



INsights

Community Newsletter

God is free, independent; and to know Him, we must work wholeheartedly and with no reservations. One who is free does not like any reservations. If you work for Him honestly, with an open heart, God helps. Do not become a flatterer and never be dishonest to yourself and others.

Be natural and honestly simple.

I consider one as my center who loves me wholeheartedly for the sake of love. God may make me give that gift which is permanent. Only God is real. God is all Love; God is all Wisdom; God is all Power; God is all Beauty; God is Everything.

Lord Meher, 1st ed, Vol. 11-12, p. 4199, Bhau Kalchuri
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Dear Reader

This month we bring you a story from the book *Seekers of Love* by the co-authors A. K. Hazra and Keith Gunn. The book contains 29 stories like this is one. I remember once when Lyn Ott described Meher Baba's first step in 1952 onto the Myrtle Beach Meher Spiritual Center. He said that Baba rarely did any spectacular Cecille B. DeMille acts, but this was one of them. According to Lyn, Baba waited a few minutes after the car was parked and the door was open before he put his foot on the ground at the Center. Finally, as his foot touched the ground a tremendous lightning and thunder struck the air. The story for this month from *Seekers of Love* could have been part a DeMille movie. And though it is long, I believe it is worth the effort.

Starting with this issue we are presenting a section called *Artist's View*. We hope to regularly feature an artwork from a visual artist with a bit about the artist and a link to their website. This December we have a recent painting by Tricia Migdoll. Tricia lived in the Bay Area for a short time with her husband Jim in the early '80s, but they returned to live in her native Australia and still reside there. We welcome recommendations for artists to feature. (meherbabacenter@gmail.com)

Happy Holiday season to all.
Jai Baba, the editors.

This newsletter (and past issues) will eventually be available in pdf form on the www.MeherBabaMeherBaba.org website.

