

OM ॐ POINT

INTERNATIONAL CIRCULAR • ISSUE 9 • DECEMBER 12, 2012



HAPPY HANUKWANZAAMEHERMAS



OMĀPOINT

INTERNATIONAL CIRCULAR • ISSUE 9 • DECEMBER 12, 2012



contents no.9

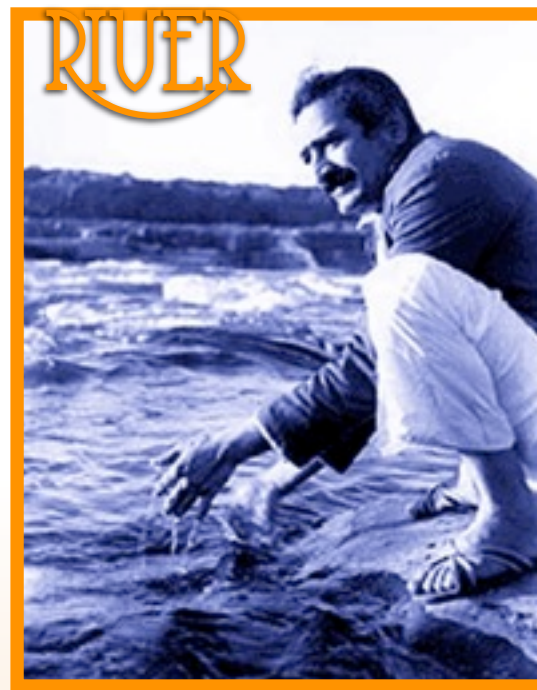
- 03 Of Baba and the River -- Kendra Crossen Burroughs
- 05 Review of "The Doorbell To Forgiveness" -- Talat Halman
- 06 I'm Ringing the Doorbell To Forgiveness -- poem, Talat Halman
- 07 Book Reviews "Where Two Seas Meet" -- Talat Halman
- 08 A Dream -- Raine Eastman-Gannett
- 09 The Inner Voice Of Love -- poem, Henri Nouwen
- 12 The Inner and the Outer: Dynamics of Creativity in Clay -- Judith Ernst
- 14 Remembering Diane Cobb -- Laurent Weichberger and Joan Harland
- 15 I Have Fallen In Love With The World -- poem, Tracey Schmidt
- 16 Is Everyone Destined to Become A Society of Two? -- Neale Lundgren
- 19 Artwork by Philipp Weichberger -- "Artful Legacy" -- Cliff Joseph
- 20 Analysis "States of Prayer: The Parvardigar Prayer and the Ten Principal States of God in Chart VIII of God Speaks" -- Talat Halman
- 25 Book Review Daniel Ladinsky's "The Purity Of Desire" L. Weichberger
- 27 Enough -- poem, Tracey Schmidt
- 28 Three Poems Two Prayers -- Zack Gordon
- 29 The Mayonnaise Jar
- 30 His Immense Love -- Shelli Welch
- 32 Two Paintings by Marla Faith
- 33 Four Paintings by Elaine Najma Carter

Cover art by Patrick Pagano B.S, M.FA is an Digital Media Arts Engineer who works at the University of Florida, Digital Worlds Institute and has been with Beloved Baba for 17 years. Title: "**High Density Baba.**"

CREDITS

"Of Baba and the River" copyright © 2012 by Kendra Crossen Burroughs. Review of "The Doorbell To Forgiveness" and poem: "I'm Ringing the Doorbell To Forgiveness" and book review "Where Two Seas Meet" copyright © 2012 by Talat Halman. "A Dream" copyright © 2012 by Raine Eastman-Gannett. The Inner Voice Of Love -- poem by Henri Nouwen copyright © 1999 Image Books (used without permission). "The Inner and the Outer: Dynamics of Creativity in Clay" images and copy are copyright © 2012 by Judith Ernst. "I Have Fallen In Love With The World" poem and "Enough" poem, and "A Little Poem for 2012" all copyright © 2012 by Tracey Schmidt used by permission. "Is Everyone Destined to Become A Society of Two?" article copyright © 2012 by Neale Lundgren. "Artful Legacy" poem copyright © 2012 by Cliff Joseph. "States of Prayer: The Parvardigar Prayer and the Ten Principal States of God" article copyright © 2012 by Talat Halman. "Three Poems - Two Prayers" copyright © 2012 by Zack Gordon. "The Mayonnaise Jar" borrowed from the internet, used without permission. "His Immense Love" article copyright © 2012 by Shelli Welch. "2 Pieces" copyright © 2012 by Marla Faith. "4 Pieces" copyright © 2012 by Elaine Najma Carter. "The Purity Of Desire" book review, the Philipp Weichberger painting, "Good Timing Baba" poem, and article "Remembering Diane Cobb," and photo of Diane Cobb in LA, and "Forgiveness with Meher Baba" article and photo, and "Overseer" poem are all copyright © 2012 Laurent Weichberger. All photos of Avatar Meher Baba copyright © 2012 Meher Nazar Publications, Ahmednagar. Used by permission. Quotes from Avatar Meher Baba are copyright © 2012 by the Avatar Meher Baba Public Perpetual Charitable Trust, Ahmednagar, MS 414001 India. Quote from Mehera-Meher is copyright © 2003 by David Fenster. "1:15am Sep 3" piece copyright © 2012 by Michael Da Costa. "I don't know anybody..." piece copyright © 2012 by Jennifer Brigham. Incidental photography India, Ojai, Myrtle Beach © 2012 Karl Moeller. A Laurel and Hearty Thank You to all our contributors.

OF BABA AND THE RIVER



by Kendra Crossen Burroughs

A favorite photograph of Meher Baba — taken on 25th December 1938 by Rano Gayley — shows him at Jabalpur, MP, dipping His hands in the Narmada, a sacred river at the boundary between North and South India.

This was during the Blue Bus Tours, in which Baba was accompanied by Western and Eastern women. They had taken a boat ride on the river that afternoon. After touching the water, Baba told Elizabeth Patterson, “It is very rare that a Master will put his hands or feet in the water, for then he nearly always has to work a miracle.” (Twenty years later, in 1958, Baba placed his feet in the Atlantic Ocean at Meher Center in Myrtle Beach, SC, and Elizabeth wondered what miracle might be foreshadowed by that act.)

On another occasion in 1938, Baba put his feet in the Narmada, this time near Mandla (where Baba had a duplicate of his Samadhi built in the 1940s). He said that Mandla was “inhabited in ancient times by great saints, yogis, ascetics, recluses, and tapasvis doing great penances. Its earth is soaked in spirituality.’...While dangling his feet in the water, Baba remarked, “The Avatar sanctifies the waters of any river when he puts his feet in it.”

Avatar Meher Baba gave great importance to the Narmada (as well as to the Betwa River in Hamirpur). The Narmada flows through three states: Madhya Pradesh (MP), Gujarat, and Maharashtra. The name Narmada is Sanskrit for “Giver of Bliss.” The holy river Ganges, personified by the goddess Ganga, is said to visit the Narmada once a year in the form of a black cow, to cleanse herself of all her collected sins. On the occasion shown in the photograph, Eruch’s mother, Gaimai, had exclaimed: “How long the Narmada has awaited you, Baba!”

That beautiful image of Baba washing his hands in the river water appeared to me in a dream on the morning of Baba’s 118th birthday, 25th February 2012. In the dream, this knowledge came to my mind:

Meher Baba gathered these waters. But before doing so, he dipped his finger in the water and touched the forehead of everyone in the world.

I posted an account of the dream on Facebook, and several Baba-lovers made comments. Furman Wallace wrote: “The dream on Baba’s Birthday is very special. That photo was taken on Christmas Day, and so has another association with the advent of the Avatar.”

Raine Eastman-Gannett wrote: “I too had a dream of this very same image on 21st September 1980. Baba looked back at me and I could hear the water, and He said,

“Raine, picture the line of souls back through time as in Rano’s drawing. See here and there those souls who await bodies, longing to be born within Baba families to be close to Me. You, Raine, can have no idea how long this soul you have just given birth to [ber Down syndrome daughter] has waited for this body in which to love Me. Run to her now and raise her in Me.”

It was commented that there has been a political movement concerning the Narmada. Controversy over dam projects to harness the river for irrigation raged for decades, though organized opposition stems only from the 1980s. Opponents say that building numerous large dams will devastate the ecosystem and displace many already impoverished and underprivileged people, including tribals and those traditionally considered “untouchable” (and still the victims of discrimination despite the outlawing of the caste system).

Often a dream can just be appreciated or experienced simply for what it is, without analyzing its symbolism or trying to wrench some prediction or advice out of it. The Jungian method called amplification that can often enrich the experience of a dream. It entails contemplating analogous material from the collective consciousness, from folklore, mythology, or religion life in order to expand the imagery of the dream. In contrast, another approach of archetypal psychology would have us “stick to the image,” not stray too far from the original dream image via free association.

For the Avatar to touch flowing water seems very significant, because a river moves through different landscapes, influencing the lives of many different people and living things. The river for me is a symbol of the advancing stream of life, ever changing, ever the same. Both to my and Raine’s dreams seem to emphasize the idea of Baba having links with many, many souls that belong to Him. In my dream, he has given each one a special blessing to return to him, the Ocean. Raine’s dream seems more personal, though it also conveys a message to all Baba-lover parents and suggests the

continuity of our journey as Baba-lovers, lifetime after lifetime (much of it apparently like standing in a queue, waiting for his darshan).

Baba has touched all of humanity with his promise of ultimate reunion — not just a particular group of people, but all. Indeed, in this advent the Avatar has declared: “There is no creature which is not destined for the supreme goal, as there is no river which is not winding its way towards the sea. But only in the human form is consciousness so developed that it is capable of expressing the perfection of its own true self, which is the Self of all” (*Listen, Humanity*).

