Meher Baba. He said he'd like to see it. We expected him to go in for a few seconds. Twenty minutes later he came out looking stunned! He then told us that he had *never* felt anything like that room. In all of the spiritually-charged places he'd ever been, he'd never felt such a powerful Presence. He was on the verge of tears and in a very touching moment he asked passionately, "What I really want to know is: do you think that atmosphere is due to your love and devotion in the room – or is it actually Meher Baba?"

I laughed heartily and told him there was absolutely no doubt it was due to Meher Baba's *actual* presence.

Here are a few guidelines and suggestions that I've found helpful in making His Place.

1. A full room (even just a closet) is preferable to a curtained off area but, incredibly, a simple curtain does work.
2. No sleeping in His Place. A general rule in all of His special places. I've found this to be a good rule.
3. Nothing is to go on in His Place that isn't directly focused on Him. (Meditation, Arti, singing etc.) But certainly no worldly conversations or activities.
4. Determine beforehand that His Place will remain His Place as long as you stay there.
5. I believe it is important to clearly state your intentions to Baba, to more or less dedicate the space to Him. Perhaps to declare, silently or aloud, something along the lines of: "Baba, I dedicate this space to You." Or maybe, "Baba, from here on, this is Your Place and I will only use it to be with You."

Not only is He there *instantly* from the time you dedicate the space or when you put His photo up; but I've even had Him sneak in beforehand! (During the preparatory cleaning.)

AFTERWORD: I think it's worthwhile re-emphasizing two points:

1. How vitally important (*I feel*) it is to commit yourself to keeping His room *as* His room, for as long as you inhabit the place.
2. Never to use the room for anything not directly focused on Him

When Cheryl shared with me her amazement at how strongly she felt Baba in the room, I launched into the entire history of my experiences with dedicating rooms to Baba. As we talked, it suddenly dawned on me that *maybe* the reason many Baba lovers don't have Baba rooms in their home is that it hasn't ever occurred to them to do it! Cheryl agreed that was possible. *Perhaps* they just wouldn't be so presumptuous

to assume that *simply by asking Him into our home* – He would come there with tremendous Power and Presence.

As our visitors all packed into Michael's car, heading off to Baba's 'home' in Australia. I said jokingly, "When you're in Baba's room at Avatar's Abode, please thank Him for being here in our Baba room, too!"

After we all laughed, Bill Stephens said, "Yes, thank God He's Infinite."

We all laughed harder.

Poltergeist?

(submitted to the on-line Baba List-Serve)

We have a Baba room in our home.

Nothing – but nothing, ever goes on in there except for silent meditation/contemplation or reciting the prayers. No children or visitors have been in recently.

We always keep the door closed.

I went in early this morning and noticed as I bowed down at my altar that the carpet was wet. A flower vase had tipped over. Why? The photo of Baba's tomb had fallen off the wall and knocked the vase over. When I put the photo back I noticed the hook was intact and wondered; maybe a slight earth tremor? As I settled down cross-legged in front of my altar to gaze at His photo ... the photo was knocked over, too! I carefully figured the angle of the fallen tomb photo and the toppled vase and it made sense. *But* there was no way either of them could have come close to Baba's photo. It just didn't add up according to the laws of physics. This was getting spookier by the minute.

Next, I glanced to my right and saw the sandalwood box with Baba's fingernail in it (on the incense table) – the box was open *and* it had fallen off the table! *Then* ... great Caesar's ghost! Tricia's Mehera photo on her altar was laying face down.

Amazed, spooked and confused, I reached the only

'logical' conclusion possible! With total conviction, I thought – this room is *so* powerful – permeated with His Presence/ 'Spiritually charged' – that some kind of supernatural critter has been drawn in here.

I'm about to leave the room with this amazing story to tell Tricia, when I go wake her up, when a last glance in the corner reveals the beautiful little carpet snake! Curled up ... snug as a bug in a rug!!! *JAI BABA*

PS: the snake removal man (he takes them into the wild and releases them) said it had climbed up the outer brick wall (two-storeys high) and in the window. Lucky snake – I'm sure it was worth the effort!

He also said that in the trauma of the capture, they will often defecate in fear. Baba's 'blissed-out' snake didn't.

JAI BABA





October encounter

sitting in a parking lot after a hard day's slog
having the first 'cold one' of the evening,
guzzling the Victoria Bitter beer
helps only a bit,
with this bloody Sydney humidity.

I'm fiddling with my Baba keyring
'cause it constantly bloody well falls apart ...
puttin' it back together with full attention
and suddenly ... there is a citizen ... asking a question
an Eastern woman (probably an Indian)
with her bags of shopping asks,
"Are you a follower of Sai Baba?"
"No ... *Meher* Baba," I reply
"Oh," she says – smiles – shuffles on

Ya' see ... that bloody Terry Moesker painted my truck
(Rubbish/Tree Work/Gardening)
and when he finished suggested we tack on:
'Avatar Meher Baba Ki Jai' for good measure ...
I said, "Sure – why not?"

Now I have to wear it
when people ask what it means or Who I follow.
I *long* to follow my Beloved Meher Baba;
but I probably shoulda' said t'that lady ...

"No. I follow my own selfish impulses."

What if

What if at one time
God's Grace had
descended on you ...
revealing that there was no time,
nor any rhyme or reason –
as to when and how,
His Grace might descend
again?

And then
what if ... God revealed to you,
His preconditions to the descent of this Grace ...
which went like this:

What is Love? To give and never to ask. What leads to this Love? Grace. What leads to this Grace? ... It is gained by being always ready to serve and reluctant to be served ... Wishing well for others at the cost of one's self. Never backbiting. Tolerance Supreme. Trying not to worry ... Thinking more of the good points in others and less of their bad points ... If you do all of these things perfectly ... Then Grace descends.

Yeah ... sure, you'd say, "But that's well nigh impossible,"
and God'd probably say something like;
"I Know ... butcha' gotta' try anyway."

Then it would take a hell of a hero to say, "OK."

The shamed milkman and perceptive pigeon

I cringe at the approach of bums begging milk
feel myself a target for the lonely and dispossessed
I fidget as they near and hope I'm not engaged,
or they try to bend my ear

Society's litter swept away under sheaves
of pension and social security cheques
crying for attention they march Market Street
battalions strong talking loudly to themselves
wailing songs
one I even saw play a mean imaginary trumpet

Turning away and trying to look busy
I'm reminded of my Master's work as the Nazarene,
and most recently as the Avatar of Ahmednagar region ...
both plied the poor with love,
uplifted the forsaken with their gentle caress
Meher even bathed the leper's feet

Shamed by my self-protective denial
of humankind's lowly meek;
an approaching pigeon notices my guilt
and bobs by on a circuitous route

In the cow nectar chariot

(1970s San Francisco milkman)

My cow nectar chariot
rumbles down pot-holed avenues,
past derelict's command posts
in the city's pre-dawn death

a misted windscreen presents:
The Vacant Dream – Maya,
entertaining 'El Lechero' (me)
gobbling cake and swigging leche de chocolate

ironic insights into Spirit's paradox titillate this Teamster,
and further enervate the \$10.72 per hour body machine
slinging, dragging, pushing
cases, cartons and boxes of bovine fluid

Where do all the cows live
to daily spill these white lakes of milk?

My customers say,

"Whatever happened to the home delivery milkman?"

and I say,

"Whatever happened to the milk of human kindness?"

Taxi driver—Byron Bay

"Good morning, where ya headed? ... G'day, where to?
... Hi, where you goin'?"

"Wategos Beach thanks ... Sunrise ... Julian Rocks Drive
... Suffolk Park Pub, ta"

No one answers truly, "Nowhere thanks"

I pick em up and put em down
from Here and Now to Here and Now
... Nowhere to nowhere

I'm the driver Ford Falcon the obedient slave;
she bears witness to words without end,
every passenger a weatherman –
will it rain and when?

All days rated as windy, cold or 'beaut' ...
screaming detailed reviews of epic pub crawls,
yesterday's shark attack
racist rantings drunken drivels
old ladies quibble over five cents,
and the 3.00 am drunks get nasty for *no* reason. ►

Driver boasting on radio static
of distant fares – to Nimbin, Ballina ... even the Gold Coast
Then that most welcome rarity: the odd kind word
Topics shift but the picking up and dropping off
goes on
and on ...
Like taking on and leaving of bodies;
Reincarnation – wherein names and faces change ...
but the process remains,
equipped with another vehicle (a new body)
we pick up our load of 'strangers'
(sanskritic predispositions)
start the meter ticking and head down life's empty road
Until one day
the vehicle stops and begins to unload,
yanking out reluctant drunks
tossing suitcases from the boot,
locking the doors and rolling up windows
mind's chattering static unplugged –
the debris of ages dropped on the littered roadside of life

and the journey continues within
with His Name and Silence for company;
Baba and I speed away
 onto the Inner Gold Coast

Prose poem for Mark Hutchinson-Braun

What if there were an Awareness
which was Aware of your awareness?
A Consciousness which was Conscious of
 your consciousness?
Aware and Conscious of *all* awareness and consciousness?
Would we call this GOD? ... or an eavesdropper?

Or is this Principle of Infinite Consciousness thine
own True Self?
either way – when this rhetorical question is answered
with a resounding YES

Then one is truly between a rock and a hard place.

Why wouldn't this Infinitely Aware Thing-a-ma-jig
or Being ... or GOD ... or Whatnot –
make oneself aware that HE/SHE/IT
IS AWARE of your awareness?

Why not indeed.

The explanation is convoluted and goes like this:
INFINITE CONSCIOUSNESS (aka Meher Baba)
has 'said' – silently through gestures and by pointing to
pieces of wood with letters printed on them –
that GOD (aka 'The One behind the many',
The Christ, Meher Baba, The Ancient One etc.)
has whimsically *chosen* to discover, over time,
(billions of years) –
this paradox of Consciousness coming into
consciousness of Itself

DIRECTLY

free of intermediaries, intellect and other assorted
superfluous stuff

Meaning: GOD discovers GOD

GOD – Who always was only Infinite Consciousness
chose (at His expense)
to dream or imagine creation (at our expense) ...
and to take billions of years to wind the thing up!

Why not when we want to Know?

Why not indeed. ►

GOD (aka Meher Baba) uses words and phrases
like Divine Game,
God's Lila, Illusion, The Spiritual Path etc.
to explain this bizarre joke
which sounds frighteningly
like brilliant black humour
to me

My creed

Revised 1989 from 1978 original. (Although written in 1978, and subsequently altered *slightly*, I find nearly thirty years later that My Creed still expresses exactly how I feel.)

Some people are fascinated by mind-reading ... others by precognition. Some are delighted by dreams that occur in the higher realms; and others seek Energy and Bliss through yogic practices.