Newsletterwallas: Ben Leet, Lisa Greenstein Cherri Nelson

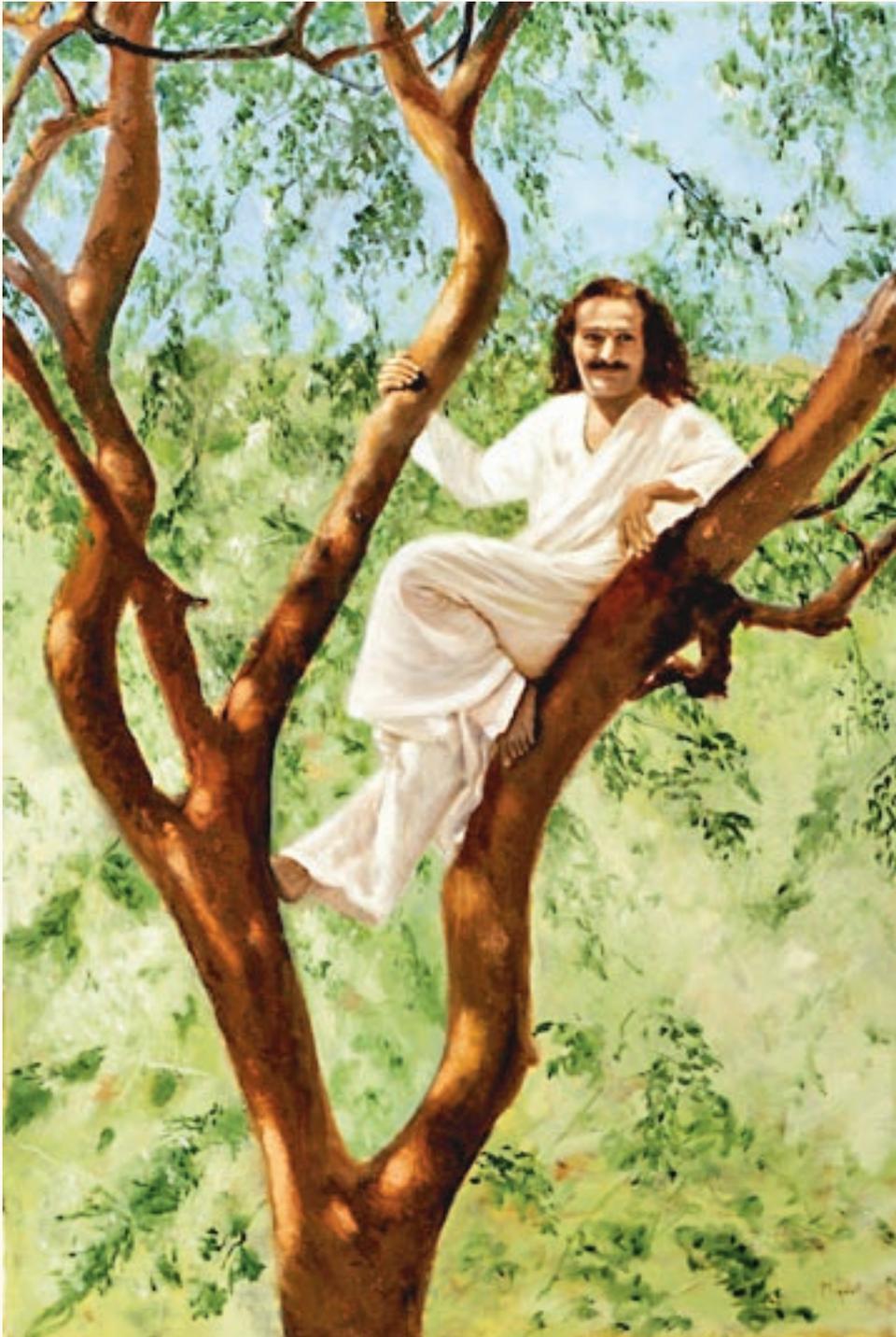


Meher Baba Center of Northern California

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Artist View – Tricia Migdoll



Lord Meher, oil on canvas 91cm x 61cm

“In 2002 , I was talking to a couple of artists in a Baba chat room. I was silently wishing I could also paint Baba; I had always had a wee longing to be an artist, and I mentioned this to my Baba cyber friends. To cut a long story short, they encouraged me to try. My thanks to Shar Jeanne, as I have never looked back. That single cyber chat has brought forth for me so much joy and sent me on a new path.

To paint His physical form is the most amazing meditation; studying every line curve wrinkle twinkle as I delight in His astounding beauty. And I talk to Him as I paint; a delicious intimacy between He and I, as I attempt to capture that which is beyond capturing.”

Tricia Migdoll

Tricia’s paintings can be viewed at her website:

<http://www.dancingdust.com/index.html>



Meher Baba Center of Northern California

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Seekers of Love

Shaligram Sharma

by A.K. Hazra and Keith Gunn



I was born in 1928 in the village of Magarpur, District Jhansi, UP, India. I was the third of four sons. My parents were simple, generous and religious by nature.

From my infancy I was not contented and used to look at the sky and horizon for something, someone unseen, feeling lonely; I developed a reserved nature. Loneliness was further aggravated when my mother, the only person who loved me, died when I was hardly six years old. Other family members were absorbed in their own personal affairs. In short, I unknowingly felt discontented with the present and longed for something lasting.

One day while I was standing in my primary school and looking at the sky in a thoughtful mood, Sri. L.R. Bajpai, a Social leader and spiritualist who regarded Swami Ramtirtha and

Vivekananda as his ideals, arrived. He saw me looking at the sky attentively and observed a great resemblance in my look and way of standing to a famous photo of Swami Ramtirtha. He requested the name of my father from the headmaster and called him. In the presence of the headmaster and teachers, he requested my father to give me to him for a greater cause as he had seen a glimpse of Swami Ramtirtha in me. This did not remove me from my present circumstances, and was more principle than practice.

My father felt honored to hear it and gave his consent. Without any transfer of property or status I began to lose my family affiliation.

The school headmaster had regards for my father. He asked him to let me live with his children and study. My father agreed, which further separated me from the family of my birth. For my part, I felt as though the whole nation should be my family, as it had been Gandhiji's. Sri L.R. Bajpai also had no family, having not married. His intentions were to spend his time in selfless service while devoting himself to yogic practices. It was this aspect of his life that cultivated respect for him in my heart.

After passing the basic classes up to fourth standard I got my admission in fifth standard in middle school at Barwasagar. There I had to pay school and boarding house fees, cooking charges, etc. My family refused to help me pay these fees. Luckily I got a scholarship. (Continued on next page)



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Seekers of Love

Shaligram Sharma (cont.)

by A.K. Hazra and Keith Gunn

I was so anxious to learn the spiritual way of life from Sri L.R. Bajpai that I used to go during holidays to his village, Binwara, or his farm at Devantpura. He in turn used to observe and magnify my faults; he complained that I didn't sweep properly, failed to think of others, failed to clean the lantern glass, rested during the daytime, and he used to ridicule, chastise and even abuse me for these faults. He wanted me to remain alert, dutiful and serve others with food, etc. and used to treat me so roughly if I failed. But I was happy to swallow his tough treatment probably with an inner faith in the God-ordained plan to reshape my mentality in a spiritual mode of tolerance, service and disintegration of my ego-self.