Was my dream what Jung called a “big dream,” which carries not just personal symbolism but a universal message? I have not yet been able to identify much personal content in the dream. It is centered on Baba’s symbolic act of touching everyone’s forehead with the water of a sacred river that washes away sins, a sign of his covenant with us. My dream suggests a divine promise that is one-sided and unconditional, not dependent on any required action on our part.

In the dream I am told that Baba created the river by gathering the waters, yet before doing that, he anoints the foreheads of humanity with the water on his fingertip. That doesn’t make sense — how could he dip his hands into the waters when they haven’t even been gathered into a river yet? This reverse logic makes sense if I think of “pre-eternity” (a term used in the Qur’an, 7:172) the state of souls when they are in union with God before human embodiment, even before we were even separated out as individual “drops.” Even before the river was created as a stream of waters gathered from different sources — even “before Abraham was, I AM” (words of Jesus in John 8:58). Since the beginningless beginning, we were His lovers and He was our Beloved.

Baba told an allegorical story to the women after taking them on a moonlit boat ride on the Narmada in May 1939. The boat ride was to celebrate the birthday of Elizabeth’s dog Kippy. (Baba had also taken Mehera on a Narmada boat ride for her birthday on December 29, 1938.) The Boston terrier Kippy was one of many pets that Baba allowed Elizabeth to keep, because “Baba would satisfy a person’s fondness for the things of life,” and Elizabeth loved animals (*Lord Meher* 7:2416).

The way Baba told the story to the women on this occasion makes an interesting contrast with Eruch’s telling of a similar story. In the women’s story, a Perfect Master’s disciples are complaining that although they have been with the Master for many years, they have made no spiritual progress. The Master does not reply directly but the next day suggests a picnic and boat ride to lift their spirits. After a night of reveling in food, wine, and merriment, the disciples discover to their surprise that they had forgotten to untie the anchor and in fact had gone nowhere. This taught them that their intoxication with illusion keep them bound to the material world, unable to to cast off and enter the Path.

After telling this story to the women, Baba says: “I am showing you beautiful sights, boat riding with you and taking you here, and all this



is to free you from material bondage. Doing all this, all the while I am attentive to whose mind is where, and when I interrupt you in your reveries with a view to freeing you, you take it ill and your mood is upset. If I do not behave like this, of what use would it be your remaining with me for years together? Remember to focus your attention always on me, even while enjoying things. Don’t remain drowned in material pleasures. Don’t give rein to your desires. Only love me! When you love me only, then in the intoxication of that love, you will find all physical pleasures lifeless” (*Lord Meher* 7:2350-52; see also *Mehera-Meher*, vol. 1).

Eruch’s elaborates on the same parable in *That’s How It Was* (“Anchored to the World,” pp. 262-68). He describes it as a story that Baba told the men mandali, emphasizing the disciples’ complaint that after many years with their Master, they still had not progressed spiritually. The fiasco of the going-nowhere boat ride teaches the men in the story that the reason they went nowhere spiritually was due to their own worldly attachments. This moral was also brought home to Baba’s men mandali, who had also complained of gaining nothing from being with Baba for many years.

See how Eruch’s version is different from the women’s version. After taking them on an actual boat ride, Baba tells the women the story, then interprets the story as it applies to the women’s own situation. He indicates that he has deliberately allowed the women to enjoy pleasures (sightseeing, boat riding, the romance of Baba’s company — all innocent activities but nonetheless worldly compared with the self-denial of traditional spiritual practice), in order to free them from bondage to the world. He works on their minds by interrupting their “reveries” of intoxication with the world. This interruption annoys them, and they complain. Then Baba says, “If I do not behave like this, of what use would it be your remaining with me for years together?”

So Eruch’s story says that it is no use to be with Baba, even for a long time, if we are still inwardly anchored to the world. The lack of progress is one’s own fault. The women’s story says it would be no use to spend many years with Baba if he did not remove our worldly attachments — and it implies that he does indeed do this. When the women’s minds were directed to worldly objects, he interrupted that fascination and returned their focus to himself, the God-Man, instructing them to do this on their own.

The river carries many stories, making me drift away from the original topic, a dream. Countless dreamlike events pass by as the river of our life advances toward its goal, the Ocean. What is important is to have confidence in Baba’s promise to take us there. As long as we remember him and hold on to his daaman, the river will wash away our sanskaras.





The Doorbell of Forgiveness, by Don E. Stevens and his Young People's Group (London: Companion Books, 2011). Paperback 285 pp.

Reviewed by Talat Halman

This review of this moving and meaningful book is cast in poetic form which is appropriate to the dialogical nature of this book which includes material from live seminars. Even through this poetic presentation I do share -- and give some details about -- the four major themes of this book. This book provides simple and effective tools for

1. developing and heeding intuition,
2. gaining freedom from worry and cutting out worry by being your true self (the book also explains why this system of gaining freedom from worry is necessary to curtail the dissipation of psychic energy needed for spiritual advancement),
3. the question of how to grant forgiveness and how to understand the nature of forgiveness as unconditional as not something done for a reason, and
4. the practice of participating in each other's spiritual pilgrimages as a part of a broader project called, in the words of Meher Baba, "bring[ing] together all religions like beads on one string."



I'M RINGING THE DOORBELL OF FORGIVENESS

TALAT HALMAN

(DEDICATED TO LAURENT WEICHBERGER)

I'm ringing the doorbell of forgiveness
My intuition is that I need to bless
and forgive like the Whim of the Universe
Let go of worry and so reverse
the past and live in the present first.

Let me join people of all faiths and search
and share pilgrimages both mine and yours.
Let this search be our service
the humble act of the dervish.

Dear Avatar of the Universe
With your living service,
You untangle the knots and you have purged
and cleaned all the thoughts that had lingered.
In the atmosphere at places of pilgrimage.
So these shrines of saints are now purest.
You've thinned down the thoughts that were accursed,
And grounded tombs' purpose with forgiveness.
So we can all enter these places now purest.

"The way of oneness is the way to happiness."*
Worry arises in manyness
As the "One with no second," all happiness
is your gift to us by which we're blessed.
May my only worry be remembrance
of your Holy Name and Your essence.

I want to love like beads on one string.
I want to love and be forgiving
and do it for the sake of befriending.
I want to love and stop worrying.

I stand at your door and give it a ring.
I'm looking inside and intuiting.
on the journey of my soul's involuting
The Avatar Meher Baba I am saluting.

The Avatar's glance is piercing
the patterns of worry not serving
moral courage and cheering
enthusiasm and with balancing
I'm poised to address what life brings.

And sometimes life brings on such sufferings
that sanskaras get unwound in loosened strings.
I remember the meaning of suffering
That Khizr showed Moses in the things
For which Moses lacked understanding.
If only we knew the deep meaning
we might have patience we need to bring
but that practice of patience like forgiving
comes first in the order of things
First is the practice and then that brings
The meaning you seek for understanding.

The purpose of life is is unfolding
absorbed into God and beginning
dissolving in God which is to bring,
bring out the heart for intuiting.
Let freedom from worry make us joyous to sing
Of the fullness of life in our journeying.

In this journey we "bring beads together" on one string.
Of religions together in collective sharing
and seeing how God is always embodying
His Truth and His Mercy that to us brings
Clearness of vision and strength for loving.

People all think it's so snappy: to say "Don't worry Be Happy."
But it is work for the purpose of energy
To advance along far on the journey
You have to cut the cord of worry.

"Don't Worry. Be Happy" is more than cute
It's an order to be resolute
It's also the promise, if only you knew it,
that He will help you in his love, so don't refute
this proverb as if it were in dispute.
Do your best, then after you do it,
Turn it over to God in your pursuit
And in His love you will get through it.

Jai Saheb-e Zaman Avatar Meher Baba Ki Jai !

* Meher Baba, quoted in Bhau Kalchuri, Lord Meher, p. 5809

Now available from:

Sheriar Books

[http://www.sheriarbooks.org/Merchant2/merchant.mvc?](http://www.sheriarbooks.org/Merchant2/merchant.mvc?Screen=PROD&Product_Code=9780952509752)

[Screen=PROD&Product_Code=9780952509752](http://www.sheriarbooks.org/Merchant2/merchant.mvc?Screen=PROD&Product_Code=9780952509752)

Barnes and Noble

<http://www.barnesandnoble.com/w/the-doorbell-of-forgiveness-don-e-stevens/1105150881>

Amazon

<http://www.amazon.com/The-Doorbell-Forgiveness-Don-Stevens/dp/095250975X>



REVIEWS of "Where Two Seas Meet"

Talat Halman here provides a rewarding meditation on the crucial Qur'anic story of al-Khidr and Moses. Drawing on the key Sufi concept of the master-disciple relationship, this book opens a window onto one of the world's richest and most enigmatic spiritual narratives, which continues to resonate across religious boundaries.

Carl W. Ernst, author of How to Read the Qur'an: A New Guide, with Select Translations.

Hugh Talat Halman's forensic analysis reviews what others have said of Khidr and Moses, looking at a treasure trove of scriptural, hagiographical, and folkloric material on the Islamic Green Man. But it also adds a radically new, and refreshingly existential, perspective. Just as the Khidr-Moses narrative is the centerpiece of the Cave Chapter, which itself is the showcase for major elements of the Holy Qur'an, so this pioneering study by Halman brings to light features of Khidr-Moses not clearly foregrounded by others, with productive benefit for all future enquirers into this wellspring of Muslim spirituality.

Bruce B Lawrence, Nancy & Jeffrey Marcus Humanities Professor, Professor of Islamic Studies, Duke University

The story of Moses and Khidr stands at the very heart of the Islamic mystical tradition. It's all here: the relationship between a master and a seeker, mysteries and paradox, the path, parting and union, and above all, Intimate Knowledge from God's own presence. No one, no one, has done more to unpack and explore this narrative than H. Talat Halman, and this long-anticipated volume is most enthusiastically recommended for all students of Islam, as well as readers of all spiritual traditions who seek the mysteries. A must read!