Some people are entranced by 'channeling', and eagerly anticipate messages from beyond this life and world. Some look for answers to life's dilemma in the stars; making charts and seeking guidance from astrology ... while others await the arrival of the flying saucer people – see them scanning the skies for saviours from space.

Some people hanker after the intoxicating powers earned through tapas, japas, magic or trance states – such as: levitation, mediumship, speaking in tongues, casting spells, astral projection or the subtle sensations of fasting.

Many perceive POWER (political, monetary, mental or physical/sexual) as the be-all and end-all of life on earth; whilst some seek ultimate meaning in Nature and the earth's processes – communing with dolphins or saving the rainforests.

There are three things, and *only* three; that hold my attention *completely* and before which I am in awe:

- * Real Lovingkindness – without show or hypocrisy
 - * Humility – born of strength,
as opposed to false modesty or piousness
- * Spontaneity – creative freedom in thought and action,
as opposed to unrestrained foolishness

Some favourite non-Baba quotes

*We are here on earth to do good to others.
But I don't know what the others are here for.*

WH Auden

*That is why it has been ruled that three rules – not to
trouble anybody in the least ... to suffer for and be
useful to others ... and to remain contented
i.e. remain in the state of:*

*BE AS IT MAY – should be observed sincerely;
to observe these rules is to lead a life worth living.*

Upasani Maharaj

*Men stumble over the truth from time to time,
but most pick themselves up and hurry off
as if nothing happened.*

Winston Churchill

Everyone loves the body but the body doesn't love us.

Upasani Maharaj

We Love most when we are least conscious of loving.

Sri Ramakrishna

*God loves soft and delicate things.
Pure love – pure devotion is the most delicate thing in
the world, and that is all God wants;
He wants nothing else.*

Upasani Maharaj

Friend

I have a friend who loves me but doesn't like me
and I feel the same about him basically –
focusing on the worst in him (and him in me)
except the part I love ... which is invisible anyway

Both overly critical of the other's faults,
we forget acceptance and forgiveness –
always discovered in evidence
 when we unlock Friendship's heart-vault

His criticism and insensitivity towards me
even encroaches on the domain of my poetry
I've been accused of *always* referring to canine excrement;
but here's a little twist –
 nowhere herein will he find mention of dog shit.

The traits of mine which most get under his skin
I consider interesting and positive self-attributes
when I rub him the wrong way it's usually one of several things:
 my 'special' humour (which he don't get)
 or detail picking perfection that really gives 'im the shits ...
 or the American 'sensitivity' left over from the 70s
(like: let's be open and honest, share feelings, talk about deep
and meaningful things)
and so ... with a few beers under the belt,
I poke and prod for a response born in camaraderie –
which elicits instead his embarrassment and enmity

Yeah, he's a gruff guy on the outside
(typical defence of a man who's been hurt too often;
jacked around, ripped off and used for his generous nature)

After seeing the 'real' each other
Bleary-eyed whisky hangovers in our underpants –
when he stayed at our house or us at his;
made me feel the bonds of trust were secure.

Yet it seems every new contact we start over
both suspicious – moving cautiously sideways

My years of longing for a close male friend
(bosom buddy ... china plate ... 'ole cobber mate)
are frustrated and constipated by pride, judgement
and fear of betrayal.

Sensing the chance for a real confidant and buddy intensifies
the pain of relating superficially – and ah Christ ...

To make it even more complicated,
I recently verbally attacked and humiliated the woman
he's now courting –
threatening the previous bonds of trust built
in hung-over underpants

I have an acquaintance who used to be and should be again

A FRIEND who I love a lot – but of late don't like much

We both should be shaken by a Greater Hand
or hear in our heads the Big Voice, which would say:
"Wake up ... here's a loyal trusted mate,
take advantage of these karmic bonds – open up –
give and take"

If this Hand doesn't shake, or this Voice doesn't speak,
if we stumble on in partial consummation,

I do have some small consolation ...

it's on the exterior of his refrigeration!
held by a magnet the only photo on the door
of his 'fridge is us

arm in arm in deepest, darkest India
and for the time being – that'll do me

No thought #3 (a bunch of similes)

(Mani seemed to particularly like this poem)

like a fruit bowl painting by Cézanne
skinny deaf old lady snipping grocery coupons

like a motionless spider waiting
in an empty web ...

a fat black Labrador
vacant-eyed by an open fire

like wind chimes on a breezeless moonlit night
a small pond – hot summers' day,
fish deep – no surface disturbance

like a sleeping infant drooling,
large Catholic cathedral empty at mid day
in the big city's heart

like a plastic statue of Buddha
on a dusty shelf in Kmart

like the silence of intergalactic space,
a falling star ...
the mountain waiting for Mohammed

like like wow man

No thought #2

Gazing at His photo – like two mirrors facing

Love and light beamed at me,

Baba enticing within ...

I'm wafted into Kundalini's channel

swirling technicolor

upward flowing warm wind caresses,

and a miniaturised me

stands at the base

of my own spinal staircase

Carefully I mount the twenty-six steps

slippery, rounded and bone white ...

ascend to Atlas – the top knob

and turn towards the rear of my head

(brain's posterior – the back of mind)

Brilliance spills forth from a sky blue chamber

diamonds or rhinestones encrust the blue marble walls

and high vaulted ceiling

suddenly I spot Meher and He's beaming

unsteady ... I balance on the C1 vertebra

seeing only ONE/THE ONE

dressed all in pink on a low dais

in the corner of my 'headquarters'

motionless but for the darting black eyes

and twiddling fingers – Grace personified

Baba is the sole inhabitant of the huge blue room,

and the Soul inhabitant of my gross body tomb

With a brief nod of His Head

I'm dismissed –

a kaleidoscopic explosion,

shards of colour slice through my translucent body and

BINGO – I'm back – staring at His photo,

trembling and sweating

No thought #2: Part 2

my Master
Who is God,
my own True Self and everything else –
allows me to go on automatic pilot,
take leave of my senses

From 'headquarters'
He puts mind in a coma – heart on alert,
murders mentation and activates the 3 I's
INSTINCT INTUITION INSPIRATION

... lets me carry on
stilled and silent within a listening automaton –
hearing only His Name's beauty
in resounding transcendent melody

He maintains the mundane
in serene working order;
while I'm poised on the border ...
of NO THOUGHT'S DOMAIN

I know when a car is approaching on country road bends,
how to move and what to say,
appear quite normal throughout the days –
even tell jokes in the workplace

... all the while from a finer plane,
in a brilliant marble chamber ...

He does all the work,
keeps His Name resounding
sanskaras unwinding
and stokes the heart
in fires of longing

NOTE: Some of this story/poem is make-believe; some is
wild hyperbole ... some just IS

No thought

I've been thinking a lot lately about stopping thinking
luckily for the reader, mind rolls on still (barely)
enabling this attempt at a poem,
(fingers crossed and God's Will)

My Master Meher Baba – Who is my own True Self –
lures me close to the frontier of NO THOUGHT
That yonder land of deep peace, wherein thinking ceases,
beckons me deep into a cradle of empty

Is it all just a déjà-vu, from some past lifetime as a yogi?
Or Your Grace peeking through
to free me one glorious day soon?

Zen men and women must sit on cushions for days
and weeks and years
the drug addict's attempts at mindlessness
are hazy, weak and full of fear.

I repeat Your Name or gaze at Your photo and Voila!
Mind slows to a snail's pace

Today I went and sat on the beach and ate two mangoes. Let the juice run all over me and onto the sand, then I buried the skins and seed. Later, I wished I'd put them by the crab's hole, as I watched the little fellow with his twitching antenna/eyes and scuttling claws. But as I sat motionless – just watching – by his hole/home entry; I couldn't *not think*: Why and when does he duck back in there? Is it the gull's shadow or just an evolutionary protective mechanism? ... 'Cause he surely couldn't see me – I was barely there! And why does he seem to favour the hard-shelled tiny brown bugs, rather than the plentiful translucent blue miniature jellyfish?

When I lost patience waiting for him to resurface, I dropped his favourite brown bug tucker down his hole. Alas. I was never able to *just watch* – without thought.▶

Our Meher is a great teaser
so when He leads me to the edge
of thought's demise, He leaves a few easy blips of mind ...
forcing me to lose myself still yet more,
in those perfect four syllables

ME HER BA BA ME HER BA BA

One day – PRESTO – or more like KABOOM
He stops this mind entirely,
then there is unlimited room
for His play in heart

God's striptease

Ego masks self-defences
social games and lustful senses,
strewn on the floodlit catwalk He struts in Glory
revealing white light, His Universal Body
becomes transparent
shutters roll up from the Soul's window,
human eyes peek from behind

WHAT A FLIRT

WHAT A TEASE

IT'S GOD'S DIVINE STRIPEASE

Infinite Consciousness slowly disrobes
on the world stage to an impatient audience,
strident catcalls from the cheap seats
(Indian yogis in back alleys) ...
pleading with – cajoling the Almighty,
"Reveal Thyself Take it all off Show us Your Nazar"

Beloved God is patient
His moves are graceful and sentient
like the seasoned stripper – a burlesque pro,
He Knows
that whatever increases the longing to See more,
will keep His lovers on the edge of their seats –
ultimately draw them to His sore lotus feet

A flowing black cape, rhinestone-encrusted
– pride, arrogance and jealousy –
swishes to the floor

the lovers of God howl for more

gaudy 'kerchiefs slinky sarongs
– lust, anger and spiritual torpor –
He flings into the screaming throng
from His perfect torso

sheer undergarments of silk pastel,
 close to the naked Truth
– piety, penance and heartless rituals –
whisper into a heap at His swollen lotus feet

Thunderous drum roll and cymbal crash
when the G-string (separate self) is slashed
by sharp and shining razors of Love

In naked splendour He gambols around
His lush, expanding playground
the known
 and unknown Universe

Unlucky horseshoe

the tip's got it all
from plastic bags to basketballs,
and twenty worn horseshoes shine at my feet,
as I grapple with vines and branches –
emptying the entrails of my truck

the paper-recycle man next to me
declines my offer of a lucky shoe ...
and next thing I see the noble creature the shoe fits!
A horse at the tip?

paper man says, "the horseshoe didn't bring him luck –
they put 'em down here ...

wrap 'em in heavy plastic and bury 'em in rubbish ...
Yeah – I seen dogs and even a donkey."

Sad-looking owner leads the peaceful nag
from her home on wheels,

to this mountain of stinking garbage
the vet is talkative, wants to explain:

"Oh, she's very old ...

about thirty, getting sicker and sicker ... now diarrhoea,
she won't make it through the winter."