Two special visits to him were significant. On my first visit after coming into his contact, I went from the boarding house of Barwasagar with a friend to Bajpai's farm, about ten miles away, hoping to meet him and hear something spiritual from him. But he was not there. On a corner of the property there was a well and a tree and a canvas bag. Both of us could barely pass the cold winter night with the help of the canvas bag and returned back in the morning to attend our classes. My next visit, after some time to this farm was by myself. This time I went there on foot during the daytime, with the same anxiety to learn the aim of life and other spiritual topics from Sri Bajpai. I felt that I really had been assigned to Sri Bajpai the day my father gave me to him, and I had taken it quite seriously, feeling that I had crossed from one phase of life into another for my onward journey.

In this second visit Bajpai also was not there. It was daytime so I went to the nearby huts of the cultivators. Those were the days when Brahmins were not expected to consume the cooked food of other castes. So they provided me uncooked flour and dal. I cooked a coarse meal with my bare hands. After taking the food by noon, I went ahead to Bajpai's village, about six miles further. Mr. Bajpai with two companions was just getting ready to return to the farm, so I walked back the way I had come.

But dinner that night was a different story. Mr. Bajpai asked me to eat food cooked by the cultivators. I hesitated but could not refuse, and at the very hut where, at lunchtime I had cooked following the Brahmin tradition, that night I took dinner cooked by an untouchable hut owner. It marked the day of dissolution of racial discrimination in my daily life. Sri Bajpai unknowingly taught me discipline that helped me in eradicating my ego and practicing forbearance. Thus some unseen power was changing my life from day to day, in other ways as well.

After a year of study at Barwasagar middle school when I passed class five, the feeling of renunciation nourished from my very childhood grew stronger. Lack of love and lack of the mother probably both fostered this feeling. Day by day, I was growing more anxious to renounce ordinary existence and go to the Himalayas in search of God --- the source of Love itself. I lacked either the means or the knowledge of the route to go on the great journey. Still I resolved to do it at the cost of my life. I revealed my determination to a friend who opted to join me in this venture on June 28, 1940. Not too far into the journey, an improbable chance meeting with a member

(Continued on next page)



of my friend's family forced him to abandon the trip, with my blessings. I, with all my belongings, consisting of a hand-made edition of Gita, Ramayana, a rosary, a coarse meal of 'Sattu' made with gram, purchased from the village shop and a few coins and above all with the company of the invisible and unknown one, commenced my journey for the Himalayas without a ticket.

In the long bogie (railway car) of primitive order, I was sitting on the extreme end of one of the two middle berths. When the train arrived at Gwalior station, a blind saint with long hair, a shining face and white dress entered the bogie, came to its end and sat facing me.

He inquired, "Boy, where are you going?"

I rejoined, "Father, my heart finds no solace in the world, hence I am going to the Himalayas in search of God, renouncing the world."

The saint said, "What will you gain there? There is even more immorality in the places of pilgrimage. If you go there at this tender age, you may be cheated, misguided and subjected to beggary."

In the course of the journey from Gwalior to Agra he convinced me of the futility of seeking an abode for peace at the religious places and assured me that since God is so overwhelmingly present in my heart, He would one day meet me in my family life itself. Ultimately, he persuaded me to get down at Agra for a return journey to my home.

Passing the night on the Agra railway station platform, I started the journey for Jhansi early the next morning, traveling on the Pathankot Express. From Jhansi I walked a distance of about 20 miles to my native village Magarpur on foot, following a railway track through thick forest, hills and crossing over (dangerous) railway bridges. A boy of twelve years of age could hardly do so without His will. For me, it was almost a miracle to accede to the persuasion of the saint and renounce the very object of renunciation itself and return to my home. Who was this saint, where had he come from and where did he go?

I knew 100%, when I saw Beloved Baba for the first time; there was a very strong resemblance between Meher Baba and that saint. Ordinarily saints advise you to go on pilgrimage, but here was this saint advising me not to go, and convincing me in short order. I very much think that it was Baba who, upon the death of my mother, had taken over supporting me.

Surrendering to Beloved Baba

The preceding story described Shaligram Sharma's childhood aspirations to find God. This story picks up where the earlier one left off, with Shaligram in school.

A very poor child from a very poor family, I studied and worked exceedingly hard, with the result that, Baba's grace being much apparent in hindsight, I passed through all my schooling and obtained a degree in Law in 1954. Again with His grace, I obtained



Seekers of Love

Shaligram Sharma (cont.)

by A.K. Hazra and Keith Gunn

a job in the office of the assistant public prosecutor in Allahabad, and married a pious woman indifferent to all worldly comforts, decorations and pleasures. Indeed, she only longed for God realization, and to such an extent that she seemed indifferent to me and such a feeling created an added pressure on me to renounce everything and seek union with God.

