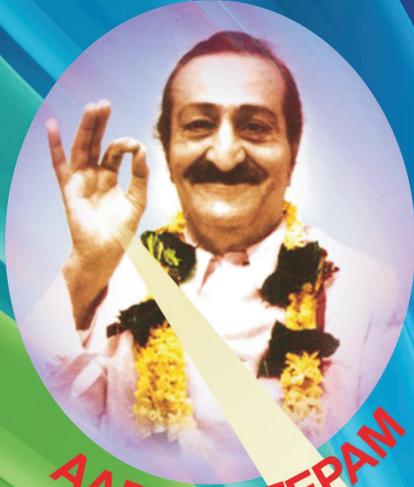


BE A LIGHT UNTO YOURSELF

Dr. Anu Dhawan



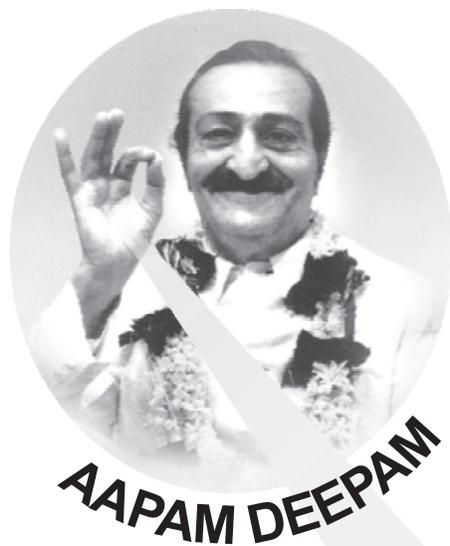
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BE A LIGHT UNTO YOURSELF



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**BE A LIGHT UNTO YOURSELF**



**Dr. Anu Dhawan**



**Anuradha Prakashan,  
New Delhi**

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**BE A LIGHT UNTO YOURSELF**



# **Dedicated**

to the memory of

**My Paternal Grandparents**

**Late Dr. HIRA LALL CHOPRA M.A. D Litt.**

**And Late Raj Kumari Chopra**

**ardent devotees of Meher Baba**

**AND**

**My mother**

**Late Smt. ADARSH CHOPRA**

**who was a constant source of inspiration to me.**

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

*I take this opportunity to express my deep sense of gratitude to my respected father, **Mr. R.M. Chopra**, an eminent author of about a dozen books on religion, history, philosophy and culture, who has guided me with his kind advice, help and inspiration in completing this book.*

*I am greatly indebted to my Munna Bhua (**Mrs. Ranjana Rana**) for her helpful suggestions and cooperation in this venture.*

*I shall be failing in my duty if I do not acknowledge my indebtedness to **Mr N.K.. Bhardwaja** and others in Avatar Meher Baba Centre, New Delhi for providing me reading material on **Meher Baba**.*

**(Dr). ANU DHAWAN**

## **PREFACE**

I was acquainted with the name of Meher Baba when as a kid I heard my grandfather Dr. Hira Lall Chopra often mention his name as a spiritual awakener of the twentieth century who lived in Ahmednagar.

It was recently that, in the course of my study on the spiritual world and on spiritualism, I came across the name of Meher Baba. His name not only evoked my childhood memories but also spurred me on to undertake deeper study to gain insight into the life and achievements of Meher Baba. In the course of this pursuit I also went to Avatar Meher Baba Centre, New Delhi. The Centre was very helpful in providing information and reading material on the life and teachings of Meher Baba.

I must admit that, on studying the available material on the life and achievements of Meher Baba, I was wonderstruck as to how an ordinary person, leading an ordinary life, by a twist of fate, not only realized spirituality but also turned into an ardent spiritual awakener for the rest of mankind in this predominantly materialistic world.

Man is essentially a spiritual being and, in my opinion, requires material gains only for peaceful

existence in order to achieve his objective of spirituality, and come closer to his Creator – God. But in pursuit of material gains, men, at large, tend to distance themselves from spirituality and thus from God. For those who earnestly seek spirituality, I feel the teachings of Meher Baba can help them to achieve their objective.