I watch her injected and pulled to the ground

The dozer driver who'll bury her
saunters up and takes a final knowing look
at her teeth ...

kinda like a substitute requiem I guess

Again the vet explains: age, illness – winter coming,
and a *PS* that she was loved and well cared for

the owner drove away before me

Goonengerry paddock wreck

a sad dull grey/green
she may be a Ford

transport vehicle reincarnated
into green planter palace
supporting lantana and thistles

brown snake sanctuary hot metal home he favours
luring the fat rats to shelter

Who picked her final resting place? Was it accidental?
she get bogged in the big wet of seventy-eight?
those who drove in her body ... where are they now?
Any minds out there harbouring fond memories ...?
the trip to Kalgoorlie when Margaret was pregnant –
Byron Bay holiday after Jamie was born

Her resignation is complete in the paddock dip
flora and fauna adorn her shell within and without

ghostly human impressions somehow calm
the big brown's agitation,

as he slowly

oh so slowly,

digests and unites with furry vermin

Soul tip—the rubbish bloke

(NOTE: Non-Australian readers – tip=rubbish dump)

I load years of accumulated crap and neglect
from the bowels of apartment blocks
and hidden garden wastelands

toilets and sinks lay down with shrubs and tree trunks,
paint tins huddle in truck's corner
with broken windows for company ...
and all this junk comes off so easily – at THE TIP

I fill up
then empty
only to fill up again

I heave-ho maggot-ridden garbage bags and double beds,
rusted water pipes and tyres without tread;
while the abandoned fridge nurses a broken doll's head
and THE TIP takes it all –
it's the end of the line
for humankind's unwanted debris.

What if? – the unwanted debris within me
could be dumped so readily ...?
ancient impressions of Lust/Anger/Greed
tugged out of Soul, then dropped and forgotten
in a shitty, sanskaric scrap heap,
wouldn't that be neat ...? if there was a TIP
for mind/heart's crap;
and when ya felt full-of-it,
ya could just dump it in God's lap!

*God in human form (aka Avatar Meher Baba)
recommends this SOUL TIP solution, and I quote:*

I am like the ocean you see before you – always ready to
receive anything, good and bad. All your thoughts, feelings,
all and everything, lay them at my feet and be free!



Mark Palmer roast

(When Mark Palmer was dying I heard about a 'roast' that was to be held by his bedside. The Baba online List-Serve offered to pass on any submissions. This is what I sent.)

Hey Mark – your humour has given me a great deal of pleasure over the years. Here's a little token I'll share in return. It's a pet theory of mine. Quite proud of it – as we all tend to be with our pet theories! *(I really do believe it.)*

OK ... so we've looked to Him for guidance, upliftment, Love and help in tough times – year after year after year. We've said dozens, hundreds, or thousands of Artis to Him: some with real feeling even! For decades we've gazed at His photo. Maybe had dreams of Him.

Year after year after year His Name has echoed and re-echoed in our minds.

From His Words, various quotes come to mind – helping us sort through and understand this strange world. After decades of Meher Baba being the focus/bottom-line/nitty gritty CONSTANT in our lives, here's what I reckon, mate.

I reckon that the *very least* we're ALL in for ... is Real Darshan after death.

Whether it's a microsecond, minutes or days. He's going to give us *some* time in His Company. Not hazy or vaguely, like a Baba dream... but the Real Thing.

It's the least He can do!

Enjoy.

New Age seminar

I've had this fantasy of giving a seminar on 'True Spirituality' at one of those New Age venues. Where people are used to hearing about themes of empowerment, intention, positive visualisation etc., you'd stand up in front of the crowd and say:

"True Spirituality is a process of loss rather than gain. The focus on what passes for spiritual in the New Age milieu – is all about procuring: Wealth, social and personal interactive powers and skills, better self image, physical wellbeing and so on. All about gain.

"In reality the Spiritual path is about loss. Losing the attachment, and identification with everything one clings to and identifies with. The only force which can bring this about is suffering: Physical, mental and spiritual suffering. Success with techniques for gaining all the things we think will bring happiness; will in reality just postpone that fateful day – when everything (including the separate, limited self itself) is lost – and God is Realised.

"Thank you."

And that's the end of the seminar. Of course, there is a no refunds policy!

String theory

I saw a program on TV about string theory. Basically, it's the notion that atomic and subatomic particles consist of 'strings' when broken down to the smallest possible unit. The spherical nature of the tiniest particles that can now be seen and measured (the component parts of atoms) are in turn composed of these 'strings' – which are incredibly changeable/elastic.

It's a theory that attempts to explain the ultimate nature of matter. While watching the show I'm thinking about how physics' attempts to 'penetrate into the essence' are perhaps doomed. Simply because, in order to find the 'source' of matter and energy – one would have to be on the subtle planes.

Ergo, without subtle consciousness it's not possible to reach the subtle world. So then, what about the (possibly) handful of physicists in the world who *are* subtle conscious (if there are any!)? How could they translate what they experience directly into the measurable/experimental world of science, if it's not possible to experience the subtle world without subtle consciousness? Wouldn't this also mean that the subtle world's nature *never can* be revealed in the gross world via experiments, using tools and instruments of the gross world? A final spooky take on 'strings' is that they may be sanskaras!

(Somewhere in *Lord Meher*, Baba says something about an atom being made up of a million or millions of sanskaras.)

Snippets from close ones and Mandali

One of my most vivid memories of *Kitty Davy* is her commenting on Baba's New Life. One day when it came up in conversation she got a faraway look in her eyes, and in a very intense manner, full of awe, said something along the lines of, "It is surely the most mysterious and unfathomable phase of His Life and work; I wonder if we can ever really understand what He was doing?" It comes to mind when I think about The New Life; providing an easy way out, from straining too hard to understand it!

I mean ... I figure if Kitty was stumped ...



Some of the most intimate and touching anecdotes around our Beloved will never find their way into print, or HisHistorical record. I'm thinking mainly of the off-the-cuff remarks and memories of Him that the Mandali and close ones shared with us first-hand.

Last night, watching the news with my huge bowl of buttered popcorn, brought one such gem to mind.

Mani related how Baba did not like the last little bit of the popcorn after it had been chewed. That little lump left at the end ... Baba would take it out of His mouth and give to her. This was Mani's very favourite prasad.

And then there's the one *Eruch* shared. How Baba's shit didn't stink. (Unlikely to find its way into print!)

Another from *Filis Frederick*: She asked Baba if Jesus had a good sense of humour and Baba replied, 'Yes ... but not as good as mine.'

I finally quit smoking recently. To celebrate, I'll share these two favourite stories from *Francis Brabazon* and *Fred Winterfeld*.

Fred was a serious smoker. A chain smoker. Something like three or four packs a day!

One day, out of the clear blue sky, Baba asked him, "Fred, how many cigarettes do you smoke?"

Fred replied, "Oh Baba ... far too many." Fred said that from that very instant – throughout the rest of his life – he never, ever, had even the slightest desire for a cigarette.

The flipside is expressed in this story. One day Baba was asking the people around Him how many cigarettes they smoked. When it was Francis' turn he said, "About seventeen or eighteen, Baba."

And Baba replied, "OK. But no more."

AFTERWORD: Since I wrote this I've taken up smoking again, dog-gone-it!

Baba and gurus

(a Baba list-serve posting)

A mate of mine here in Australia (Ray Kerkhove) is extremely well read in the Baba literature and also other spiritual traditions. So when I came upon some spiritual writings that I considered quite special, I shared them with him. Over many years I've had a fascination with cults, alternative religions, New Age groups and fringe religious movements. It's sort of a perverse hobby ... reading about cults!

The longer I pursue this 'hobby' the more amazed I become at how many of the 'gurus', 'masters', realised beings etc. are so obviously phoney. That is – they come undone in very blatant and undeniable fashion. Whether it's drug abuse, sexual misconduct and emotional abuse of 'disciples' ... whatever.

It's reached the point where it seems that virtually everyone of these 'spiritual figures', who have attracted high profile media focus, since Baba dropped the Body, are phoney! (That is, hypocritical ... don't live up to their claims or even inflict great harm on their followers.) That really shouldn't be surprising in light of how frequently, throughout the 60s, Baba hammered home the message about false saints. He didn't just give out The Final Warning ... and that was that. No, Baba brought up this topic frequently during the 60s. Every decade that passes, it becomes clearer why our Beloved bothered! Anyway, to the point:

So I told Ray that I thought I had found the only spiritual writings since Baba had dropped the Body, which really did feel, to me, as though they came from a genuine advanced soul and possibly a very advanced soul.

Since the time that Baba specified certain great Indian saints as genuine (Kirpal Singh, Ramana Maharshi, Sri Aurobindo etc.) ... ever since that 'crop' of the 1930s, 40s and 50s ... these writings were the first I'd come across that seemed

they *maybe* came from a pure source, out of the hundreds and thousands of claimants around today. Now, I wasn't urging Ray to read this guy ... just saying, "Hey, due to our mutual interest in spiritual writings, why don't you have a read of this?"

Ray's answer is so eloquent, I'm delighted to share it with you all on the list-serve. JAI BABA

The test is how this fellow lives. Baba's words aren't always original or magnificent. Their beauty is their having been lived – backed by real Experience, which gives them a sincerity beyond their obvious meaning.

For me, it's Meher Baba's incredible life that sets him apart from the so-called perfect ones. Does he regularly trudge tens of thousands of miles all over India, incognito, to assist the poor, the seeker, the god-mad (all whilst hardly eating, resting, sleeping or bathing)? Does he bed as happily as an unknown vagabond under trees and on railway platforms as he does in his ashram? Does he play cricket with 'untouchable' villagers and wipe the shit off the bedridden sick? Does he warmly embrace all who visit him – beautiful or ugly, immaculate or vermin-infested? Do children and animals rush up to greet him, and adults burst into tears on glimpsing him – even when they don't know who he is? Does he spend months in a crypt, living on half a flask of cocoa?

Does he let simple folk eat with him and cry in his lap? Does he, night and day, exhaust himself in fretting about, serving and loving the humanity he claims to be one with? Does he usually wear the ordinary clothes of his people? (Baba's sadra is no 'guru gown' – it's just a standard Zoroastrian undergarment. Similarly, look up pictures of Parsee Indians. you'll find them wearing coats, white pants and sandals quite similar to his. Even his moustache was standard 'garb' for Parsee males.)

Is he ever-changing, versatile and all things to all men?

Spiritual lateral thinking

Even though Baba has given us more cosmological information and detail in this Advent than in all His other Advents combined, we still come up with questions! As He said, there is no limit to questioning, but in reality there is only one question and one answer: "Who am I?" ... "I am God."

I'm the sort of person who is easily impressed and delighted by intelligent problem solving, lateral thinking and novel approaches to life dilemmas. Here is one of the most profound and moving examples of *SPIRITUAL LATERAL THINKING* that I've come across.

A dear Baba friend who lived in Sydney, Australia, named Paul Wylde (Paul passed away some years ago), was one of the few Baba lovers I've known, with whom I could share deeply esoteric aspects of Baba – and spirituality in general. I mean *really* ... it hasn't been very fashionable to talk about such things for years now! Paul also shared the quirky background of having read – *and* enjoyed! – all of Upasani Maharaj's *Discourses*.

