

Without love, none can cultivate the noble habit of forgetting and forgiving. You forgive a wrong done to you in the same measure in which you love the wrong-doer...Forgiveness follows love.
~ Meher Baba

Quoted in *The Doorbell of Forgiveness*, Don Stevens et al, compiled and edited by Laurent Weichberger, Companion Enterprises Limited, 2011, p. 264.

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Meher Baba Center of Northern California
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In This Issue

- * Love is Forgiving- Workshop Introduction
- * Psychological Growth and Spiritual Development
- * Poetry Corner

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Dear Reader



In this issue:

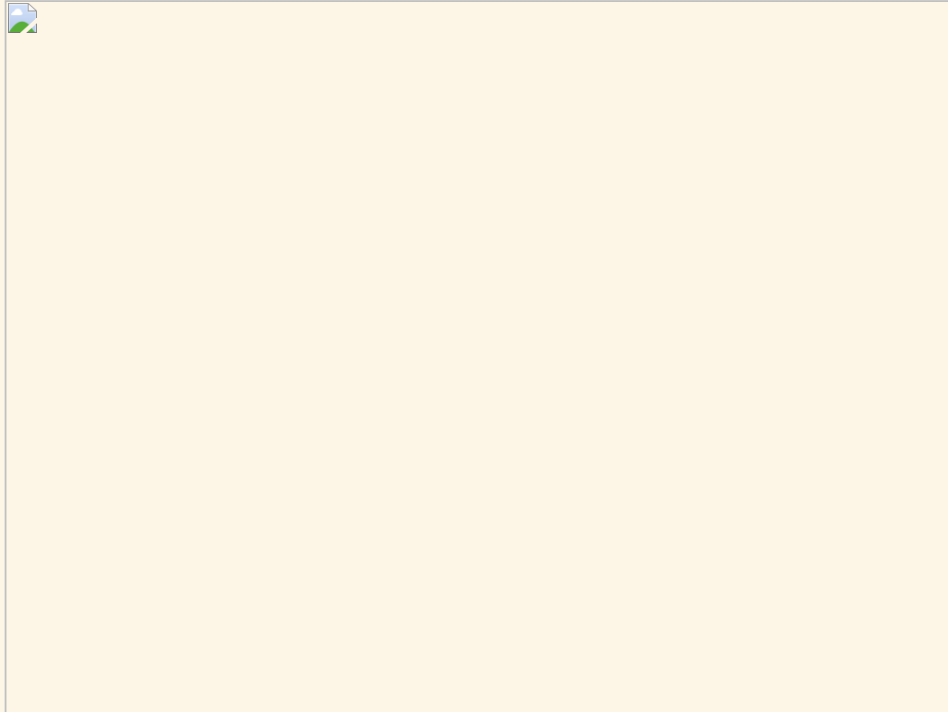
We have an article by upcoming *Forgiveness with Meher Baba* seminar hosts, Laurent Weichberger and Soleil Brigham. The seminar will be held at Karen and Alan Talbots' home (721 Crossbrook Dr., Moraga) on the last weekend in April, Saturday the 27th and Sunday the 28th.

Also, Alisa Genovese shares her thoughts and reflections on psychological growth and

spiritual development with us.

Jai Baba!

Love is Forgiving
By Soleil Brigham and Laurent Weichberger
Half Moon Bay, CA ~ February 25, 2013



Laurent Weichberger with Soleil Brigham, Half Moon Bay, January 2013.

This article is an introduction to our *Forgiveness with Meher Baba* seminar to be held for the Northern California Baba Groups during the weekend of April 27-28 at Karen and Alan Talbot's home. [See below, endnote 1, for details.]

After having facilitated this forgiveness seminar a number of times [2], it struck us that the word forgiveness itself is little understood. We have some clichés such as "forgive and forget," and reminders from Baba, Jesus, and other holy men about the importance of forgiveness. However, few really understand what the word means, or how to accomplish it. One seminar attendee offered that she had tried to look up the word in an etymological dictionary (showing the roots and evolution of words) and even that explanation was confusing to her.

During the seminars, it would invariably be brought up, what does "forgive" really mean? It was fascinating to hear what people would say about the fact that "give" was in the word. So, what was being given? And to whom? I remember one person said - we are giving up our sense of being owed something, or giving up the need (or the right) to punish someone. That was the gist of it.