It is for this reason that I have penned down my findings and thoughts in the form of this book on the life and teachings of Avatar Meher Baba which may help all those who seek spirituality and God - consciousness.

**(Dr). ANU DHAWAN**  
**NEW DELHI**  
**July 2014**

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## INTRODUCTION

From time immemorial many spiritual personages have embellished the spiritual horizon of India who have made substantial contribution to the spiritual upliftment of man in India. Some amongst them have been **Mahatma Buddha** in the 6<sup>th</sup> century BC, who brought a spiritual message of Eight Fold Path (**Pali**: *ariyo althangiko maggo*; **Sanskrit**: *aryastangamarga*) [1]. This is one of the principal teachings of the Buddha, who described it as the way leading to the cessation of suffering (*dukkha*) and the achievement of self awakening. It is used to develop insight into the true nature of phenomena (or reality) and to eradicate greed, hatred and delusion. The Noble Eight Fold Path is the fourth of Buddha's Four Noble Truths ; the first element of the Noble Eight Fold Path is, in turn, an understanding of the Four Noble Truths. It is also known as the Middle Path or Middle Way.

All eight elements of the path begin with the word *right* . The **Noble Eight Fold** paths are: -

***Right View, Right Intention, Right Speech, Right Action, Right Livelihood, Right Effort, Right Mindfulness and Right Concentration.***

Buddha's contemporary was **Bhagwan Mahavira**, last of the twenty four Tirthankara of the Jains who, among other things, laid emphasis on ahimsa (Buddha's non- violence). Mahavira taught the three things :- **Right Faith** – we must believe in truth – **Right Knowledge** – understand what life is all about – **Right Conduct** – the conduct which our faith and knowledge show us to be correct. These are the three Jewels, or **Ratnatraya**, of Jainism.

In the 8<sup>th</sup> century AD, **Adi Shankara**, who ,by expounding the

doctrine of *Vedanta*, in the middle ages in India revitalized and rejuvenated Hinduism and made it a strong progressive force. The teachings of Shankara can be summed up in – “*Brahma Satyam Jagan Mithya Jivo Brahmaiva Na Aparah* – Brahman (the Absolute) is alone real; this world is unreal; and the Jiva or the individual soul is non-different from Brahman. This is the quintessence of his philosophy. Saints, who embraced *bhakti* movement and syncretic beliefs, laid emphasis on devotion. Many saints, Sufis (Muslim Mystics) and holymen contributed to spiritualism.

In the 15<sup>th</sup> century (15Apr. 1469 – 22sept 1539) it was **Guru Nanak**, who was influenced by the Bhakti Movement, Sufism and revelations received by him direct, founded Sikkhism in India.

In the 20<sup>th</sup> Century we have also had a holy man who among other things stressed on the doctrine of “**UNCONDITIONAL LOVE**” for God and he was **MEHER BABA** . It was in his complete devotion and dedication to, and Unconditional Love for God that he observed silence for 44 years in pursuance of his belief. I have been greatly influenced by Meher Baba and the ideal pursued by him, which has prompted me to write this monograph, describing in brief his biography and highlighting his philosophy and teachings. He has become a spiritual awakener not only for me but also for multitudinous number of people

**ANU DHAWAN**

1. Brekke, Torkel. “The religious Motivation of the early Buddhist Journal of the American Academy of Religion vol. 67 Dec. 1999.

## Chapter-1

# Brief Biography

Meher Baba was born as Merwan Sheriar Irani on 25<sup>th</sup> February 1894. He was the second son of Shirin and Sheriar. His father, Sheriar, became a monk at the age of 13. He could neither write nor read, but had made up his mind to lead a life of renunciation. So for eight years, Sheriar roamed all over Persia, but found that it was not bearing any fruitful result, so he along with his brother came to Bombay (now Mumbai), India and took up some work. In 1892, he married Shirin when she was 14. Shirin was “*as intelligent as she is fair*”. She understood four languages.