One day as we talked about the issue of retrograde reincarnation (the notion that the human soul can, and does, return to be embodied in lower life forms), we pondered as to why Baba has stated emphatically that it *does not occur, except* in the rare instance of the misuse of fourth plane powers. Yet The Perfect Masters' writings treat it as a common occurrence. Paul informed me that not only Upasani, but also Milarepa and the other Perfect Masters he had read ... *all* proclaimed retrograde reincarnation as a fact. Since Paul spent most of his time reading Baba and/or Perfect Masters, I took his word for it. SO ... WHY?

Perfect Masters are in possession of Infinite Knowledge – as is the Avatar. Why would they have taught something which was patently false ... over hundreds and thousands of years?

I had to press Paul for his opinion. Really force the issue.

Finally, he revealed his theory on this anomaly. He reminded me that, although our Beloved Baba disclaimed the performance of miracles, He made it quite clear that when push comes to shove, He *would rarely* perform miracles on a GRAND SCALE.

The miracles of a Saviour are of a universal character and are performed when universally necessary.

God Speaks, pg. 222

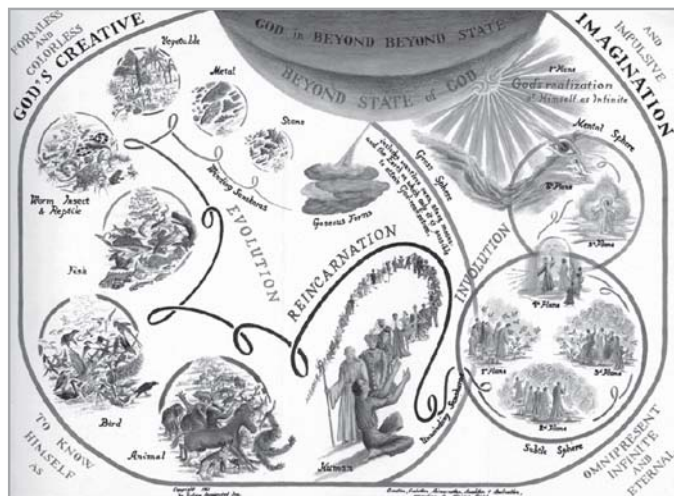
... on the other hand for the spiritual upliftment of all humanity and all creatures, at certain periods I do manifest the Infinite power I possess in the form of miracles.

The Highest of the High

THE PUNCH LINE: Paul Wylde's theory.

It had been true. For Millennia. Retrograde reincarnation *was* a reality.

THEN, Meher Baba Came. Being the greatest Advent in this cycle of time; He Determined to perform a miracle on a Grand Scale. By the time *God Speaks* was published, He had performed such a stupendous miracle. *Retrograde reincarnation had been undone!*



What Baba 'said'

(Anon.) Unfortunately I couldn't find the author of this posting to the Baba List-serve. I think it covers *almost all* of the vital points to consider when 'interpreting' Baba's Word and messages.

In my opinion, the most important Baba book not yet written is the one that points out the differing versions of the same quote, inaccuracies in the books already published, remarks made by Baba to individuals, which are now being taken as general instructions, etc. Since so many of the 'first generation' (those who spent considerable time with Him), have passed away already or will soon – and as we of the 'second generation' grow older and memory dims! It seems to me that time is of the essence for such a book to be written.

SOMEONE SUBMITTED THIS TO THE LIST-SERVE:

Might be a Babaism tale, but am fairly sure that I read in the Baba lit. that Meher Baba said Chairman Mao [ex-Chinese ruler] was a decent man, although manipulated by those around him.

ANONYMOUS RESPONSE:

There are a few things people need to know when they read or hear quotes attributed to Baba. First of all, Baba is not as two-dimensional as the rest of us. He would say things for lots of reasons, not just to express Himself or impart information. Baba sometimes made casual comments for the purpose of shocking people or to shake them up.

Say I am a rigid anti-Communist. Baba might want to break me out of my dogmatic stance. So he says to me, "Mao is a good man. He's not the problem, it's the people around him." That is enough to trouble me deeply for days and make me rethink things. And Baba definitely wanted us to rethink things, and throw out our preconceptions and dogmas.

So, it's important to consider the shock factor when looking at quotes of Baba, especially things he said to

individuals in conversation. The stranger quotes about Hitler may be in this category. Margaret Craske, who lived with Baba throughout the war, told me that all the Westerners in India with Baba were very prejudiced against Hitler – they thought him the very incarnation of evil. Baba apparently wanted to break down this prejudice, so he would say positive things about Hitler that shocked them. One example may be the quote about Hitler having accumulated too many good impressions in his previous life. The idea being that doing a lot of good may not be so good after all.

This impressions thing is hard for some people to understand. Good impressions are not good, really, they are imbalanced. Real good, in the spiritual sense, is selflessness. In selflessness there are no impressions created at all. To act selflessly means to take no pride in the action, to not feel separate from the one you are helping, to serve others without regard for what anyone will think of you, without any desire for credit, and to do it in such a way that they do not become indebted to you.

But when, through selfishness and pride, we do 'good' things for others, we create 'good' impressions. Our motives are not pure. We want respect, we want to be well thought of, we want to think well of ourselves, we want something back in return for our 'good' deeds. So we do actions that look good from the outside, but from the inside ... in words attributed to Georges Gurdjieff: "Externally auspicious, internally suspicious."

As a result, we have to experience the opposites of these new impressions we have created in our next life. The opposite of 'good' is 'bad'. That's why Baba said, "When you serve others, always think, it is not I who serves, but they who serve me by giving me this opportunity to help." Baba also suggested saying to oneself, "It is not I who am doing this, but the Master is getting it done through me."

With this understanding, Baba saying Hitler may have

had too many good impressions makes more sense. Badly-motivated good can lead us to bad.

Another point: Baba said that Hitler believed he was doing good for Germany. In other words, he was sincere in his insanity. Baba did say that Hitler was insane. What we call 'mentally handicapped' today. About the war, Baba said it was the worst thing, and that he would never have allowed it to take place if there had been any other way to cleanse the world for the new humanity.

The statement about Mao is said to have been reported by Don Stevens. It is not in *Discourses* or *God Speaks* or *Beams* or any book Baba intended for public consumption. It was printed in Ivy Duce's autobiography, a large collection of anecdotes, some accurate, some fairly messed up. No part of this book was gone over or checked by Baba. For instance, Fred and Ella Winterfeldt told me that Mrs Duce's book told their story quite inaccurately. They were very upset about it.

Kitty Davy told me some errors she noticed in the book and said, "Isn't it funny that Mrs Duce complained so much about the mistakes in Charles Purdom's book, *The God-Man* (she made a long list of factual errors) and then when her book came out, it was riddled with errors." I heard that Mani said the same thing.

This is not to disparage Ivy Duce in any way. When you do a huge book and report other people's stories second-hand, there are bound to be many mistakes. *Lord Meher*, for instance, is chock full of errors. The quotes of Baba are often chopped up or even rewritten. If you check earlier sources for these quotes, they don't match. The earlier versions are generally more complete and more trustworthy.

The process of editing can become one of rewriting. Generally, no one intends to mess up what Baba said; but in their desire to make things clearer to the reader, their own misunderstandings and prejudices creep in. This has happened in virtually every book by or about Baba. The original *Discourses*

had serious mistakes. Even *God Speaks* has one glaring error. Fact and quote checking has not been the strong suit in Meher Baba publishing.

Many 'quotes' of Baba were first written down twenty or thirty years after he 'said' them. I don't know how good your memory is, but I can garble what someone said a half hour after he said it. Have you ever considered why hearsay evidence is not allowed in a court of law?

There's also the problem of translation. Much of what Baba said was said in other languages like Gujarati. The translation may be at fault.

Then there's humouring. Baba himself used this word to describe the kid-glove treatment he had to give even his closest disciples. Baba said that no one would follow him if he didn't humour their prejudices. If a person had a strong belief, Baba would go along with it, even encourage it. Eventually, he might tell them the deeper, underlying truth but sometimes not for many years – and sometimes never. These beliefs or prejudices we carry with us are so strong that they make it impossible for us to believe someone to be a genuine Master who does not share them. No wonder the world is divided up into tiny groups who fight with each other.

So when you hear something crazy that Baba said, don't jump to conclusions. Find out the exact quote. Make sure he really said it. Find out who he said it to. Find out the context. Was it translated from another language? Did Baba check and approve it for publication? And think about *why* he might have said it. A good place to start is with how the statement makes you feel. If it stirs you up and upsets you – maybe Baba said it to do just that to someone who needed it. Even with all these limitations, reading about Baba is probably the best way to get to know him (now). But read with your eyes wide open, and with that little switch that says, 'Think Carefully About This' (it's just behind your right ear) in the ON position.

Baba's loopholes

Another indication of His supreme compassion is how Baba has left us with two loopholes. In the future these loopholes will always provide a way out of the trap: trying to fathom Him and His ways with the intellect. They will prevent humanity from establishing a rigid dogma, on a grand scale, around Meher Baba, and allow for free and unfettered interpretations of His life and teaching to flourish.

HIS ONE MISTAKE – Baba has told us the Avatar always makes one mistake and that He would reveal His when He returned in 700 years. So theoretically no one knows for sure what Baba's one mistake was. (See *How a Master Works* by Ivy O Duce, for His one mistake in His past advents.)

HIS 'THREE LANGUAGES' – In the 'Clarification to the Final Declaration', Baba describes how whenever He 'says' a 'thing', it can be in His language, our language ... or a blend of the two. So except for the Clarification, where Baba specified which points were in which language, who can say for sure *exactly* what Baba meant when He 'said' this or that.

I often imagine in hundreds of years some smart alec in the crowd piping up, "Hey, how do *you* know that wasn't Baba's one mistake? Or "Hey, maybe Baba said that in His language alone."

Baba's secret

Someone once asked Meher Baba, "What is your secret?"

Baba replied, "The elimination of the ego."

When I first read this I thought it was pretty amazing. Then I pondered the answer a bit deeper and it occurred to me that Baba was answering with His Divine Honesty. That is, He was literally answering the question! Telling this person, who was clever enough to ask such a question, the truth! His secret. (Now no longer a secret because He answered the

question!) Then I pondered a bit further and thought, why a secret?

Well, would as many people be drawn into His Love net if it were clear on the front end what His end game was? His 'secret'.

(I'm almost sure I originally read the question and answer as above. However, the very day I finished editing this piece, an interview with James Douglas was sent into the Baba list-serve! This version/translation was: "What is your secret message or special advice?" and Baba's answer: "The elimination of the ego.")

Baba's practicality

We all know how He emphasised practicality, and we've seen how His Mandali manifest this quality so well. Although Ena Lemmon was not Mandali, she was certainly close to Baba. (Ena told me that she was actually the first person to directly invite Baba to come to Australia.)