Finding some Definitions

We looked at an *Online Etymological Dictionary* [3] and it mentions for forgive:

Old English *forgiefan* "give, grant, allow; forgive," also "to give up" and "to give in marriage;" from *for-* "completely" + *giefan* "give" (see [give](#)). The modern sense of "to give up desire or power to punish" is from use of the compound as a Germanic loan-translation of Latin *perdonare* (cf. Old Saxon *fargeban*, Dutch *vergeven*, German *vergeben*, Gothic *fragiban*; see [pardon](#)).

After reading this entry, we looked up the word "pardon," which said: "to give wholeheartedly, to thoroughly give." If we completely relinquish everything we are holding against another, **and completely give, we might find some inner freedom.**

An example of this might be if someone owes you money, or even steals money from you, to offer them forgiveness is to mentally-emotionally-spiritually **give it to them**, thereby potentially karmically unbinding and de-energizing (dissipating) the "charge" of the impressions. This may alter the internal links between the individuals in the situation.

We recently took a weekend trip down to Santa Cruz to visit a monastery there, and when we pulled into the parking lot, we noticed a number of other cars had just arrived and people were headed somewhere. We followed and saw that we were just in time for mass. It was a beautiful seaside chapel, and we arrived just as the service started. The Catholic minister was a delightful Asian man, and he was quite animated and funny. At one point in his monologue, which covered issues about Lent, stories about Moses and Jesus, and what love is for and about, he remarked, "Love is for giving." In other words, love is something to be shared and given away. In his state of mind, what Laurent heard was "Love is forgiving." Somehow, without even knowing it a minister, whom we had never met, shone a bright light on this word and gave it new meaning. Love, when coupled with forgiveness, suddenly made total sense. And forgiving, without love, seemed to make no sense.

Love is for giving, love is forgiving.

Forgiveness requires us to dig deeper in ourselves - perhaps to give love that we feel we didn't get ourselves. It can require us to lay down our ego, and its desire to be "right" - to walk a heroic path of choosing to love, release, let go, unbind. That is not to say it will be an easy task, hence the reference to the word heroic. This indicates overcoming fear, a willingness to re-experience and release the energy that may be tied up with complex emotions.

Looking to Avatars as Exemplars

Meher Baba explained to Don Stevens that each Avatar gave an Avataric Gift to humanity. He said that Jesus' gift was that of "love" and that Baba's gift was that of "intuition." This is in keeping with what Jesus showed on the cross about how to forgive ~ "Then said Jesus, Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do. And they parted his raiment, and cast lots." [4] It is also in keeping with what Mani said to us about Baba's gesture for the word "love" being the same as his gesture for "forgiveness." [5]

To sum it up: Love = forgiving.

Loving forgiveness is letting go of all grievances, putting love in place of our judgment, releasing our attempts to maintain control. Perhaps it means to give everything completely back over to God, as we are not fit to judge this world. To forgive is a - flow of allowing - it is not holding tight to our opinions and judgments of how others should act, or what should happen. To forgive the Grand Play (Leela) is to understand that we are in the mental~physical play of the human mind, under the full sway of the directives of unconscious forces.

In our forgiveness seminars, we delve into other related areas such as: How has our unconscious mind been directing the course of our reality? We ask how do karma and sanskaras fit into all this? And we use two specific forgiveness prayers that help to clear the subconscious mind.

Needless to say, a whole book could be written about these subjects, however, without Baba's guidance and God's grace it all seems like a daunting mountain to climb. Maybe that's why Baba ended his special prayer for us with the words, "help us all to hold fast to Baba's damaan until the very end."

Notes:

1. As mentioned above, the seminar will occur at Karen and Alan Talbots' home (721 Crossbrook Dr., Moraga) on the last weekend in April, Saturday the 27th and Sunday the 28th. Arrival times will be from 10:30 to 11:00 a.m. each day and formal sessions will be from 11:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. and 3:00 to 5:00 p.m., separated by lunch/hang time from 1-3 p.m. A catered lunch will be served during the break. There is no charge or suggested donation for the workshop. The workshop will have the sequential nature established by Don Stevens for his training workshops, assisted by Laurent. It is now being used during our Forgiveness workshops. Consequentially, you cannot attend later sessions if you haven't been present for previous sessions, although you can drop out of the sequence at any point if you decide the workshop is not for you. The sequential structure of the workshop is designed to encourage a buildup of trust and intimacy as individuals share and work more deeply to transcend resentments and forgiveness challenges vis a vis other participants as well as others in their lives who are not present.
2. Sacramento Baba Group (June 2012), Los Angeles Baba Group (Aug. 2012), Chicago Baba Group, and Myrtle Beach Baba Group (Nov. 2012).
3. See *Etymology Online* here: <http://www.etymonline.com>.
4. See King James Version of *The Bible*, Luke 23:34.
5. See *The Doorbell of Forgiveness*, by Don E. Stevens and his Young People's Group (London: Companion Books, 2011)

Psychological Growth and Spiritual Development

by Alisa Genovese

 Josh & Alisa

Alisa Genovese with her son, Josh Dreyfuss

Psychological Growth and Spiritual Development

Is there a connection?