***Sheriar Irani***



***Shirin Irani***

They lived in Poona,(now known as Pune), which is an important city in Western India, also a cultural and educational centre, once a Maratha capital. The city is at the conjunction of the rivers Mutha and Nula.

Shirin’s first child, Jamshedji, died in 1926.The second son was Merwan,and the three others were Jal, Behram and Ardesher and two daughters Freni and Mani.



*Family Photograph*

Merwan was born at 5 am on 25<sup>th</sup> February, 1894 under auspicious stars that indicated his destiny as a Spiritual Awakener. This was an ordinary birth at David Sassoon Hospital, Poona. Now there is a plaque outside the hospital which commemorates Meher Baba in the words, ***“Deliverer of the world was delivered here”***.



*Sassoon Hospital, Pune*

Merwan's mother Shirin brought him to 816 Butler Mohalla (now renamed as Meher Mohalla in 1940 by Cantonment Board), the house which was bought and repaired by his father. The house had two rooms and it was here that Merwan spent his childhood. Later they moved to No. 765, Butler Mohalla, which was a larger house.

The childhood of Merwan was a happy one. He was a happy bright lad, mischievous but gentle, and very sensitive. His favourite haunts were Muslim Burial Grounds and the neighbourhood of the Parsi Tower of Silence, where he would sit for hours. He was a lover of nature, beauty and took pleasure in poetry. At school he was very methodical, punctual and a rapid learner. He was alert and brisk, a quick walker and a fast runner. He delighted in sports excelling in cricket and hockey.



*Merwan in his childhood*

When Merwan was five he went to Dastur Girls School, where he learnt to read and write the Gujarati language and the rudiments of arithmetic. At the age of nine, he was sent to Camp Government English School, where he remained for five years. He then went to St. Vincent's High School (Roman Catholic), which was considered to be the best school in Pune. It was from this school that he matriculated in 1911 at the age of seventeen.

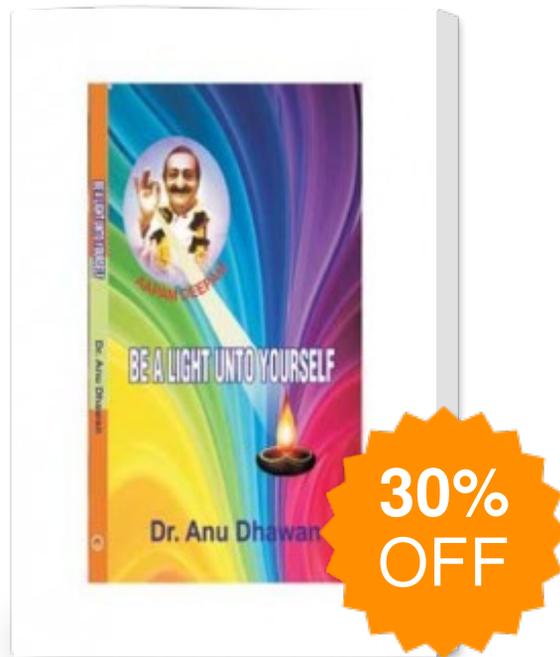
Merwan then attended Deccan College which was the greatest educational institution in the Deccan at that time. His main interests were literature, specially poetry. He read Shakespeare, Wordsworth, Shelly and many other English poets . He also read many Indian and Persian poets and had the faculty of remembering almost everything he read. At the age of fifteen, he wrote a story which was published in the British Monthly magazine, The London Union Jack [1]. The Persian poet Merwan's favourite was Khwaja Shams-al-Din Mohammad, known as **Hafiz**, one of the greatest lyric poets of Persia, and considered by some a Perfect Master of his time. Under the influence of Hafiz, Merwan wrote poems himself in Gujarati, Urdu, Hindustani and Persian, which were published under the *nom de plume* of "**HUMA**" in *Sanj Vartman*, a popular newspaper in Bombay.

Merwan's friends in school called him "*ELECTRICITY*". He formed the Cosmopolitan Club which was dedicated to remaining informed of world affairs and giving money to charity. Money was raised by donations and sometimes by gambling at the races (betting at horse racing).



*Merwan's Love for horses*

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