This story demonstrates that down-to-earth, practical, straightforward and simple approach to problems, that His Mandali or older dear ones often utilise in daily life ... providing a counter-point to the complexity and the intellectual and emotional gymnastics we young'uns often bring to problem solving.

THE STORY. Ena and I were tending a Baba information stall in Melbourne at a New Age Fair kind of event (c. 1982). I was talking to Ena about how often I'd done public presentations of Baba when I lived in America, and how there was always this dilemma in presenting Him – how to project an 'availability' to the people who came up to the stall (approachable, friendly and open), and at the same time have them sense that you would not pounce, proselytise, earbash or try to recruit them!

Since I really wanted feedback from Ena about this (sometimes she seemed to have access to a 'wise old woman'

within!), I talked on and on while she listened patiently. I described how on a few rare occasions I felt that I was able to get very centred in Baba, and thereby balance the seeming opposites of approachability and detachment. Then I confessed how when I wasn't genuinely feeling Baba – being centred – that I would *try* artificially to adjust my body language!. Smile a certain way etc. And then I went further and waffled on about how it was almost a semi-occult exercise that I felt one could learn!

The bottom line was I spilled my guts and confessed all these silly things I'd attempted over the years, in order to project this balanced and centred state, so that people could actually sense it and feel free to approach the stall.

When I *finally* finished, Ena looked thoughtful for a few seconds and said, "Why don't we move our chairs back a little bit."

IT WAS THAT SIMPLE!

All those years I had sat right up close to the table, when all that was needed was a bit of space! The number of people who came up to look at books or take some literature increased dramatically, as soon as we moved our chairs back.



Ena Lemmon with dog 'Wazza'

Well then ... where are we all?

As the years pass – since our Beloved passed away – we’ve heard many stories of (and seen first-hand) those souls who continue to hear His Silence-breaking within. We’ve all witnessed the semi-miraculous and the prosaic ways in which He reveals Himself to our friends, relatives, workmates and strangers alike. For many of us, the shock lessens year by year as we watch His Manifestation unfold. In the most unexpected places He’s capturing more and more hearts and revealing Himself to people we know, in surprising – and sometimes bizarre fashion!



How is it that such an explosion of recognition/connection with Him has taken place since 31 January 1969; and yet the *visible* numbers remain static? If you were in Berkeley, California when Adi K Irani visited in the early 70s and there were 150–250 people at various events ... why is it that approximately the same number came to be with Bhau in the 90s? At Meher House in Sydney, perhaps 30–40 people came together in 1983 to celebrate Baba’s Anniversary visit; and there were roughly the same number in 1993. Why would a working bee at Avatar’s Abode in the late 70s attract the same number of lovers in the 90s? ... or the Melbourne group have 8–15 lovers at Betty Hall’s home in 1995 – and about the same when Tricia and I had Baba meetings at our house in Melbourne in 1982? If you visited Atlanta, Georgia – Boulder, Colorado – Bombay, India – or Sydney, Australia in the 70s you’d find the same number of working committee members, lovers attending Birthdays or *Discourse* reading.

WHY? Where are we all?

A theory: 'The Room'

THE ROOM contains all those who are active - in the *external* sense, in the 'Baba world'. At any given time those of us who inhabit THE ROOM could be termed the 'Meher Baba World Community'. We go to India when we get the chance. Lots of our friends and social contacts are Baba lovers. We hear the latest gossip from India, Myrtle Beach and Avatar's Abode. Perhaps, we have a close relationship with one or more of Baba's Mandali. We give time, energy and/or money for things associated with Beloved Baba and we attend meetings. And, of course, keep our subscriptions current with the *Love Street LampPost!*

NOW VISUALISE THE ROOM ITSELF: It's a long and narrow rectangle. There is a front entry door, a side exit immediately to the left on entering and another exit doorway down at the end of the room.

IMAGINE AND REMEMBER: Imagine the following six groups of people relating (or not) to *The Room*. Remember back to Baba lovers you've met over the years. I'll bet we all recognise and remember people in these six groups.

GROUP 1 – NEVER ENTER: *He Reveals Himself*. That's it. That's all they need or want. A certain percentage of souls who 'find Him' (or He finds them via dreams and/or direct means) take to heart what Baba said about organisations, creeds, tenets, rituals etc. And decide to 'go it alone' with Baba. All they need is the love in their hearts for Him, and they feel this so strongly that they never even approach *The Room*. Often they would not have had another lover as their connection ('Baba contact'); they may also, coincidentally, just not be the social type.

GROUP 2 – ENTER BUT DON'T STAY: Most of us have met those who come into *The Room* and are put off straightaway. They rush immediately (or at least politely wait until the meeting is over!) to the side door exit ... are gone ... and never

come back. Like some in Group 1 they may not be social types, or they feel unwelcome or they just couldn't relate to us who were in *The Room* at that particular time.

Sometimes, it's due to psychological imbalance, drug or alcohol addiction, low social status or poor self-esteem. *Conversely*, it's a very open, balanced and warm-hearted person who expected a loving welcome (from those who follow The Lord of Love) ... and didn't get that welcome into *The Room*. For whatever reason(s) they didn't like *The Room*, but they continue to *love Baba!*

GROUP 3 – OCCASIONAL BRIEF VISITS: This group is comprised of a certain number of those in Group 2 who *do* come back into *The Room* but only sporadically and *only* for special events. Birthdays, Bhau's visit, Amartithi etc. Perhaps once a year or every three–five years. Eventually, after intermittent mingling, most in this group leave *The Room* permanently via the back door ... taking Baba with them!

GROUP 4 – 'LEAVERS': Those who 'leave Baba'. A certain percentage from Groups 2 and 3 would be 'leavers'. What causes such a thing to happen? How would they let go of the Daaman? I suppose there are as many reasons as there are leaving souls! Anyway ... it does happen. Surely, they will pick up where they left off next lifetime. One thing for certain – they won't be coming back into *The Room* this lifetime!

GROUP 5 – STAYERS/PERMANENT RESIDENTS: We *stay* in *The Room*. For *years* and sometimes for many, many years. Help organise public events. Attend meetings as well as Birthdays, Amartithi, Silence Day and visits by the Mandali. We are definitely part of the 'Meher Baba World Community' ... and *in The Room*. Many of us never leave until death or incapacity. We are permanent residents!

GROUP 6 – STAYERS WHO LEAVE: These are the people in Group 5 who *eventually* leave *The Room* via the back door. It

could be four years or forty. At some point they may move to a geographic area where there is no *Room*. Perhaps they decide to seek Him totally within. Maybe no longer feel a need to associate with other lovers or be involved with 'externals'. Some perceive the 'Baba scene' changing from the 'good ole days' of the 60s and 70s and no longer feel comfortable in *The Room*. And for others – family and business commitments leave them no time to be directly involved.

Anyway, after many years of mingling intimately with hundreds of other Baba lovers, they slowly work their way the entire length of *The Room* and then quietly slip out the back with Baba! The constant influx of 'new lovers' coming in the front door are partly offset by this group leaving through the back door.

So ... what's the point?

Hopefully, this has been an interesting, accurate or thought-provoking explanation of *where we all are*. If there were a moral or punchline to this article – it's the 'what if' scenario. What if – throughout the 70s, 80s and 90s – we, in *The Room*, had manifested just a smidgin more of our Beloved's compassion, acceptance and love to newcomers ... and to each other?

Would we be attending anniversaries now with thousands present? All we can say for sure: It's His Will – and – maybe His Wish.

AVATAR MEHER BABA KI JAI

Inner dialogue

ME: Baba, I think I love You ... I want to love You more.

BABA: Oh yeah? So whaddaya gonna do about it?

M: Well, I guess I'll try to remember You more, and maybe *feel* love for You.

B: How?

M: Umm, well ... by repeating Your Name and thinking of You. Trying, at least trying, to be more tolerant and forgiving of others ... more giving and loving to others.

B: That's a pretty tall order isn't it? What about hypocrisy and selfishness? Won't they be insurmountable obstacles to such lofty urges? How can you move from self-interest, greed, anger and such ... to selflessness, love and tolerance? How will you stop thinking of yourself and begin to think more of My needs and happiness as they appear in others around you?

M: Ahhh ... I reckon it'd be through Your Grace.

B: Right, My Grace. Did you read *Listen Humanity*?

M: Yes.

B: How about page 51, where I said, 'I am the Ocean of Grace, but I am also hard as flint when you try to draw that grace from Me.'

M: What if rather than trying to draw Your grace from You, I surrender to Your Will?

B: Great! But how can you do that when you grizzle about a toothache? Or whine because business is bad and you can't afford eating out – the Indian food which you like so much?

M: What if ... when self-centred desires arise; I just take Your Name and feel resigned to whatever is happening?

- B: That's a very good start. Excellent. But remember how strong selfish urges – greed, lust and attachments are? How often do you do that? *Truly feel* resigned? Does it move from thinking to *action*? From intellectual to practical application?
- M: Well, sometimes or quite often. I mean I'm aware that I should a lot of the time and do it some of the time.
- B: Did you read *God-Man? The Family Letters*?
- M: Yes, both.
- B: How about page 298 in *God-Man*, page 24 in *The Family Letters*. I said, 'In the spiritual path there is no room for compromise' and, 'There is no compromise ... either you please yourself, or you please Me in the littlest thing.'
- M: But nobody's Perfect until God Realisation, right? So what can I do but my best?
- B: AHA! Now we are getting somewhere.

Do Your Best ... (as long as it really is the best you can)
then *Leave The Results To Me (I Am the Do-er)*

Don't Worry ... (If at all you must worry,
let it be how to remember Me constantly)

Be Happy (actually happy – not just pretending)

I Will Help You (you can count on it)

Personal meditation on the Master, in its different forms, ultimately contributes towards the release of *creative life of spiritual fulfilment*. Meditation on the Master is a meditation on *the living ideal* and not on the bare conception of perfection. Therefore it generates that dynamic power which eventually enables the aspirant to bridge over the gulf between theory and practice, and unify the spiritual ideal with everyday activity in his own life ...

The Discourses, 'The Types of Meditation', part V

The best way to cleanse the heart and prepare for the stilling of the mind is to lead a normal, worldly life. Living in the midst of your day-to-day duties, responsibilities, likes, dislikes, etc., will help you. All these become the very means for the purification of your heart. This natural, normal method depends for its success upon a clear idea of the force behind your thoughts, and the facts underlying your actions.

Listen Humanity, pg. 43

Cruel joke

some kinda cruel joke
what am I supposed to do?
after YOU reveal Yourself – then slap me around awhile,
show an Immanence
(the very intimacy, with God, that we all crave)
Face of the ONE in the many,
you dangle in front of me,
and then pull the rug out.