Omid Safi, Professor of Islamic Studies, UNC Chapel Hill



Where Two Seas Meet

Al-Khidr and Moses—The Qur'anic Story of al-Khidr and Moses in Sufi Commentaries as a Model for Spiritual Guidance

H. Talat Halman



\$29.95 • ISBN 9781891785900
6x9 • 344 pages.

The immortal Islamic Green Man, al-Khidr, has been compared to the Celtic Green Man, Hermes and the Buddha and in cultural practice to Elijah and Saint George.

Al-Khidr figures prominently in the Qur'an, Hadith, hagiographies, and the Alexander Romance. He is cited by Sufi teachers, who draw wisdom from his story as the guide of Moses (Qur'an: 18:60-82) about the Sufi path and spiritual authority. This book provides the explanations of the story by three medieval Sufi Qur'an commentators, al-Qushayri (986-1072), Ruzbihan Baqli (1128-1209), and al-Qashani (d. 1329), presented here in translation for the first time. In addition, it reveals al-Khidr's special compassion and inner knowledge ('ilm al-ladduni) as divine inspiration distinct from conceptual knowledge and as a model of the

mentoring master (shaykh al-suhba), who is distinct from the instructing master (shaykh al-ta'lim) discussed in Hadith, Qur'an commentaries, and hagiographies. The master-disciple relationship, particularly the role of companionship (suhba) and manners (adab) is central. This work includes important Sufi stories, including those of Rumi, Hafiz, and Ibn 'Arabi. It then explores the story in light of cultural anthropologist Ernest Becker's theory of human death-denial through the aspiration for both physical and symbolic immortality. This

book opens a conversation about a story that has been more acclaimed than studied, more valorized than examined, more revered than understood, and illuminates the dynamics of the master-disciple relationship, our relationship to death and dying and the quest for immortality.

49 Mockingbird Valley Drive

Louisville, KY 40207

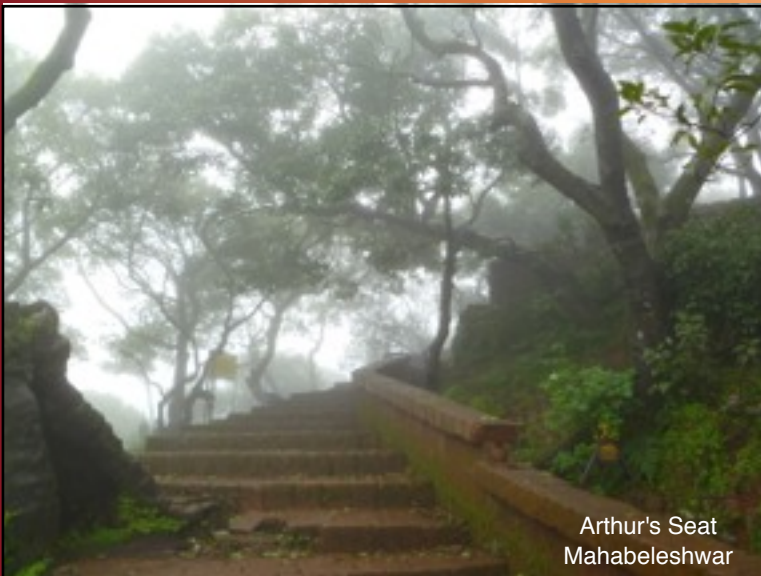
FOR ORDERS: fonsvitaekv@aol.com

www.fonsvitae.com

(502) 897-3641 phone/fax



Dalai Lama prays in Srinigar mosque July 2012



Arthur's Seat Mahabeleshwar

A DREAM

By Raine Eastman-Gannett
Berkeley, CA ~ September 2012

I had a peaceful and unusual dream last night where I was lying fully prostrate at the Samadhi/Tomb-Shrine of Meher Baba with my head on the threshold, my body outside, it felt just wonderful, cool calm and fragrant too. It was early and no one was there yet, but soon enough people started to arrive and get in line to enter the Samadhi. I could smell the flowers and garlands they were taken inside. My head on the threshold was not in the center, but to one side (Mehera's tomb side) so they were able to enter to my right.

IT FELT JUST
WONDERFUL
COOL CALM
AND
FRAGRANT

One by one they passed in to the Samadhi. All of a sudden I felt a little self conscious and realized I might be in the way, I pulled my arms up and went to push with my hands to arise, and a beautiful voice said, "This is not the time for shoulds!" and so I remained where I was!



THE INNER VOICE OF LOVE

When you "love" someone or "miss" someone, you experience an inner pain. Bit by bit you have to discover the nature of this pain. When your deepest self is connected with the deepest self of another, that person's absence may be painful, but it will lead you to a profound communion with the person, because loving each other is loving in God. When the place where God dwells in you is intimately connected with the place where God dwells in the other, the absence of the other person is not destructive. On the contrary, it will challenge you to enter more deeply into communion with God, the source of all unity and communion among people.

It is also possible on the other hand that the pain of absence will show you that you are out of touch with your own deeper self. You need the other to experience wholeness, to have a sense of well-being. You have become emotionally dependent on the other and sink into depression because of his or her absence. It feels as if the other had taken away a part of you that you cannot live without. Then the pain of absence reveals a certain lack of trust in God's love. But God is enough for you.

True love between two human beings puts you more in touch with your deepest self. It is a love in God. The pain you experience from the death or absence of the person you love, then, always calls you to a deeper knowledge of God's love. God's love is all you need and it reveals to you the love of God in the other. So the God in you can speak to the God in the other.

This is deep speaking to deep, a mutuality in the heart of God, who embraces both of you.

~ Henri Nouwen

From *The Inner Voice of Love*, by H. Nouwen (Doubleday: 1996)



"Books and discourses will never bring about one's spiritual regeneration. The mind cannot be annihilated by the mind, just as one cannot jump over oneself. Only by loving me as I ought to be loved can the mind be destroyed. Anyone may have love for me, but not the love I want.

"My lovers may be likened to one who is fond of lions and admires them so much that he keeps a lion in his own home. But, feeling afraid of the lion, he puts it in a cage. The lion is always kept caged, even while he feeds it; he feeds the pet from a distance, standing outside the cage.

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

~ Meher Baba

In *Lord Meher*, by V.S. Bhau Kalchuri (Myrtle Beach: Manifestion, Inc.) p. 5299

Meher Baba's sister Mani shared about her times with Him:

One Sunday when everyone had left after a darshan program at Guruprasad, Baba sent Goher around to check and make sure everyone had left the property. Only when assured that everyone was gone was he able to take a deep sigh and relax. Then he asked, "What's for lunch?" And he turned to Mani, "What book are you going read me?"

Mani noted, "Those intimate, personal moments with him were so precious. It's amazing how much God comes through as a man; how much Godness you receive through his humanness – it's incredible. Godness came through his humanness more than anything."

From *Mehera-Meher: A Divine Romance*, by David Fenster (Ahmednagar: Meher Nazar Books)

Forgiveness with Meher Baba seminar in Chicago

facilitated by Laurent with the Baba group there, August 23 2012. Photo by Kelly Fethering.



Laurent has performed the seminar Forgiveness with Meher Baba at the following Meher Baba centers:

1. Sacramento
2. Los Angeles (with Soleil Brigham)
3. Chicago
4. Myrtle Beach (with Soleil Brigham)

Coming soon:

5. San Francisco Bay Area (El Cerito)
6. New York
7. Paris/Marseilles
8. Tucson AZ
9. Asheville NC

If you wish to schedule a seminar with Laurent & Soleil, please contact:
laurent@ompoint.com

Laurent will share from the recently published book, *The Doorbell of Forgiveness*, by Don E. Stevens with his young people's group. Laurent will also share his own personal forgiveness journey, as well as sections of the book by Don E. Stevens containing Forgiveness intuitions, and then invite the group to explore the topics:

1. Asking forgiveness of others.
2. Forgiving others.
3. Asking forgiveness of God, and forgiving God (or Baba).
4. Receiving forgiveness.
5. Forgiving oneself, and much more.

Vessels have always been used as literary metaphors to describe creation, transformation, transcendence, and the body as a vessel for the soul. Years ago in India my husband, Carl bought a piece of handloom cloth with a decorative motif showing the gods sitting together, while one of them, apparently a potter, creates humans from clay as little pots on a wheel. On another trip I witnessed a Hindu cremation in India. Just before the pyre was lit, a large terra cotta jug filled with water was carried to the site. Then a small hole was knocked in the bottom of the jug, letting the water flow out as the jug was carried around the deceased, circumambulating the pyre, symbolizing the process of the soul leaving the body. These connections between clay and the pot form and notions of creation and transcendence are ancient. In Sumeria and Mohenjodaro, these motifs connecting clay with creation are common, and of course in the Old Testament, in Genesis, it says, “And the LORD God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living soul;” (Genesis 2: 7) The Sufi poet, Hafiz, connects both the themes of creation and transcendence when he writes,

“Last night I saw the angels knocking at the tavern door;
they kneaded Adam’s clay with wine, and cast it as a cup.

The dwellers in veiled holiness, the purest archangels,
proceeded to serve vagrant me intoxicating wine.”

—Hafiz (Ghani-Qazvini, no. 184, trans. Carl Ernst

In other words, the angels combine the wine of the soul’s divine intoxication with Adam’s clay, or creation. It is the combination of these two elements—the soul and its divine longing, and the vehicle of the body—that propels the soul toward transcendence. Then, continuing the verse, the angels form the clay and wine into a cup in which they serve wine to a drunken and vagrant Hafiz.