One psychotherapist lover's query

What do I know about this subject? For years I have traveled to India to spend time at Baba's home and with his beloved mandali. Each trip I took, my heart

was ever open and ready to receive, but, alas, my western psychological mind, intact and operational, came along as well. I often assumed, and perhaps even took pride in my studies and work on myself, thinking I was progressing on the spiritual path by healing my own inner wounds, thinking that somehow one was a reflection of the other.

Although the trips were always deeply heart enriching, spending close time with the mandali, family and residents over the years, shook up my vantage point, particularly on what my western psychological mind deemed healthy behaviors and responses. I saw this, in particular, toward the end of Eruch's life. There was so much chaos and what I considered 'dysfunction' going on around him, with all the battling about his diet and health care and who was to have the power to make decisions. Eruch would just go along with whatever he was presented with; never speaking up or stopping any of it, even though at times, he would express his feelings differently. Why would he allow this to happen, why are these people, whom I considered spiritually evolved, behaving in this way? Even though I had heard stories of life in the ashram with Baba, to witness it was jarring to my mind.

This went on for many years and would confuse my mind and perplex my heart and sensibilities. Because of my mind, I could not understand it. I just kept pushing it away. One day, while witnessing a particularly 'frenzied' interaction, I could feel something shift, let go inside. I sat on the veranda by the Blue Bus, closed my eyes and inwardly implored Baba to help me understand. In an instant, I heard loud and clear, what I took to be directly from Baba; "Psychological development has absolutely nothing to do with Spiritual Advancement" and that was all I heard. At the time it felt like a relief, but for the past fifteen years I have pondered it. To this end, I share a bit of what I have made of it since.

What I heard Baba say was not that spiritual growth had nothing to do with psychological work, He said spiritual advancement. This I have come to realize is different. Darwin Shaw maintains in his book, *Effort and Grace*, that we have to make an effort toward Love even as Baba says it is the Grace of the Master that brings us home. Without our efforts to control our minds, desires, whims and moods, we cannot clear the strangers from our hearts enough to let go and realize Baba is there.

For me, in my own life and from what I have witnessed in working with countless others over the years in my practice, psychological growth and healing can bring us closer to our hearts and our own self-compassion and love. Without this self-love I don't think we can ever experience the Love of the True Self. In other words, the ego must be strengthened before it can be surrendered and ultimately crushed by the Grace of the Master. Thus, psychological work on oneself can be seen as an aid to helping us to control our minds and offering us greater choices in how we behave. True strength of ego is not full of pride, conceit or deceit, but has a healthy sense of self, and the ability to experience being loved, lovable and loving; to be a warrior on the path to God. In the ashram with Baba, as all the mandali have related, Baba would scold and get angry with those close to Him, cutting down their egos. Yet no matter how harsh He was, He would always bring them back to a place of love and forgiveness in short order. The apparent purpose being not to wound and traumatize, rather to grind the ego down, while still keeping a sense of their being loved. In this state the soul, the True Self can radiate through so others can be affected. "Let your life itself be my message of love and truth to others" as Baba states, can only be possible in a state of self-love

that cares little for what others may think and can think of others before oneself.

Baba talks a great deal about the role of the mind and the ego on the spiritual path. His single most objective with His disciples was ego crushing. Getting them to care not for themselves or their needs and desires, but only for His pleasure. Yet those around Him were not wallflowers. Each one was a strong personality, a strong ego and they had to be to follow Him. To be crushed by a Master takes great development of character. So again we see the stand up and sit down theory. Is ego effacement about denial of self? At times I would hear Eruch say, "Just take it brother." And other times I heard him warn, "Never be a doormat". Is there a way through the mind and ego?