Frustration, longing and desperation,
leftover crumbs from Your beautiful Hands

You prevent a 'going within'
I grunt and groan
over meditations on Your perfect photo
boredom sets in ... The message, "Get out there
in it – the world,
give and take sanskaras with other souls"
and so I do
and it's just as empty
as tryin' to Commune with You
so what am I supposed to do?

***'If we endure our lot with patience and contentment,
accepting it as His Will, we are loving God'***

1.

Under the debris of self-pity
and around the corner from disgust –
with the God-Man's plan for us,
lurks surrender
waiting to bloom
like a wildflower at the tip,
with humour as its scent

2.

woke up with a swollen hurting eye
business is bad but the bills still arrive,
lonely – my wife gone to her father's bedside,
with a crook heart maybe to mend ...
wonder? – do I really have any friends
Deep breath and exhaled sigh
glance at Your photo
corner of the eye
tiny thrill heart pitter-pat
just when I felt so desperate

'It is necessary to experience being caged to appreciate freedom ... suffering is God's gift to men'

When we forget to thank Him
for the 'gift'!
bitch and cry
try to resist ...
struggling in the mighty bonds
of sanskaric filaments,
playing out the little self's gambits and ploys
in mental convulsion and emotions' noise
He waits in patience and stealth
hidden outside a narrow subconscious alley –
a cul-de-sac we fled into seeking freedom

He waits for a silence to follow
the noise and clatter of our frantic bids at escape
(like cat fights and garbage cans clanging)

Moves in quickly now
His fast powerful gait
Stoops low in compassion
Skilfully unties the knots,
Rubs the sore spots
Tweaks the cheek
Strokes the brow

ALL LOVE HE IS
preparing us for the next round

Addictions

five addictions
wake me from sleep
and propel me through the days,
provide sanskaric momentum
to remain incarnate

Caffeine

Nicotine

Alcohol

Gambling

(and the fifth –

MEHER BABA

– in five parts)

1 – staring at His photos;

2 - repeating His Name;

3 - remembering His Life Work and Word;

4 - riding the heart/love bubbles He percolates;

5 - savouring the glimpses of His Ever-Indwellingness.

Four of my addictions are counter-productive,
And *probably* retard Spiritual growth

One is not

And does not

UPDATE: *stopped gambling!*

EGO DEFENCE/CLARIFICATION:

Alcohol strong attachment but moderate in consumption –
three times per week!

Contentment

I couldn't renounce guilt and regret of the past
so I let God do it for me
but it didn't happen fast

Meher's Name and remembrance
eventually became more attractive
than fear and anguish about a future
which never seemed to arrive

 this or that
 well ... OK –
 whatever

the simple glory of waving weeds,
clouds, faces – an ordinary tree
couldn't truly be seen
while mind was spinning its vacant dreams
... and now – kinda' like the Zen guys,

I can taste my food
sounds are music
there's time to smile,
 and deep deep within
 the witness watches
 this or that ...

whatever

Four from Upasani



INTRODUCTION:

All five of these Perfect Masters have brought me 'down', and all that I have become is due to these five. I am made of all the attributes of all five of these Masters, and my Avataric state comprises the five states of these five Sadgurus (Outubs). Naturally, therefore, the qualities of all five are in me ... From *Listen Humanity*.

Upasani has always seemed to me to personify the Shiva aspect of God. By extension, I believe this attribute of His to be the primary aspect of 'the Upasani within Baba'. The fiery, Jalili side of Baba, which was much more evident in the early days, appears to me to be the legacy – from His Master.

In 1993, I re-read Upasani's *Discourses* for the third time. Unlike the previous two readings where I'd skim through (skip the 'boring' or too-weird bits) – this time I read every word. This perseverance led to what I can only describe as a 'personal relationship' with Upasani. It was a relationship with the 'Upasani within Baba'.

The spiritual succour I received was the same (Bread of Life) but with a slightly different flavour and I never lost sight/feeling of the fact that it came from, 'The Source of Truth ... The Ocean of Love' – my Beloved Meher.

This feeling connection to Upasani, and the attendant 'spiritual high' only lasted for a few months but in those months I absorbed some concepts of the Path that had never before registered so forcefully in mind/heart.

1. 'UNDERSTANDING' COWS! I still can't put into words what this was like. Just that when I glanced out at the paddocks in this area and looked at the cows; I *felt* what the Hindus have felt for thousands of years.

2. THAT GOD PLAYS ALL ROLES – and can be loved and found, through any form/role that suits the seeker ... *as long as there is absolute sincerity, wholeheartedness and determination to know Him ... He will reveal Himself.*

Upasani hammers home the point of God's Omnipresence: how God can be approached and realised through worshipping a stone, a clay idol or even a lump of cow shit. *Any Form* – which is sincerely and wholeheartedly revered as representative of God – through that form, He will reveal Himself.

This axiom leads to the related point: *Honesty, forbearance, humility and courage* are of the essence; more so than correct belief systems or 'true' answers.

Taken to the extreme, we might say someone who followed Jim Jones with absolute selfless love and dedication, who believed wholeheartedly in his skewed vision and longed to find God with his help – such a person *may* be far more blessed in the spiritual 'Big Picture' than a Baba lover who lives a weak, hypocritical and self-indulgent life.

God's omnipresence dictates that He respond to *spiritual qualities* rather than 'correct' belief systems about the Truth, or intellectual understanding of His Nature. (i.e. Jim Jones=the rock or lump of cow shit)

3. SIN, AND THE PRICE TO BE PAID, CANNOT BE ESCAPED: BUT THROUGH GRACE – While absorbing Upasani's *Discourses*, the inevitability of karma came home to me painfully and forcefully. Upasani makes the case for one *necessarily* having to accumulate 'Punya' (good sanskaras) – through 'Satkarmas' (i.e. penance, remembrance, service, self-denial and/or simply clinging to the Perfect Master) – in order to undo or balance 'Papas' (sins).

Although Upasani does go into the unfathomable ways of a Perfect One, unwinding or eliminating sanskaras/sins – by His whimsical Grace; He makes it clear how *very rarely* such Work is done. (To paraphrase Baba, 'I can be as soft as butter but as hard as flint if you try to extract My Grace.')

I realised how easily 'spiritual laziness' had crept into my relationship with Baba – *assuming* that He was doing all necessary spiritual work and adjustment within and I could just sit back and enjoy the ride. *After* this third point really struck me, I felt the personal necessity for *sharing* responsibility with Baba! By way of service to others, penance (as Baba describes it in *The Discourses*) and other difficult and taxing works in the world.

The comforting notion of relinquishing responsibility for one's salvation was replaced by the frightening and terrifying challenge of that hackneyed cliché: 'God helps those who help themselves'.

The next four poems written during this Upasani period are dedicated to the Avatar's Master.

This world: my Mayavic manifesto

(On working six and seven days a week)

Dedicated to Sadguru Upasani-Baba Maharaja

I'm not 'out here' – in this world
to win friends or influence people,
make money or gain anything –
nor to be funny or avoid ageing

I'm not driven into this dream
from the Beyond Beyond slumber of sound sleep
to procure possessions, security, sensory pleasures
or the sweet success
of name and fame

I'm 'out here' Baba – 'in this world'
to assist You in Your game,
of unwinding sanskaras ... forcing a step-by-step
death to self –
rubbing me up against other facets
of Your Indwellingness ('The Soul of souls') ►

wearing smooth ego's pitted mask
while annihilating through CONflict
the compulsion to conFLICT ...

to help You 'Kill the Jiva' (as *Your* Master put it!)

I'm not out here in this world
to nurture pride, make my mark, kick a goal or
save face ...
nor to feel pleased with a job well done,
but to being resigned
to being undone
through Your Grace

It's a bumpy ride on purpose
to force me beneath the surface of appearances,
Not to chase Your shadow in the world of forms –
but to rest ... as You suggested,
(being one of the 'heavy laden')
in passionless neutral gear,
detached from the chaos and fear

to slip into self – forgetful BLISS

so that ... *Your* dream – Lord Meher ...
is a sweet one



With tweezers and a steady hand

mind slows down
and then:

anger goes into hiding and lust is put to bed,
eyelids get droopy – toes come uncurled
bodily tension oozes out a black hole in the brain ...
like fragrant baby bathwater gurgling down the drain

ocean breezes carry arcane messages
from unseen Higher Spheres,
heralding an amnesty from mortal fear

BE AS IT MAY in THE HERE AND NOW

nothing more is hidden there's nothing left to surprise

Knowing – how ships get in bottles
and what happens when ya die

NOTE: 'Be as it May' is to Upasani Maharaj what 'Mastery in
Servitude' is to Meher Baba

Byron Bay Main Beach parking lot

like a disease in remission
desires lose their claim
on mind and body
momentarily

called **BE AS IT MAY** – it's awesome

freshly stripped of sanskaric chains,
childlike – but not childish
yer chilled out ...

and a flow a hum a buzz
connects ya to it All – just *there* with it All

gulls squawking,
serious faced surfers tireless Ocean waves ►

frustrated adolescents stoning the gulls;
and a nerdy lookin' bloke reads his potato chip package

Whether it's GRACE ... or the 2 VBs –
I'm just grateful to BE AS IT MAY

NOTE: Non-Australian readers – VB is Victoria Bitter... a very
popular Australian beer

At the altar

Part 1

once upon a time
a fifth plane saint pestered the God-Man,
saying in effect ...

“Why don't you give your lovers experiences? ...
glimpses of the Path –
I give my disciples peeks at inner splendour,
because they work like pep pills,
and keep them enthused ... moving onward/inward”

Our Beloved Meher replied, (in effect)

“When I give I give it all
direct sight of the higher realms
can unbalance and waylay my precious friends –
keep them hankering after the gifts,
while forgetting the Giver ...
so when I give I give it all,
and until then lovingly draw a veil
over their involving consciousness
When the time is right
in less than the twinkling of an eye,
I pull off this veil. now
you and I are ONE”

Part 2

Recently I started looking again,
poking around inside
to find my Beloved and best Friend
snooping and roaming internal vistas,
meditating – repeating in a whisper
Meher Meher Meher

I built an altar and asked Him to be there
when I sit and drift ...
prodding third eye territory,
raising sex energy up to heart –
staring at His photo declaring,
“You can’t fool me. I know we’re never apart”

It’s not ‘Your Way’ to give pep pills of the Path,
but You can’t blame me for trying –
everyone wants to feel high and free.