Perhaps these metaphors exist because the vessel form has a discrete and hidden “inner”, which completely changes its existential presence from that of a solid form. Think of a solid, sculptural form, like a Henry Moore sculpture. This solid form relates to its external context; it relies on the space outside of it, around it, to establish its presence; it’s about the space it displaces; it is extroverted. Now imagine that same form with an obvious entrance into its interior. The form, now a vessel, is no longer dependent on the space around it to define it; it refers instead to its inside; it is self-contained, inner-directed. It implies the dichotomies between the inner and outer, between that which is hidden and that which is seen, between the esoteric and the exoteric, between the soul and the body.

These ideas inform my ceramic work. Rather than make functional pieces, instead I make art pieces that conceptually echo the ways in which the



THE INNER AND THE OUTER

THE DYNAMICS OF CREATIVITY IN CLAY

vessel form was used metaphorically. Some of my pieces I call “Metaphysical Pots”. I Use the form of these pots to focus on the dual themes of the Water of Life, or the source of creation, running out and into the Infinite Ocean, or the goal of mystical transcendence. The water is at once both inside of the pot as well as outside, showing the continuous journey from creation to transcendence.

In my “bio-geometrical” pieces, I use the patterns created to suggest a movement up to the top, to the inside, so it becomes for me a sort of “Jacob’s Ladder”. But this path is not just up to a supposed heaven above. It is a path to the inside, to an ineffable interior, a journey of consciousness rather than just a journey “up”.

You can see images and further descriptions of my ceramic work at: www.earthembracingpace.com



JUDITH ERNST



Remembering Diane Cobb (Baba's Beloved Baby "3B")

A few words from her sister, Joan Harland interviewed by Laurent Weichberger Flagstaff, October 2012

Laurent (LW): Hi Joan, what characterized your sister's love for Beloved Baba?

Joan Harland (JH): Extraordinary honesty. She spent her life focused on Baba, but shied away from any displays of devotion to Baba that she felt did not spring spontaneously from the heart. If there was anything that drove her crazy, it was devotion by-the-book.

LW: Did your sister mentor you in any way, and if so, how?

JH: In all the ways older sisters do - but most importantly, by her example, she showed how compatible love for Baba was with fun and creativity. For her, I think they were synonymous. Otherwise, her path was through Sufism, and in the end she respected that my path to Baba was different.

LW: Did your sister's relationship with Baba influence the way you related to Baba?

JH: Only that I was extremely jealous of the attention that Baba showered on 3B! And, she showed me that around God it doesn't pay to be shy. In 1958, she enrolled Baba in the "Stinkers Club," telling Baba He was the Biggest Stinker of them all! Instead of being offended, Baba loved it!

LW: Did 3B ever share anything with you that you felt you should always remember?

JH: About a month ago, she quoted a line from the movie Chariots of Fire, spoken by the athlete Eric Liddell (studying to become a missionary): "When I run, I feel His pleasure." I'll always remember the way that she said it. Also, as an art teacher at the Meher School in Walnut Creek, she said the important thing was not being a great artist yourself, but being able to bring out the artist in other people.

LW: How do you feel that 3B should be remembered to our readers, and how would she want to be remembered?

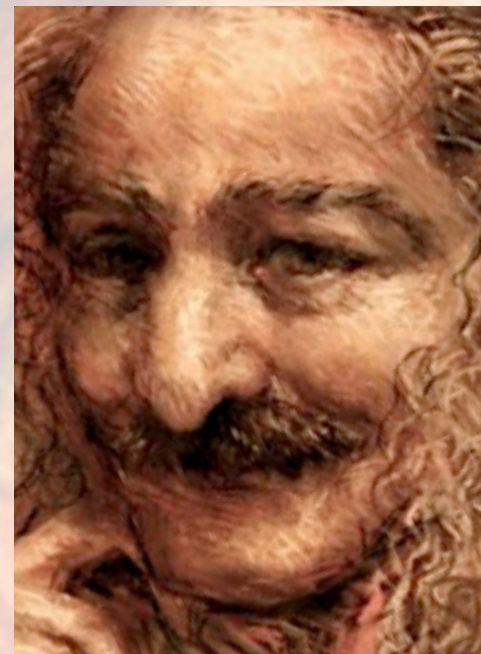
Of course, I think 3B will be remembered by her incredible paintings of Baba. And by her sparkling, mischievous personality, which shines even in photos and films. Years ago, she said that she hoped that when she went to Baba, He would say, "Well done!" I hope that's how she is remembered - as having pleased Baba.



Diane Cobb (October 23, 2010) at Avatar Meher Baba Center of Southern California, showing a photo of her with Meher Baba. Photo by Laurent Weichberger.



Diane Cobb with Avatar Meher Baba 1956, courtesy http://www.love-remembrances.com/baba-lovers/diane-3b-cobb/dianecobb_01/ used without permission.



I Have Fallen in Love with the World

I have fallen in love with the world.
I'm not exactly sure when it happened—
It wasn't on the first date
It wasn't even on the
Ten thousandth.
First, we had to become friends
That in itself
Took some doing.
One day
I noticed some giddiness
Present between us.
"Oh, no," I thought,
Passing it off to
Something I drank.
Then, one morning
I rolled over and asked,
When did my heart
Break open to this world?
And How
Can I Fit
Everyone
Into the
Church?



I went to the famous Chartres Cathedral in France to walk the labyrinth, where this photograph was made. A year before I was there, I wrote this poem, which described exactly what happened on that labyrinth- I fell in love with the world. Not the things of this world- but This World, Creation, and all that Baba has gifted us with in it... It is the title poem to my first book of poetry and photographs: *I Have Fallen in Love with the World*.

Tracey Schmidt www.traceyschmidt.com 828-215-4716 Asheville

IS EVERYONE DESTINED TO BECOME A SOCIETY OF TWO?

Much has been written about the great loves of history from the unbridled affection of Antony and Cleopatra to the transfigured and spiritualized love of St. Francis of Assisi and Claire, Rumi and Shams of Tabriz, Krishna and Radha, Jesus and Magdala, Meher Baba and Mehera, etcetera.

For many years I've been studying the significance of intimate love circles, inside as well as outside the conventional and socially accepted forms. I have found that when love reaches a particular summit of its strength and courage it can become a formidable unit of force. I've contemplated the mystery of the work, the struggle and the countless lifetimes it must take for a society of two to mature and ripen.

Yet, it is my sense that an intimate society of two develops gradually in the long journey of an individual soul through many lifetimes. I've often wondered about non-conventional couples in more recent history and have sought to understand where they fit in the larger schema of the path of love.

There are many examples of unconventional loves that have not received the broader public attention they deserve.

Lou Andreas-Salome and Rilke corresponded for the entirety of the poet's lifetime. Although both were married they were muses for one another's writing and thought.

Although the Lebanese spiritual writer Kahlil Gibran and May Ziadah never even met in person, they were both inspired by an intimate correspondence that lasted the entirety of Gibran's lifetime. Neither was married.

D.H. Lawrence and Frieda von Richthofen's lifelong marriage would turn the head of even today's free spirits. Frieda abandoned her marriage and children to elope with Lawrence.

Ralph Waldo Emerson and his first wife, Ellen Tucker had one of the most intense and passionate loves ever recorded, even thought it

lasted but two years and during a time that Ellen was sick and dying of tuberculosis. Emerson was so attached and overcome by this loss that he dug up her grave and wrote that his grief was so vast that her death spelled the "complete wreck of earthly good." Although he married again to bright and fitting life companion, Lidian Tucker, his brief coupling with Ellen transformed his entire life and thinking and deepened his spiritual path beyond measure to tell.

One of the most notable is the illicit love between Pablo Neruda and Matilde Urrutia. Due to the limits of this essay I will focus on the love of these two souls because I believe their love might challenge the limits of our thinking of what is moral and right in the actions of couples who were destined to meet while one was still married.

A human being evidently does not become a primary unit of force until it first gains a strong sense of self. Individuality is a goal to be sought, not a beginning to be discarded prematurely for the sake of a group. Countless entrances and exits of the embodied soul must take place before it can become a genuine individual.

Sometimes it will become a soul's destiny to effectively combine with another individual of like or similar consciousness. If this should happen, what was once a stream (of love) could become a mighty river—that is, after the two pass many trials; especially, those presented to them by other humans.

I have found that a potential society of two can be sabotaged from achieving its full expression because one or both lacks the courage to enter upon such a path, one that often can destroy a prior form of life to which each have grown accustomed.

It goes without saying that not everyone gets this kind of love every lifetime. The arrival of



BY NEALE
LUNDGREN

one's mate of soul is earned. If a person happens to be experiencing loneliness without a partner or lack of fulfillment in a relationship of emptiness, this is not an indicator that they should stoically accept their solitude—or if miserably coupled with another—prematurely exit.

This happens when a binary unit of force concedes with the consensus of a social network, otherwise known as the status quo. There are reasons not readily comprehended beyond the obvious of why the body of a human being is gifted with two eyes, two ears, two nostrils, two arms, two legs, and two feet. Many loves "made in heaven" have found it impossible to withstand the storms and winds conjured by the dark forces of the earth as well as the stale and turbid oxygen of convention.

Although genuine soulmate love is not dependent on conventional forms of marriage, it is still rare for a couple to successfully pass all the difficult tests that will be given them throughout their lifetimes together. If destiny should have it that this couple meet before their previous karmic commitments have run their full course the forecast of their future will not be easy. Yet some will nonetheless manage to withstand these and other formidable challenges.

Although Pablo Neruda is still known primarily for his political poetry, his love poems to Matilde Urrutia reveal a dimension of Neruda's soul that expressed his ability to counter-balance his experiences of strife-on-earth with those of bliss-on-earth. It appears from all accounts that the one refuge of peace for both Pablo and Matilde was their Unified Heart that remained oblivious of the violence and duality around it, and perhaps its muscle and sinews were even strengthened by the many trials endured.