How then can this self-love be achieved without the sense of pride and ego taking hold? In my opinion this is the journey that crosses the great divide between psychological growth and spiritual development. In Baba's Manonash work he talks about the annihilation of the mind as a step on the spiritual path. In Glimpses of the God-man, Bal Natu describes this phase of Baba's work: "One has not to forsake one's rationality after coming to Baba...However after sincere and honest efforts there comes a blessed moment when one cheerfully accepts one's inability to understand...the hidden meanings of the God-man and totally gives in. Baba lovingly reveals a glimpse of Himself in the heart of one who quiets the mind...then the apparent contradictions and paradoxes do not bother such a lover. It is love alone that counts".

This paragraph sums up for me the role of mind and not mind, the contradictions we find there as we traverse this path of illusion. I think understanding one's psychology gives one more abilities, not only for compassion and love for self and others, but also for self-control and finally surrenderance. In my experience, it is in the healing of our shame, wounds and misconceptions that this self-love begins to arise quite naturally and with it we begin to feel less need to dominate, prove ourselves, or even to have constant approval of others. These are traps of the ego that keep us enslaved to the mind and create hindrances to the flow of the heart.

Ironically as the mind/ego seeks and feels secure with more control, as we gain more self-love and acceptance, there naturally comes an inner sense of contentment within our skin, which enables us to let go of how we think it should be and accept more readily what is or Baba's will for us. As we continue to let go and accept what is, our faith naturally increases, a quite necessary bridge between one's psychology and spirituality. In my experience, as my faith in Baba grows, my ability to navigate the challenges and suffering in my life becomes more bearable and the lessons I am to learn become clearer. I struggle less with the "why is it happening" and/or the denial of it all and continue to learn to dance with it more easily. The more we let go, the clearer we see the hand of God, ever strong, which is always there wanting to take us through. All we have to do is to make the effort, and Baba is there with His armfuls of Grace.

POETRY Corner

Poem by Josh Dreyfuss

Love Poem to the Avatar

Don't think I don't recognize what you've done to me, Baba.
Why do you think I've been driven to write this?

I want a love poem
to capture this feeling,
to share the possibility
of a whole-hearted "I love you."

But what words can I use
to express the weight of your presence?
The surge that passes through my head in the Samadhi?
Maybe this would be easier
if you didn't constantly remind me
how primitive a form of communication
language is.

But I'm a poet.
Certainly I can find some way to share my love.
Don't think I'm above leaning
on the thieves and moonlight
of Hafiz.

You have made me
electric with tenderness,
expanded to my limits,
my breath clouding a vulnerable sky,
heart adrift on your ocean
like so many messages in a bottle.
Cast
away.

And I have made the fatal mistake
of trying to write,
forgetting,
my love,
how silencing you are.

I struggle to write
through the flimsy barrier of this earth
while the whole time
I've been so fully yours
long before I was even aware of your gaze.

How foolish I must look
trying to project eloquence
to the wrinkles of your lake
while you stand there with open arms,
saying so much more
than I ever could.

You are my love poem, Meher,
and I?
I am just
wasting paper.

Announcements

Center Library Note:

Would you like to be a "patron"? We have a library for your reading pleasure

and convenience. Our library is housed upstairs in a bookcase at the MBCNC Center on Stockton Street. We have had 14 borrowers over the past year. You may access a list of the holdings at the web page meherbabameherbaba.org; look for library, and open the book or video pdf files. When you visit the Center, remember to check out the library books. We would also like donations. For a list of books we need, see the section at the end of the library holdings. Contact the Newsletter about donations.

The Trust

All who wish to share in the commitment laid down by Meher Baba through the Trust should contact Jack Mormon, ambkj@aol.com
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**Meher Baba Information** For introductory information about Avatar Meher Baba, e-mail: [info@MeherBabaInformation.org](mailto:info@MeherBabaInformation.org) or write to P.O. Box 1101, Berkeley, CA 94701. <http://MeherBabaInformation.org>  
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The meeting schedule is now included in our online calendar (web link above), and can be printed directly from the calendar.

Directions to our Center:
From Highway 80, Interstate 5, going north or south, in El Cerrito, take the Central Avenue exit exiting east, toward the hills. Cross San Pablo Avenue.
Go under the BART train tracks and less than a block after the tracks, turn left on Richmond Avenue. Head north on Richmond Avenue until Stockton Avenue (the first stop light), turn right on Stockton. About two blocks onward, the Center is located on the left side of the street. Address and phone are listed above.
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**More Local Meetings:**

**Sonoma County** - Arti happens once a month, usually the first Sunday. Locations vary. Call Ellen Van Allen at 707-528-0357 for specific information.

**Los Gatos** - Sunday Evenings  
At the home of Clint Snyder  
Call (408) 395-6865