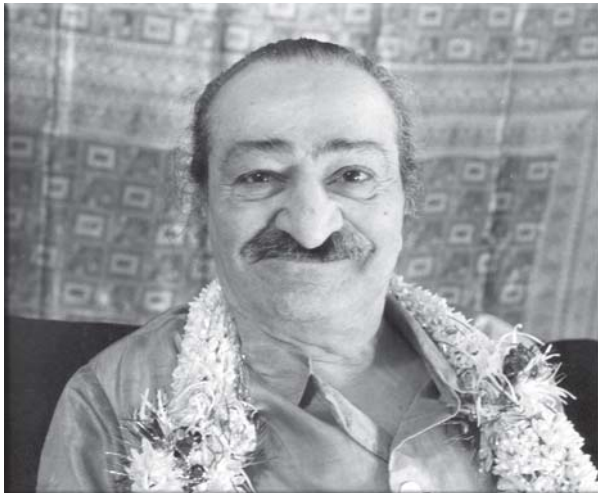
You said, “The only yoga I know ... is ‘you go’”
But then again Baba
when I stare at Your photo
and vaguely sense the Kundalini’s tremendous force,
then close my eyes and sigh “Meher ...
my own True Self ... Meher
Meher Baba Baba Baba Baba”
drifting towards the far shore
of empty minded peace,
and try to see You in the light between the eyebrows –

This is all delightful stuff
So if my duties for the empty day are done,
isn’t it OK to come to this altar looking for Your Sun?
the light within me
which animates ego’s phantasm ►

Lord Meher replies,
“This photo at which you stare
is a symbol of My Infinite Being
your love and faith alone
transform it into ME

“I am here when you are truly present
in fact I am you – now and forever ...
and this is the only experience worth having.
If you want to reach deeper,
attempt to soar higher –
meet Me at the third eye,
or slide into some minor samadhi,
where the mind stops and bliss starts ...
Well my friend – there is no harm in trying
because you’ll only see or feel
what I choose to see or feel through you
BEING YOU – I’ll set the agenda of these meditations.”

So saying,
He’s given me carte blanche
To *GO FOR IT*





Baba talks to me on a Monday

Whatever tiny fragment of My Glory
that I choose to view – through you,
don't be frightened

Flow with the show,
but don't tell!

Any smidgin of My Infinitude
that happens to intrude
on your squashed-down personhood;
take it ... stay open ... stay tuned,
there's more to come –

On we will go, together, until as ONE
I finish My business of finding Myself;

Myself who wandered aeons in form
pretending unawareness of Myself in you
So don't be scared by the glimpses –
Surrender to what I decide to see and feel
through you ... OK?

I talk back

well yes I guess that's OK
I won't be scared ...

but what about feeling sad and frustrated
if I don't know how
to share the joy from these 'glimpses'
with You ...

in Your other 'pretending-not-to-know-Yourself – selves'
is that OK?

Comfort

Part 1:

Chocolate ...

deep tissue massage

and hot bubble bath,

with best-selling thriller

sexual congress,

reciprocally tender

A feel-good film in comfortable cinema,

stranger's smile midst the urban miasma

Infant suckling in peaceful place,

doting expression on mother's face

cool breeze when it's hot

someone ... somewhere

forgave and forgot

deep meditation till mind almost stops

Part 2:

Complete Cosmic Comfort

You

Real dear Daddy

Meher Baba

The warmest and fuzziest of All

keeping Your Company;

unfurls worried brow

slows muddled, racing mind

and warms the cockles

of True Heart

Almost accidentally

One entire lifetime on earth –
one amongst many –
nothing happened

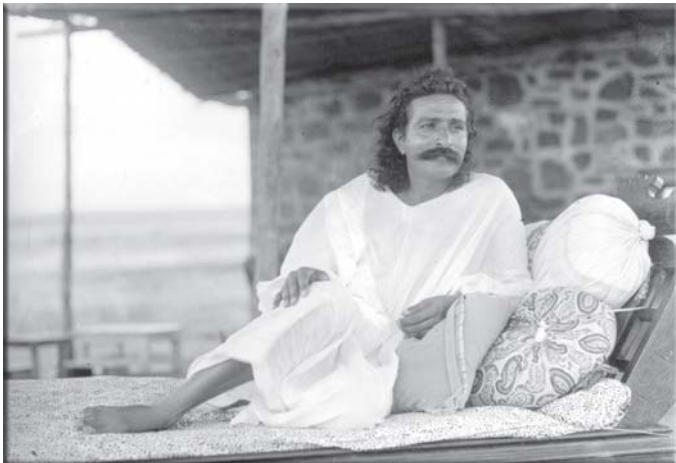
Almost nothing
except an accidental Something
the Indwelling Essence paid a visit,
revealed His hiding place –
deep within the recesses
of my frozen soul

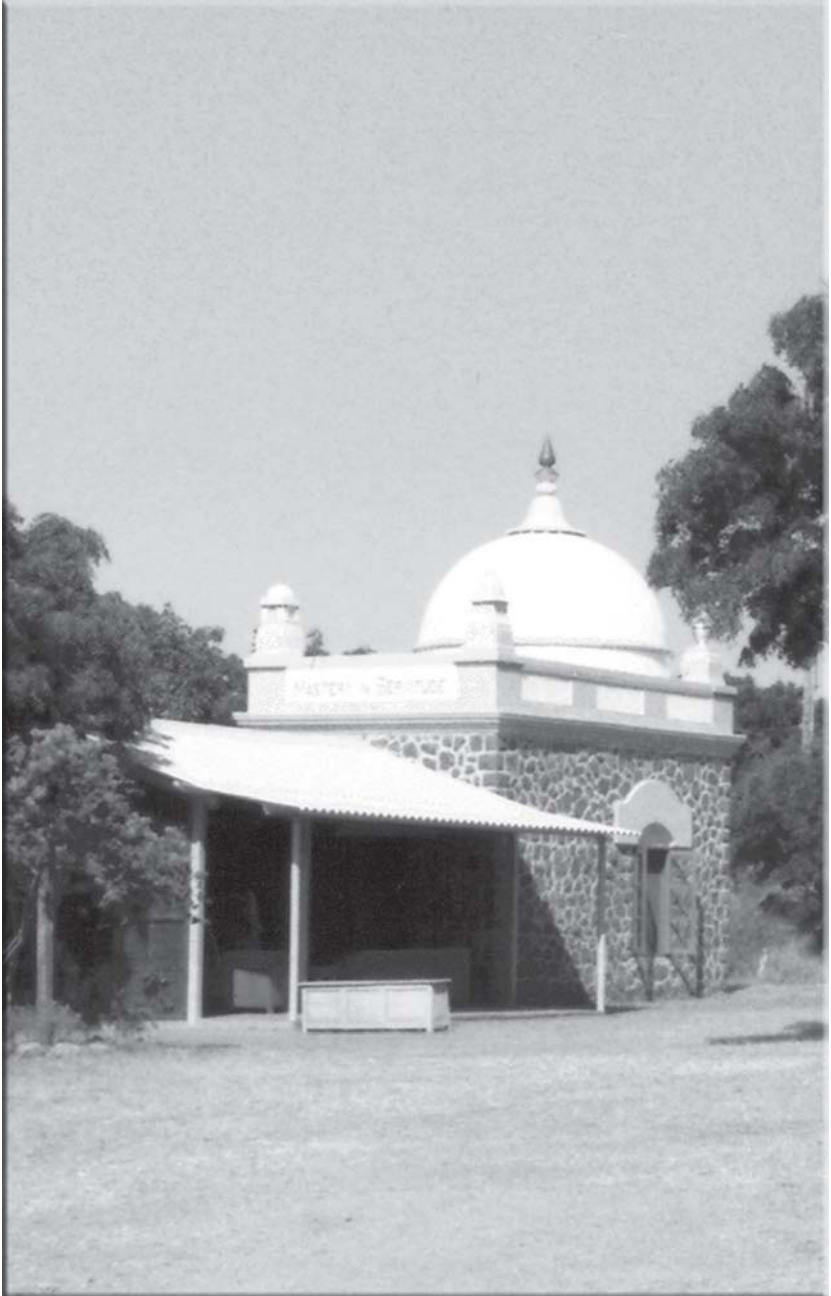
The Lord of the Universe
does show and tell

passively ... joyously ... I accede to His Wish,
watched and listened to His revelation:
"I am you"

An entire lifetime and nothing happened,
but for the raison d'être
for any life to be lived

Almost accidentally





Spiritual experiences

The most direct quote I know from Baba – regarding genuine experiences (i.e. His Love) would be:

Love sets on fire the one who finds it. At the same time it seals his lips so that no smoke comes out.

In all the spiritual literature I've read there are cautions about revealing and sharing experiences vouchsafed by the Master – with others. Over the years I've learned the hard way just how valid this advice is. Early on, in my life with Baba, I spoke openly with Baba lovers about the experiences He'd given me. This sharing was *almost always* met with scepticism, outrage or what *appeared to be* mild jealousy!

Another factor, which The Masters warn about, has been the gradual dissipation of the feeling/memory of the original experience. If I had kept these experiences as closely guarded secrets – just between Him and me – I'm sure the nourishment from the memories would be stronger and sweeter today.

Although I've always felt that my motivation in sharing was to glorify Him – bear witness to His Infinite Power and compassion – *still human nature ordains* a certain admixture of ego enhancement, pride and primal sense of worthiness.

I derive a great deal of joy in hearing about others' inner life with the Beloved. I could listen till the cows come home to Baba lovers speak about their intimate, deepest relations with Him – and experiences He's given them.

How happy I am to hear of others' lofty glimpses of HIM, would surely tie in with the fact that I've been on the receiving end myself! It's easy to understand how unsettling it could be (if one hadn't had any glimpses at His Hand), to listen to the stories of others who had. (By the way, some of the strongest and most focused Baba lovers I've met have never had extraordinary experiences of Him.) And, of course, such experiences don't *necessarily* have any intrinsic spiritual

significance. It's all a matter of each individual heart and soul, and how He does the needful in each case.

For three reasons I'll forge ahead:

1. It's too late now ... I've already 'spilled the beans'
2. In order to glorify HIM: as in the song AMAZING GRACE:
*Thaaa aaa aaattt saaaaaaaaved uh uh uh
wretch lllllluu u iiiieeeeeekkkk mmeeee*
3. The purpose of this book is to reveal what 'Meher Baba and Me' means to me! It would be 'social cowardice' to leave out the punchline ... to omit the most important things in my life with Him.



When Baba first 'revealed Himself to me', whilst reading *Listen Humanity* in San Francisco in 1971, He immediately initiated the honeymoon period. I took to heart the advice in *Listen Humanity* regarding saying His Name and, as a result, I gradually entered into some kind of ecstasy. Heart opened and mind slowed down. I was given a glimpse behind the veil: that is I had a direct sense of Baba as the Indwelling Essence in all life. I could see His physical image in tree formations, on patterns in the footpath, in other people's faces etc.

The experiences were so all-consuming that I often assumed He was going to break His Silence at any moment. A particularly delightful experience was hearing sounds which were probably just on the edges – the frontier border! – of the subtle world. In crowded public areas people would be talking about their exam results (this was on the Berkeley campus), the date they had last night, the weather or just any mundane stuff – but I would hear these sounds as ancient Eastern chants and mantras or Gregorian chants or just unidentifiable beauty. Another specific incident was when the fear of death left me completely. For a few days I knew to the depths of my soul that I wouldn't bat an eye in the face of imminent death. During this 'first honeymoon' I was *not* worrying, and I was *very* happy!