The poem below reveals an inspired Neruda who believed that their love transcended the limits delineated by the world. What is particularly poignant is that the last verses imply that there's good reason why the foundation of a higher love is laid amidst the crucible of society and its woes and yet constructed and nurtured in a realm beyond time. Pablo writes of his love that he believed would overcome death:

The fire for light, a rancorous moon for bread,
the jasmine smearing around its bruised secrets:
then from a terrifying love, soft white hands
poured peace into my eyes and sun into my senses.

O love, how quickly you built a sweet firmness
where the wounds had been!
You fought off the talons and claws, and now
we stand as a single life before the world.

That's how it was, how it is, how it will be,
my wild sweet love, my dearest Matilde,
till time signals us with the day's last flower:

Then there will be no you, no me, no light,
and yet beyond the earth, beyond its shadowy dark,
the splendor of our love will be alive

(Love Sonnet #23 by Pablo Neruda, translated by Stephen Tapscott)

Many of those who haven't experienced an enduring love of passion beyond a temporary infatuation might ask: What about me? Why should I be inspired and not envious or even full of ridicule for this elite couple, this so-called society of two?

If you have found your life absent of an intense, passionate and enduring love, and yet you secretly long for one, there are pre-conditions that I have observed in mates of soul who have become a tried and true society of two:

- 1) Radical openness of mind
- 2) Desire to live outside the matrices of convention
- 3) Lack of need to meet the expectations of society
- 4) Cultivation of a rich inner life and an individuality not based on egocentric desires.

Awareness of the universal laws and knowledge of how these work in the world of mayavic illusion to overcome the law of karma or fate; such as, the law of attraction, the law of appreciation, the law of affirmation, and the law of love.

It is important to keep in mind that the key to a life of enduring happiness and peace is to know that where we are is right where we need to be, and that all the circumstances in which we find ourselves have been designed specifically for each of us with Love and Care, often beyond our ability to readily comprehend their deeper meaning.



OVERSEER

by Laurent Weichberger
October 2012 ~ New York

"He is overseeing our destruction..."
Sometimes crushing precedes construction.

His love is real, and he knows us clearly,
After the pain he holds us dearly.

My Real Father knows what's best,
even as my tears roll down his chest.

My head is buried in his sadrah white,
I feel His Sun in my dark night.

Soleil is warming within and without.
I love you both, from the rooftop I shout.

Laurent now shakes off all the old,
In New Life reborn, the rest is sold.

Oh Baba, take me to where I belong,
In union with you, and our heart song.

I see Him smile, I hear His laughter,
No more dark night, but morning after.

My soul is light, or Noor-e-ullah,
He says open wide, and now say -- Ahhh...

My Lord, my doctor, my Reiki-Master,
He says slow down mind, and heart go faster...

When you balance the mind and heart,
You will wow them all with spiritual art.

The soul of all that lives is He,
Some say holy spirit, and others say "We."

He said, "You and I are not we but One."
Meher Baba, I bow to you alone, and kiss your Sun.

I am the moon to Him and Her,
Until Laurent becomes one with Noor.

The unfoldment of life and consciousness for the whole Avatic cycle, which has been mapped out in the creative world before the Avatar took form, is endorsed and fixed in the formative and material worlds during the Avatar's life on earth.

~ Meher Baba

In *Treasures from the Meher Baba Journals*, Jane Haynes, Editor, (Myrtle Beach: Sheriar Foundation, 1980) p. 73.

Michael Da Costa

1:15am Sep 3

There is a process involved in living in Baba's Nazar expectation, disappointment, acceptance.

expectation is MY will
disappointment is MY ego reaction
acceptance is of HIS Will

acceptance, disappointment, acceptance

the trick is to narrow the gap between disappointment and acceptance

trickier still to ultimately eliminate expectation
leaving only acceptance of HIS Will



Painting by Philipp Weichberger

ARTFUL LEGACY

by Cliff Joseph, Chicago

Hey, Philipp

There was a laid-backness

To your urgency,

That seemed to say,

We had all the time in the world

To ease each others' and everyone else's pain,

To share our splashes and dabs of revolution

Planned minute by minute, hour by hour and day by day,

In the meeting rooms of our minds,

Fought inch by inch, foot by foot, and yard by yard;

On paper, board, masonite and canvas.

Waged street by street, block by block, and mile by mile,

In rallies and protest marches.

Mad as I was at your flight,

I look at your artful legacy

And know that you've lain aside

The brush and pen

That was your powerful creative weaponry,

Your warrior's tools for peace,

Your struggle shouts from pages and from walls,

Insisting that we carry on the fight,

and win it NOW!

In memory of Philipp Weichberger

The struggle continues, Cliff



States of Prayer: The Parvardigar Prayer and the Ten Principal States of God in Chart VIII of God Speaks

by **TALAT HALMAN**

I have wondered often about the distinction between praying to God and praying to Meher Baba. I am struck by the fact that on certain occasions such as the start of the New Life in 1949 and during the Three Incredible Weeks, Meher Baba himself addressed God in prayer. And Meher Baba attended recitations of the O Parvardigar Prayer as a participant, not as a recipient. These instances have led me to wonder about how I should perform the O Parvardigar Prayer. In this short piece, I am offering some ideas about how I have addressed this issue. Obviously many reading this article do not need an amateur Meher Baba lover's take on how to practice the Parvardigar Prayer. And I certainly do not suggest that I am necessarily right. This is an exploration and an exercise.

It occurred to me one day that the answer to my dilemma might be found in Chart VIII of God Speaks on p. 158 by referring to the chart while praying. Since that day I have found that correlating the O Parvardigar Prayer to Chart VIII has enriched my experience of the Prayer. Although I have never seen this discussed, it seems likely that this correlation would have been obvious to the mandali and other Baba lovers who knew Chart VIII well and so it has gone without mention. There is actually a precedent for this: on May 17, 1943 Meher Baba gave a two-hour discourse on the chart, "The Divine Theme (i.e., either or both Charts IX and X in God Speaks)." Then, "[h]e asked all at the meeting to meditate on the Divine Theme for twelve hours on May 18."¹

That chart called the "Ten Principal States of God" presents multiple dimensions or expressions of one God. In that light, I think it is important to begin by reviewing Meher Baba's emphasis on the oneness of God. As Meher Baba opens God Speaks he says, "All souls (atmas) were, are, and will be in the Over-Soul (Paramatma). Souls (atmas) are all One." (God Speaks, p. 1) In addition, Eruch emphasizes that Meher Baba's gnosis upholds the theory of "Identityism." "Identityism" is a translation of the Sufi term wahdat al-wujud, often translated as "the oneness of God" and also "the oneness of being." And Eruch continues this line of thought by also identifying that Meher Baba's gnosis supports the theory of Advaita, or the non-duality of reality." (God Speaks, p. 159) Further, in the "Supplement" to God Speaks, Dr. Abdel-Ghani Munsiff elaborates on Eruch's point by discussing at length and in detail tawhid, the Muslim doctrine of recognizing and living in terms of God's Oneness (pp. 258-269). In these pages Dr. Ghani also explains another articulation of Tawhid "Apparentism," wahdat al-Shuhud ("the oneness of experience).

So Chart VIII depicts that God is One and has ten "States" within his unity. When we pray the O Parvardigar Prayer I suggest that we are addressing God at different points in the prayer in His various specific States, among His dimensions, or expressions. In the case of STATE I, one can only refer to it, not address it. Thus many references to STATE I in the Parvardigar Prayer are negation statements, describing what God is not.

Here I want to propose a delineation of how these correspondences work by identifying possible correlations between the phrases of the Prayer and Chart VIII:

O Parvardigar -- the Preserver and Protector of all
[STATE III]

You are without beginning, and without end,
Non-dual, beyond comparison, and none can measure You.
You are without color, without expression, without form, and without attributes.

You are unlimited and unfathomable, beyond imagination and conception; eternal and imperishable.

You are indivisible, and none can see You, but with eyes divine.

You always were, You always are, and You always will be.

[STATE I]

You are everywhere; You are in everything;

[STATES I – X]

And you are also beyond everywhere and beyond everything.

[STATES I & II]

You are in the firmament and in the depths;

[STATES IV – VI]

You are manifest

[STATE IIC]

and unmanifest;

[STATE IIB]

On all planes

[STATE VII]

And beyond all planes.