The timing of the second honeymoon was extraordinary. By 1976 I had drifted from intimacy with Him. I was being very disobedient and felt trapped in a destructive relationship. I left a short-lived marriage and leapt into the unknown. I went to Maui, Hawaii where I didn't know anyone, with no idea of what I was going to do. I thoroughly expected the worst. I anticipated Baba's fiery retribution. I believed that I was going to have to pay for the recent years of 'wrong living'. Instead – His Grace descended once again. I bought some sandalwood beads to repeat His Name on and the second honeymoon began.

This time it was much more intense. Although, I completely appreciated and understood how long the Path is and how extremely unlikely it was to consciously advance in this lifetime, the intensity of bliss was such that I could only conclude that I was *either* going to die – *or* begin to get established in the subtle world.

Mixed with the bliss was a three-pronged agony: 1. The little voice deep within which would intimate that one day I would 'come down' ... *that of course* I wasn't ready to *consciously* advance on the Path. This was exceedingly painful. 2. The agony of not knowing how to share the bliss I felt, so as to lift the spirits of all those I saw suffering around me. 3. The agony of separation. To be absent from Him for a second would tear at my heart. (Like pondering what sandwich I'd have for lunch, thereby not repeating His Name for two seconds.) It was the consuming fire of love and longing which Baba explains so eloquently. A desperate longing to unite. A fish out of water.

My room-mate at the time told me that I laughed a lot in my sleep and also said Baba's Name. For the first time in my life I felt love for Jesus. There was a delightful merging, and then distinction and again a merging of Baba/Jesus' Divine qualities and personalities. Sometimes, I would wake up with surges of love in my heart and from the first moments of awakened consciousness begin a love dialogue with Him.

SOME SNIPPETS OF BLISS: One day, while answering the call of nature, I realised that the appendage I held was nothing more than a device for waste elimination. Every iota of sexual energy that used to reside in this appendage ... was now in my heart. I could actually hear a creaking sound within. It was the sound of my heart chakra opening. At times Baba's companionship would take on physicality. That is – I could feel a pressure/presence that was physically tangible. I'd look behind me to see if He was manifesting. I finally concluded that this sense of 'pressure/presence' was probably due to angels.

An absolutely delightful game I would play with Him went like this: I would say to Him, "Baba ... if I *really, really* wanted to see You physically – You would manifest. But since You've given me sight of Your Universal Body ... what's the point? Since I can see Your Face all around me, and feel Your Presence within ... it would just be greedy to ask You to appear physically. *And yet* Baba – if I decided that I really, really wanted You to ... You would!" Then I would pick a certain room in a building and visualise exactly how He would look, what He'd be wearing and the chair He would be sitting in; *if* I decided to ask Him to manifest ... and then went into that room. Anyway, His Physical Body was the *only* thing missing throughout all the experiences He's given Me. I've never seen His Physical Body. I don't know the exact technical terms for which Body I have seen.

Some days there would be hours together where I'd see partial or full formations of His Face in other people's faces, clouds, the façade of buildings, etc. It was as though the world itself was overlaid with a template of His Face; or His Form was etched on my inner eye.

During these weeks the waves of bliss were so strong, in momentary surges that I didn't think my body could stand it; hence the belief that I might die. (The bliss always tempered by the three-pronged agonies mentioned earlier.)

OTHER INCIDENTS: Every single bubble in a glass of carrot juice I was drinking became a *crystal clear* image of His Face! Tens of thousands of minuscule Babas! (The Face on the *Don't Worry Be Happy* card.)

I had the feeling of my spine being in perfect, erect alignment, even when slouched over in poor posture. Some kind of 'kundalini thing'?

The sense of His In-Dwellingness reached a point wherein I could directly perceive and feel the true meaning of God's Lila. That is – I saw Baba *perfectly pretending* to be limited and burdened within other people around me. The body language, quirky idiosyncrasies and physical traits of people and the structure of their faces, would all mirror aspects of Baba's human qualities and further strengthen the knowing that He was the Animating Principle of All Life.

Sometimes, while repeating His Name silently within, the sound of His Name would become so loud it was like a deafening roar that filled me.

THE TOPPERS: Remember that story of the Mandali member in the early days who was talking to Baba about the concept of His 'In-Dwellingness' – how he lives within all creation – is closer than our very breath? Anyway they were having a conversation along those lines and Baba told the fellow to open his shirt and have a look. He opened his shirt, looked at his heart ... and fainted! (Later recounting that what he saw was, of course, Baba.)

Twice in my life I have *seen Baba inside of myself*. This is impossible to adequately explain with words but what else can I use!

1. To set the scene: *Externally* – I was working in a health food restaurant on a very busy day – as hard and fast as I could – and doing it efficiently. I was taking people's orders, collecting money, making sandwiches and smoothies etc.

Internally ... I could see myself sitting in my own heart. I was sitting just on the edge of my 'heart cave', in full lotus position, mind stopped – adoring Him.

(The heart cave is a term that appears in spiritual literature and it exactly describes what I was sitting on the edge of during this experience. It looked and felt like a cave.)

Sitting in perfect mental silence I was meditating on His Form, which I could see as *thousands of images of Him filling the sky outside the cave*. The closest representation I can think of, are those posters of Krishna wherein thousands of Krishna faces fill the spiritual sky.

2. *Awakened by Him:* The next time I saw Him within myself was with my eyes closed. Circa 1978 or 79 in Northern California. I was working as a milkman and used to get up about 2.30 am. On this particular morning, at the *exact instant of waking from sleep* – that very nanosecond wherein one is aware that one *is* aware and awake – I saw Him within myself gesturing silently. I could read and translate the gestures. He said, *"I am always within you. I experience everything you experience. I am your very life and breath. I live in and through you. You are being lived by Me. In Reality I am you."*

I suppose if ever there is such a thing as a genuine spiritual experience, this was it!

So far, it had lasted between five and ten seconds. My immediate reaction was to cry out to Baba from the depths of my soul, *"Oh Baba, why must it go on?"* Which translated to: *"Baba, now that You've given me this direct experience of the Truth – why must the empty charade of You playing the Jim Migdoll ego-self role ... go on? What's the point? After this moment – You've revealed the Truth to me – what purpose is*

served in continuing the Illusion? Which is difficult and distasteful for me – and surely a burden for You.”

He replied: *“Because it is My Will.”*

I got up, showered and went to work.

Although I ‘heard’ and translated Baba’s gestures as above, they are also a paraphrase of one of my favourite quotes of His:

I assert unequivocally that I am infinite consciousness; and I can make this assertion because I AM infinite consciousness. I am everything and I am beyond everything. I am ever conscious that I am you, while you are never conscious that I am in you. Daily I support you and share your consciousness. Now I want you to uphold me, so that one day you can share my consciousness.

Rapture’s end

MELBOURNE, AUSTRALIA 1984. Since this particular experience the ‘fireworks’ have stopped. I’ve had some Baba dreams, periods of intimacy with Him and many moments of savouring and trying to relive and revive the memories of the two honeymoons. But no more overwhelming experiences.

As in *‘Awakened by Him’*, this also occurred at the very microsecond of waking from sleep. In that instant came a roar from deep within my soul, and it was Him, and He ‘said’: *“It’s you or ME.”*

I knew immediately what He meant. It was an ultimatum with no shades of grey ... no middle ground.

A *total* demand with no room for rationalisations. *Either* I continue living for my own hopes, fears, desires etc. *or* He becomes the focus of my life *completely*. To please Him and love Him and live for Him. It was so stark and absolute that it terrified me. My response internally was to say, *“Oh no ... oh God, I can’t handle this. I’m not ready for this, please – leave me alone.”* (Imagine telling God to leave you alone!)

Externally, I groaned aloud, pulled the covers right up

over my head, adopted the foetal position and forced myself to go back to sleep as quickly as I could. It all took about five to ten seconds.

He knew I wasn't capable of one hundred per cent surrender, nor spiritually prepared to live my life completely for Him. But He didn't say, 'try harder' ... or 'love me more'. Instead He presented an impossible demand. Why?

Having reacted the way I did – what can I do about it now? To this day I ponder these questions. It brings to mind how Baba used to ask the impossible of people and then say, "But try ... do your best."

At some point, years later, I started to wonder, what if? Of course there are no 'what ifs' in spiritual life! What happened, happened – and I responded the way I did. Still, it's fascinating to wonder, what if? What if I had jumped up out of bed and from the bottom of my heart said, "OK, then ... It's YOU!"

I'd probably be a *real* Baba lover by now!!!

Most recent India pilgrimage

On my last trip to India in September 1995, Baba gave me some more insight into the message, '*It's you or Me*'. He also helped me to understand the significance of the 'spiritual experiences' ... and why they stopped.

During this pilgrimage my prayers, introspection and internal dialogues with Him – in the tomb, His room etc. – developed a theme. He kept reminding me of how our relationship had been one-way. I had been the passive recipient of His Grace: always made intensely aware of *His love for me*, yet unable thus far to *implement and put into action* any small feelings of love I had for Him. Another realisation was that He had already given me more than I could ever fully assimilate in this lifetime and now it was time to give back something to Him. He wanted obedience in little things – willingness to sacrifice selfish desires for Him. He wanted courage and

discipline, which would manifest in seeing to His comfort via love, tolerance and service to others. He didn't want me wallowing sentimentally in memories of the blissful times. They had served their purpose. (i.e. I hadn't left Him ... and my being was impregnated with the certainty of Who He Is.)

An analogy/metaphor emerged from these dialogues in Meherabad. Picture a city where one of the main streets has been a one-way street for many years. Eventually, the busy part of town that this road runs through is going to be redeveloped. It becomes evident that the one-way thoroughfare has outlived its usefulness. The flow and volume must be increased and so the road is converted to two-way traffic.

AFTERWORD: *Everything* we experience is imprinted on the mental body and it remains until the death of the limited mind. This one thought provides so much comfort to me. To know that these wondrous experiences from Him will always remain with me – *right up to the moment when He gives me the only Real experience!* The cliché, 'third time lucky', also provides much comfort and hope! After the two honeymoon periods ... I wonder what might happen if there is a third time in this lifetime. If by some miracle I repeated His Name at the moment of death – that would certainly qualify as third time lucky!

Something I heard Bhau talk about recently regarding the subject of liberation (as opposed to full God Realisation): Bhau was saying that during His Manifestation, many more people than normal would attain simple liberation (Infinite Bliss only ... without Infinite Knowledge or Power). I asked him about how many more people, just to get an idea of the scale of increase he was talking about. I can still hear his answer clearly, "towzands and towzands ... many, many towzands."
JAI BABA

My epitaph

(Composed 1997)

He realised so much,
Utilised so little ...
Better luck next time.
Jai Meher Baba

('realised' with the small letter 'r')