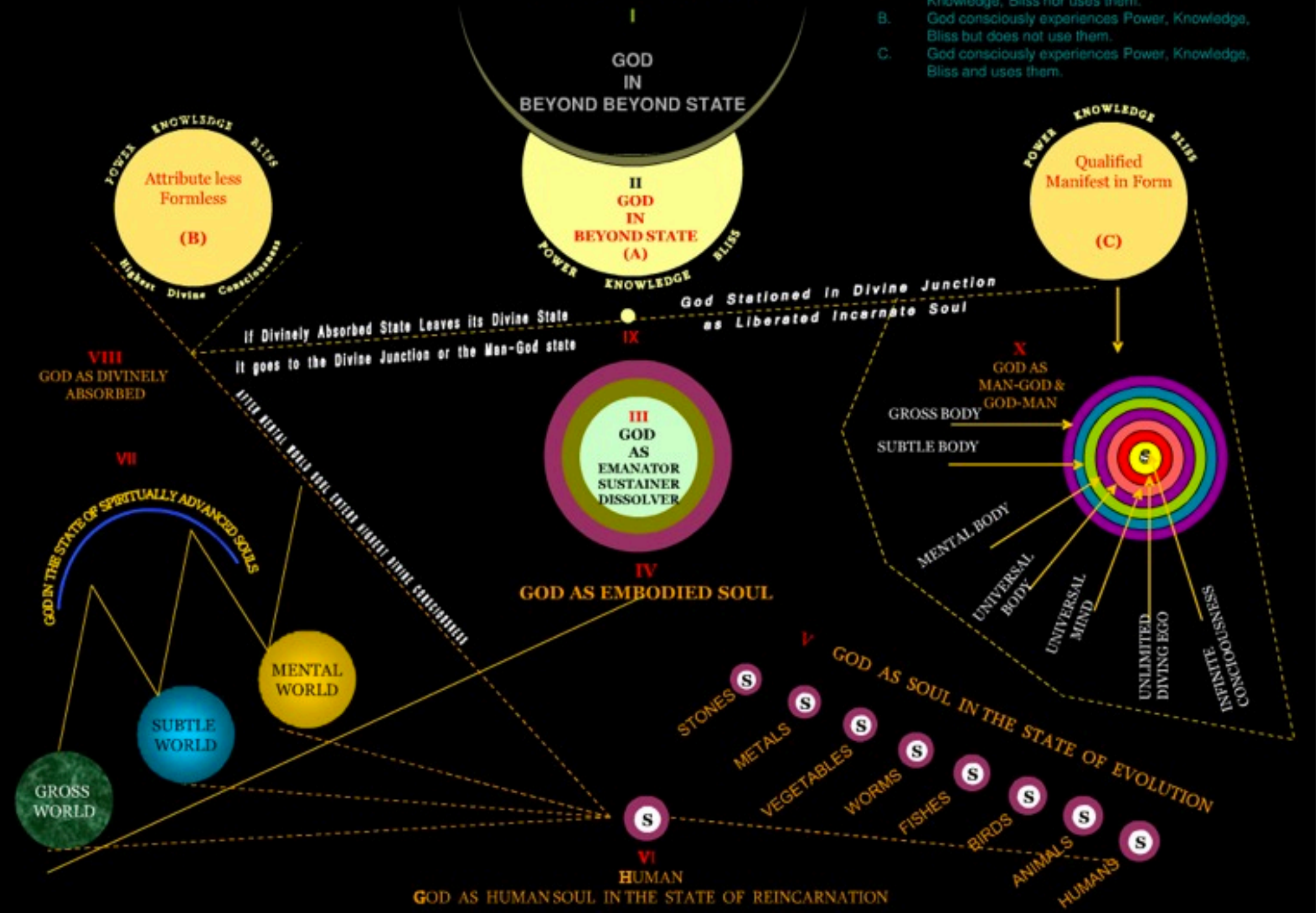
[STATES I – III & VII – X]

You are in the three worlds

[STATE VII]

TEN STATES OF GOD

- A. God neither consciously experiences Power, Knowledge, Bliss nor uses them.
- B. God consciously experiences Power, Knowledge, Bliss but does not use them.
- C. God consciously experiences Power, Knowledge, Bliss and uses them.



And also beyond the three worlds

[STATES I – III & VIII-X]

You are imperceptible and independent,

[STATE I]

You are the Creator; the Lord of lords; the knower of all minds and hearts.

[STATE III]

You are omnipotent and omnipresent.

[All STATES]

You are Knowledge Infinite, Power Infinite, and Bliss Infinite.

You are the Ocean of Knowledge; all-knowing; the Knower of the past,

The present, and the future; and You are Knowledge itself.

You are all-merciful and eternally benevolent.

[STATE II]

You are the Soul of souls,

[STATE X]

The One with infinite attributes.

You are the trinity of Truth, Knowledge, and Bliss.

You are source of Truth

[STATE II]

the Ocean of Love.

You are the Ancient One, the Highest of the High;

[STATE X]

You are Prabhu and Parameshwar; You are the Beyond God,

[STATE II]

And the Beyond-Beyond God also;

[STATE I]

You are Parabrahma, Allah, Elahi, Yezdan, Ahuramazda,

[STATE II]

And God the Beloved

[STATE X]

You are named Ezad – the only One worthy of worship.

[STATE II]

While there are probably good arguments for different designations of which States are being addressed or referred to in the phrases of the O Parvardigar Prayer, I suggest that the meaning and experience of the prayer may be enhanced by some attention to the way the prayer addresses multiple States of God” from among Meher Baba’s elucidation of the “Ten Principle States of God.” Such a method has been described by Dame Frances Yates as the “Theater of Memory,” in her book *The Art of Memory* (Chicago, 1966). I find that this system Dame Yates describes of “mapping” text into a visual structure helps achieve better and easier memorization.

It has been my experience that this mapping of the O Parvardigar Prayer onto Chart VIII of “The Ten Principal States of God” contributes to my understanding of what the Prayer’s Names of God of God confer by putting those names in the direct and specific context of God Speaks. This correlation has certainly increased my appreciation of the beauty and majesty of the O Parvardigar Prayer. The ultimate touchstone of evaluating this method is the question of whether it encourages and helps us to remember Beloved Meher Baba.



I don't know anybody who doesn't need to be pointed back to their own true center, their deepest self, continually through life. The outward reach is what needs to be constantly counteracted by the inward reach.

~ Soleil Brigham

A Poem for 2012

Make a list of things you love:
Swirling flowers curled into buds - about to bloom,
A friend's gorgeous hair,
Your own soul on fire.

Let them reach in and lift
The pressing weariness of this world-
Releasing the false belief that
the tender infant that your life is
was ever meant to be a burden.

In this new year,
Open the tiny buds-
Watch them transfer their fragrant joy.
Brush one beautiful strand after another, and repeat:
Freedom is the open mouth of my life
and is everywhere shouting for more.

Like a moth, step into the fire of your own light
Waiting to burst into flames.

Like a prayer, ready to leave this world
More beautiful
Than when
We came into it.

Tracey Schmidt

Good Timing Baba

by Anne Weichberger
New York ~ October 2012

Time doesn't count
In the now
But sitting on black
Foodstamp chairs
It was endless
Coming home
To sunlight and greenery
It is time
To poetize
My love for you
Easy
You are ever present
In my heart
Always on time
Thanks
Baba
No waiting

This little poem (above right) was written on December 31st, 2011. I had been thinking about all the talk about the Mayan calendar, and how people seemed to be nervous about it. I just felt great about my life and the coming year, and so wrote this homage to it. It was also inspired by a conversation I had with a friend in The Near cabin at the Center in Myrtle Beach, a few months before, when she turned to me and said, "You should step into the fire of your creativity."

Tracey Schmidt www.traceyschmidt.com 828-215-4716 Asheville

Let us love not only our sameness
but our unsameness

In our difference is our strength

Let us be not for ourselves alone
but also for that Other

who is our deepest Self
Hamid Metanat -- Iran

STRUCTURE OF THE POSSIBILITY SPACE

"Look, we know way too much to commit to a particular religious position. And we don't know nearly enough to commit to strict atheism so why don't we try to figure out the structure of the possibility space?" ~ Dave Eagleman

From <http://m.npr.org/news/front/159922899>
Submitted by Mark Fei, Durango, CO (September 2012)



We are Not Separate

We are not separate beings, you and I
We are different strands of the same being

You are me and I am you
and we are they and they are us

This is how we're meant to be,
each of us one
each of us all

Hamid Metanat -- Iran

A B C D E F G H I
J K L M N O P Q R
S T U V W X Y Z
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 0



The Purity of Desire, 100 Poems of Rumi

by Daniel Ladinsky with Nancy Barton (New York: Penguin Books, 2012)

Softcover, 117 pages. ISBN: 978-0-14-312161-9

Reviewed by Laurent Weichberger, Flagstaff Arizona (November 18, 2012)

First and foremost, I would like to say that even before the wine starts flowing from the Tavern Keeper, in the new translation of Rumi from Daniel Ladinsky: *The Purity of Desire, 100 Poems of Rumi*, we are treated to not one but two self-revelatory pieces from Danny via his rather intimate Introduction, followed immediately by a one pager, *If I Had a Son or Daughter*. Both share his own spiritual life more than past books he has published, and I am grateful for his inviting us into this deeper side of his journey with God. The book ends in a similar way with, *A Note on Divinity*.

I have followed Danny's work with Hafiz since we started hearing him read his work in progress during informal gatherings in the early 1990s, at a spiritual center in South Carolina we both enjoy. Since then, his worldwide fame has naturally raised his own bar, and so I read with interest this new publication, knowing that many readers may be critical of his new work. Also, in November of last year I took my daughter to Turkey, where we made a pilgrimage to Konya (where Rumi lived and is now the location of his dargah or tomb). While in Konya, I embraced the human side of Rumi and got to know him much more intimately than was possible through English translations of his work. Something alive in the atmosphere at a memorial tomb of Rumi's beloved Shams – in a little park in Konya – told me the spirit of both Masters are tangibly present. I brought these feelings with me to my reading of Danny's new offering.

Some of my Persian friends in Los Angeles once said to me when comparing Hafiz and Rumi: "Hafiz is the poet of the heart, and Rumi is the poet of the soul." After more than twenty years of reading and contemplating Rumi (in translation), I have to agree. There is something cosmic about Rumi's tone of voice and style, which is transmitted through his splendid imagery—often confounding the mind with thoughts like, "I wish I had thought of that"—so brilliant is his light, and sometimes so simple are his words. And this is Danny's second attempt at translating Rumi, as we saw from the first delicious batch published in *Love Poems from God: Twelve Sacred Voices from East and West* (Penguin).

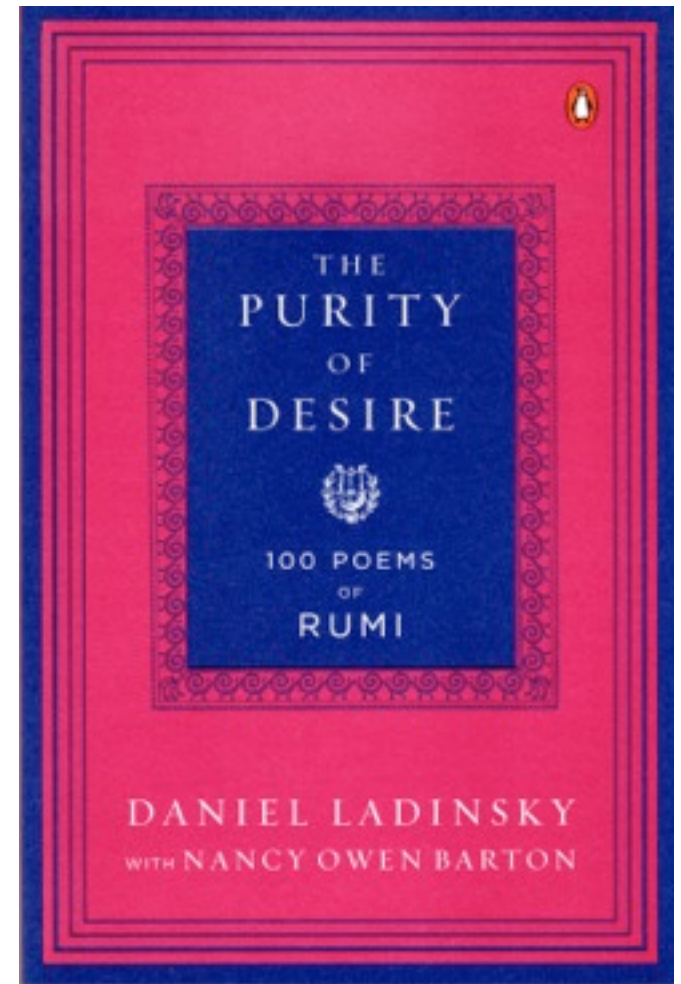
The first poem in this slim volume is a classical poem from Rumi in which he weaves for us the fundamentals of evolution of consciousness. Avatar Meher Baba used this poem in his seminal work, *God Speaks* to illustrate his own fine points on this subject. Danny renders this poem with a modern grace, playing it straight and narrow in homage to both great Masters of Wisdom.

Shortly after that more formal beginning, we hear: "The body is like Mary and each of us, each of us, has a Christ within." [p.3] Such sentiments are the stuff of inspiration and why I read Rumi in the first place. As Danny says in his own introduction – Rumi "helps us to get dressed for another day." How can we who walk with God not love hearing about our own inherent divinity, and the assurance that one day we too will be fully awake to this reality?

In the fresh poem, *I Am Looking For An Apprentice*, he says: "The scent of the Rose Garden reached you. Otherwise, you would have no knowledge of these words... Knowing what your own heart really wants, is knowing what everyone is really striving for. Compassion and kinship follow ... If you can go a week and not belittle anyone in thought word or deed... let me know, for I am looking for an apprentice, an heir." [p.9] Exactly what kind of challenge this is, only those who have strived not to back-bite can attest.

In the light-hearted poem, *Great Intimacy*, Rumi reveals: "I have ceased to tie the strings of one shoe to another in the morning, so now I don't trip over my wants. This leaves me nimble. Any mountain I can scamper up... " and further, in the same poem about Beloved God, "Gazing at Her across a field some days, and desiring great intimacy as we need, what can I do? What can we do when God is acting coy, but to be like a bird that sings to its mate?" [p.10] This is bread soaked in wine for the hungry spiritual seeker on this long hike homeward.

In the obviously colloquially titled, *Suckered Into A Bad Deal*, Rumi becomes the psychoanalyst we don't need to pay for: "Ninety percent of any depression you know was probably due to things not going your way. Or because the last time you did seem to have a choice, when you got back home with what you wanted, it turned out to have more thorns in it than you expected – and maybe you are still picking some of those out." [p.12] Anyone who has suffered disappointment or betrayal can nod and smile with Rumi, whose wisdom dissolves like smoked-honey in hot chai for a mind thirsty for Truth.



In the famous poem, *As Shams Was To Me*, about a lion cub who forgets his original nature and becomes like a lamb, Rumi says, “Yes, that is the role of the Teacher, as Shams was to me – showing one who they are, so they can stop bleating, crying at night, and never again be afraid.” He gives at least one important meaning of the need for a Spiritual Master. [p.7] Again, Danny seems to be coloring inside the lines of original intended meaning, and one senses that the poetic expansion we are used to from his early Hafiz work has either been carefully edited by Nancy Barton, or perhaps his own sense of refinement has brought him to this more subtle leaning into the core message of Mevlana.

Some of the poems use language that is hard for certain spiritual types. Those are the ones he seems to be prodding with lines that talk about things like Rumi’s pride upon examining his own excrement, and about sex addicts, or someone’s “bare ass,” or even the “Big Bang,” and then asking whether or not you, the reader, is a prude. So it can be unclear how much of this is Danny and how much is really Rumi. (Rumi, too, incorporates wild barroom tales in his verse.) One may find oneself asking — How did we get here again, and what is going on? I guess my own nature is to listen for the Truth in the words, and not focus as much on the messenger. Who can explain Danny except Rumi himself: “It is not easy to find the grace that makes an extreme lover of God the way they are. So free.” [p.87] I, for one, forgive him for being so bold.

Then towards the end of this work – and perhaps to address the elephant in the room, Danny goes into his own poetic offering, *Your Breath Upon Me*, in which he crafts verse around the legendary Last Letter of Rumi to his beloved Shams. [p.97] While I did notice some extra scholarly notes in his recent tome *A Year with Hafiz*, this is the first time a footnote shares his process around how an entire poem came to be expanded. This also helps restore credibility in a world that is growing somewhat uncertain about what can pass as an English translation of a medieval Persian poet.

How Danny accomplishes yet again this wonderful transmission, this time of the soul of Rumi, to the general reader, remains somewhat of a divine mystery. I think the answer lies in a line from Rumi. Danny has become so intimately close with beloved God that secrets from behind the veil are revealed to him in quiet nights at his farm, while drinking wine: “There is a devotion I have found that can make God so intimately close, I can count the hairs on His chest when He opens His robe.” This book came from inside that robe.



Enough

She dreamed
Of the day she would have
Enough courage
To drop her idea
Of the way it
Should be.
Then, she would step
Into the wild pool
And bathe into the
Joy
that only
This letting go
Could bring.
When her heart asked her,
“When will this be?”
She ran a thousand miles
Away
And finally over her shoulder looked
To see if it followed.

We throw bricks at
Our heart
As if we could
Break that Love.
And when we finally
Hold our own hand
And say to that
Mirror image,
“You, So beautiful
So beautiful”
Our heart
Will shine
And we will find that
Courage
Was enough
Was
Enough
All
Along

I wrote this poem in the refectory at the Center. I didn't think that much of it at first. Then, sitting on the porch there, I read it to a few women. Most of them cried, and told me they had had very similar feelings. It was then that I realized the extent to which poetry has a way of lifting an existential loneliness for me- because situations that I write about, which I thought were unique to me, are ones we have all had... and that we are all just going through the human experience...

Tracey
Schmidt

Prayer one

Father, Baba, Buddha, Krishna, Muhammad, Christ, Thank you for all that we have! Thank you for the air that we breath thank you for the energy from the food we eat. Thank you Brothers thank you sisters! Thank you animals, minerals, and plant life too, The all Is in me and is in each of us too!

Three Poems Two Prayers

ZACK GORDON

Prayer two

God thank you for the sunshine today, thank you for the darkness last night so that we all slept well. Thank you for the food that we eat today lord thank you for love. Show me how to live father show me the way. Help all others first that need more help than me. Thank you god for all.

How I feel when it snows

Pure and calm warm but cold

at peace and connected to the whole

snow is life and snow is zen love and peace a mans best friend

as the snow falls the lights shines energy is seen the snow is god and life is pure

I see my breath I see my -self

Look all around at what is happening life is great when there is no reacting to things that are out of our control

learn to be just as the snow is

it was one time water and will be again Snow is life and mans best friend

Rebuilding the church

slow and calm and moving on

doing what is the right thing to do

as the stones are put in place the sky become blue

start slow it is no race find a nice and steady pace

being man is not an easy task

each day we grow

stone by stone like the walls of the church

be patient brother

be calm

Calm in mind Body and spirit

all is well and all is good

don't always listen to the mind it is easily misunderstood

Jesus

Jesus, Buddha, Krishna, Muhammad, Baba, Rama and god

all names are the same all are nothing but love

God is for everyone god is for life

I am not religious but I am one with the truth

the truth is one with me

Life is worth living when u know you are never alone

god loves and is in all of us from a saint to Al Capone

from a murder to a nun to the president

thank you lord thank you Christ

thank you baba

love you twice

The Mayonnaise Jar

When things in your life seem almost too much to handle, when 24 hours in a day is not enough, remember the mayonnaise jar and two cups of coffee.

A professor stood before his philosophy class and had some items in front of him.

...

When the class began, wordlessly, he picked up a very large and empty mayonnaise jar and fills it with golf balls.

He then asked the students if the jar was full. They agreed that it was.

The professor then picked up a box of pebbles and poured it into the jar. He shook the jar lightly. The pebbles rolled into the open areas between the golf balls.

He then asked the students again if the jar was full. They agreed it was.

The professor next picked up a box of sand and poured it into the jar. Of course, the sand filled up everything else.

He asked once more if the jar was full. The students responded with a unanimous "YES".

The professor then produced two cups of coffee from under the table and poured the entire contents into the jar, effectively filling the empty space between the sand. The students laughed.

"Now," said the professor, as the laughter subsided, "I want you to recognize that this jar represents your life. The golf balls are the important

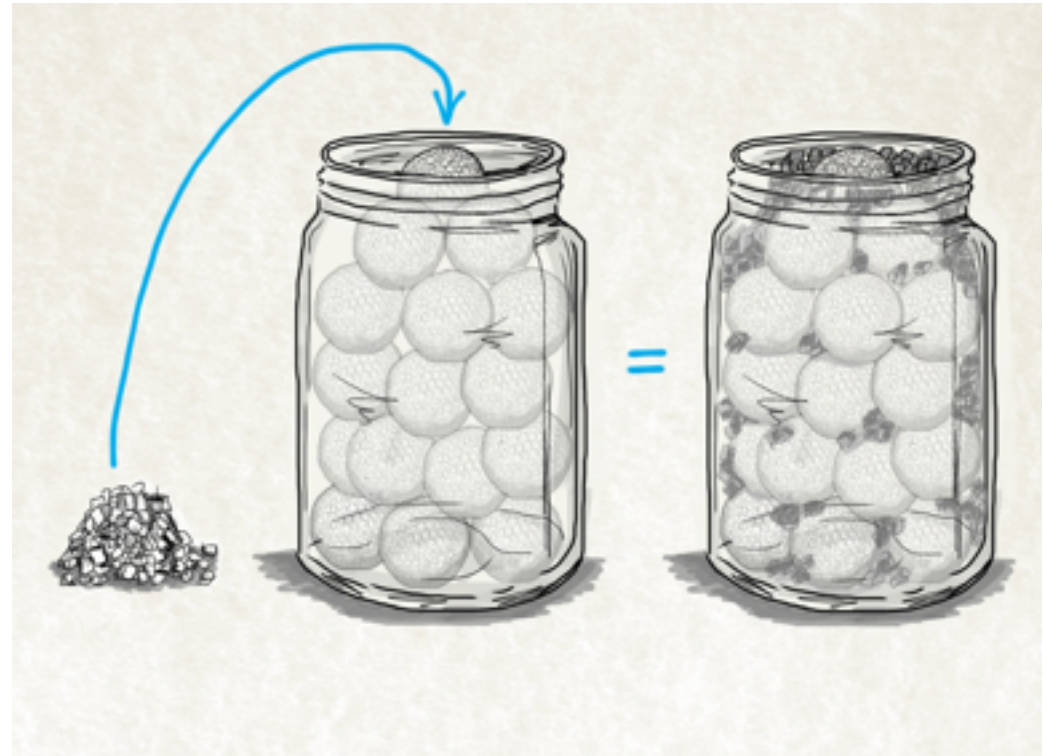
things - God, family, children, health, friends, and favorite passions. Things, that if everything else was lost and only they remained, your life would still be full. The pebbles are the things that matter like your job, house, and car. The sand is everything else -- the small stuff," he said.

"If you put the sand into the jar first," he continued, "There is no room for the pebbles or the golf balls. The same goes for life. If you spend all your time and energy on the small stuff, you will never have room for the things that are important to you..." he told them.

"So... pay attention to the things that are critical to your happiness. Worship with your family. Play with your children. Take your partner out to dinner. Spend time with good friends. There will always be time to clean the house and fix the dripping tap. Take care of the golf balls first -- the things that really matter. Set your priorities. The rest is just sand."

One of the students raised her hand and inquired what the coffee represented.

The professor smiled and said, "I'm glad you asked. It just goes to show you that no matter how full your life may seem, there's always room for a couple of cups of coffee with a friend."



His Immense Love

By Shelli Welch ~ North Carolina

October 31, 2012

For the past 2 years, Meher Baba has been sending me the same repeated messages/impressions... of His immense love, intimate presence and the transformational process that is happening for each of us and the world.

The message began (and has repeated) through the symbol of the Butterfly. The message has been, as I try to express it in words, that NOW IS the time for transformation. That He is making transformation possible. That this transformational process is happening not just for the limited "me" but for all of us. The transformation is a transformation of "consciousness"... away from identification with the mind, physical form and limited ego self towards a life lived in full consciousness awareness of Divine Self.

My friend, Laurent, recently traveled to Myrtle Beach and sent back to me a video on "Highlights from Baba's Life, Work and Message"... in it Baba talks about the "New Life" that he is calling us to live. I was amazed that what I was hearing was exactly what I had been feeling and receiving from within.

Baba states: *"Renounce the limited self. Get further away from "I", "me" and "mine". You have not to renounce anything but your own self. It IS possible for you to renounce your limited self by My Grace. I have come to release that Grace. Man is on the verge of a Golden Age of Universal Brotherhood, Enlightenment and Spiritual Understanding."*

The Kingdom of Heaven IS at hand!

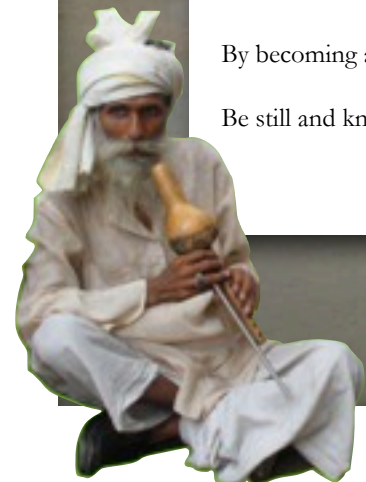
Our transformation from living life through ego self vs. Divine Self lies not in trying to change our actions or by digesting more knowledge... it lies in connecting with Divine Mind and letting Him flow through us. From that place, we have perfect understanding and all action is divine infused and directed by Him.

As spoken by John the Baptist, "I" (limited ego self) must decrease and "He" (Divine Self) must increase."

How do we connect with Divine Mind?

By becoming an empty vessel ready to receive. As Baba says in his New Life: "What has value and importance for us now is to live in the active present..."

Be still and know I am God!



That is all we have to do. The ego-mind wants to make "spiritual progress" a complicated, and ever elusive task... when that could not be farther from The Truth. We ARE already with God. He sits "right next to us". Knows each and every one of us Intimately... Loves us more deeply than we currently know.

We already ARE with Him, and have been for all eternity. We can never be separated from him, EVER. It is only through illusion that we are separate. We are not "experiencing" this as a reality only because of our identification with the world of forms and mental emotional coverings. Therefore, the only way back from "the knowledge of Good and Evil" (the mind and world of form) and back to "the Garden" (of complete oneness with God) is through absolute surrender to whatever happens in complete trust that whatever you are going through is exactly what you need for the evolution of your own consciousness (Baba's benevolent destruction of all identifications and attachments that stand in the way of our relationship with Him) and the regular practice of stillness to strengthen our ability to be led and hear His voice.

Whether it be through asana (yoga practice) or in quiet seat, it is through the regular practice of meditation (the stilling of the mind) that you can start to break the identification you have with thought, emotion, the body and the world of forms and begin to perceive yourself as you really are... Divine Consciousness (which we perceive as pure awareness).

Our transformation begins within and then without... as Baba shows his GREAT Love for us through Lord Shiva, the destroyer of illusion, the destroyer of material and ego attachments as well as any and all impediments that prevent us from merging with Him and Divine Consciousness.

It has always amazed me how we say we want to give our lives to Baba... We want to be more like Him.. that we Love and trust Him.. and have Faith in Him in ALL things and yet the moment something happens that is not to our liking, we resist, we doubt, we curse... We are no longer flowing with life... with what is. The many unexpected changes, losses and deaths that we experience are absolutely necessary for our growth in God-Consciousness, and for our detachment from the world of form and ego self.

All the difficulties, challenges, hardships and changes are necessary in order to evolve and become closer to the expression and image of our True Nature and mergence with Him. The suffering however only comes from our attachment to anything other than Him. "When thy eye is single, thy whole body will be full of light"...

Lord Jesus said, "He that findeth his life shall lose it. And he that loseth his life for My sake, shall find it." And "Love God with ALL of your heart, soul, strength and mind"...

Our Love must be fixed on The One.

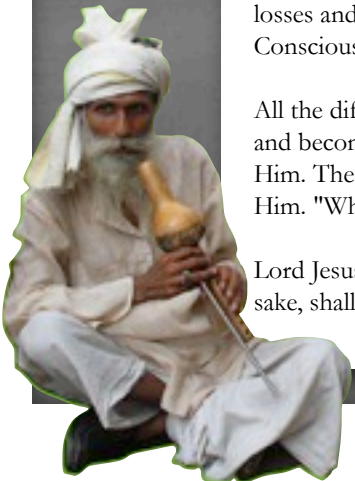
That IS the transformation Baba is working in us.

Our pride and attachments lay in the way of our relationship with Baba. They also lay in the way of our experiencing the Peace that is our true nature. When we realize the "joys" we have been seeking in the Ego/World of forms are the very root of all of our suffering and prevent us from experiencing what is already available to us... RIGHT NOW... unlimited love, peace and connection then we can start to let go and let God.

I am not loved by what I do but by who I AM. The I am that is within all of us... from "sinner to saint"... Baba loves freely. There is no separation -- has never been separation. He longs to be intimate with each and every one of us.

May Baba make in me a New Mind and a New Heart.

Jai Baba.





"I bought a small photo card of this image at Sheriar Books awhile back, and I was so drawn to it that I wanted to draw it. A meditation on this relaxed magical pose. I tried it in different mediums because I loved it so much, and also to try to improve my accuracy. I didn't carefully measure and draw first, but went directly onto the paper with color or ink. I have sold and given away some of them, still have some left, and will still do more. In each one, He looks a bit different, trying to capture this ephemeral fellow."

Marla Faith

Artwork by

MARLA FAITH





The translation of the inscription to the left may be اللطيف (*al-latif*) The Most Good or Gracious; an attribute of God. Also, 'hidden', 'subtle'.

(translation thanks to Stephanie Sheppard)

Artwork by

**ELAINE
NAJMA
CARTER**