While my wife was visiting her parents, the urge came upon me from within to put my life itself at stake for a radical change --- to find God. I began a prolonged fast on April 10, 1960, living on fruit only. I sought self-purification for God realization through this fast. While performing my duties as a public prosecutor, I devoted most of my time to the scriptures and lived in virtual isolation, gradually withdrawing from social interaction. It seemed that God sanctioned my actions, since after a couple of months I was transferred to Hamirpur, a place where solitude was prevalent and of course a place ordained for lovers of Meher Baba.

During my stay at Hamirpur, I tried to keep it a secret that I was fasting. However, my officer, on seeing my calm and lonely nature grew curious to peep more deeply into my solitary life. He invited me for a walk on the bank of the Jamuna River. One evening we went down to the river near an inspection house at which Meher Baba had stayed during His two earlier visits to Hamirpur. Although I did not know it at the time, I nevertheless felt the peaceful atmosphere. Mr. Sharma was interested to hear my views on spiritual matters and the goal of life.

On another such evening my senior enumerated the various officers posted in the district, informing me about each one. When he came to one he said, "His wife is very much devoted to Meher Baba" The moment I heard the name of Meher Baba, a beautiful smiling divine person wearing a white sadra and pink colored coat, sitting on a sofa, appeared in my vision. But since I had neither heard His name nor seen any of His pictures, I could not make much of it, although the sensation accompanying the vision was thrilling.

A few days later I chanced to visit Munshi Barelal, the then-manager of Narayan Press (eventually to be Meher Pukar Press). He told me that the press printed Hindi language literature on Meher Baba.

I inquired, "Who is Meher Baba?"

He said, "Meher Baba is the incarnation of God in this Age." This made me very anxious to know about Meher Baba. I requested some literature about Him. He gave me the "Universal Message", "Meher Baba's Call" and the "Highest of the High" to read.

Meher Baba's authoritative disclosure and claim to be the same Ancient One reincarnated again, inviting all to come unto him to attain Godhood, the goal of life, created immediate acceptance in me, along with an intense desire to know all about Him. Therefore I sought others who might tell me more about Meher Baba.



Shaligram Sharma

Seekers of Love (cont.)

by A.K. Hazra and Keith Gunn

My first interview was with Parmeshwari Dayal Nigam ('Pukar'). Our meeting lasted past midnight. Pukar narrated some details of Meher Baba's life to feed my inquisitive mind about Meher Baba's divinity, and also described the life of Pleader, a disciple of Meher Baba. Pleader's life had been led under Baba's instructions to undergo extreme austerities of fasts, seclusions and prolonged silence. During the last phase of his life, Pleader had undergone extreme suffering, and the final scene, in which Pleader sees a glimpse of Meher Baba's universal body, and praises Meher Baba while breathing his last at Meherabad thrilled me [see Pleader story, this volume, Seekers of Love, and see Lord Meher, American Edition pages 5688 ff]. The dedication and obedience of Pleader and the divine way Baba gave his promised glimpse at the last to Pleader created a deep impact of Baba in my heart.

I immediately read everything I could, without stopping. Reading God Speaks, in eight days while fasting convinced me of His Avatarhood. It gave me the conviction that my search for the path and the goal of life was over. This gave me a new life in which all desires and longings contracted into the solitary longing to find Meher Baba. But Baba had gone into seclusion on July 1st, 1960 and His darshan and correspondence with Him was prohibited. Nevertheless I was very restless to see Him.

Coincidentally, Pukar and others had organized Meher Melas [fairs] from 17th to 27th November 1960 on a grand scale at the various places visited by Baba during 1952 in Hamirpur district. Many prominent speakers and singers came and participated in the huge love gatherings. I felt a deep affinity with the visitors and the whole Baba family, and was drawn to attend all the functions organized at various places. Mostly these programmes were held during the evening, and I attended my official duties at Hamirpur city in daytime, attending the various programmes at the respective places in the nights. At every opportunity I would serve the lovers as a volunteer, serving food, asking if they wanted tea and seeing to their comforts. I was very much restless to see Baba, although everyone was receiving me with love. At this time I was an assistant public prosecutor, but I was so restless to see Baba that I was getting disinterested in performing my duties.

Madhusudan and others saw that I was restless for Baba's darshan. Madhusudan suggested the possibility that I might meet Baba on 4th December 1960 when He was going to hold an important meeting of some selected ones from the whole country. He explained that I should arrange to be in the vicinity of the Sarosh Cinema in Ahmednagar on the morning of the 4th. However the meeting that had been called was a secret meeting and I had no invitation. Somehow, Jal, Baba's brother, became aware of Madhusudan's subterfuge. Jal expressed his displeasure to Madhusudan that he had revealed the secret about the meeting to me, and further was greatly annoyed because I should not have been invited by Madhusudan to attend. I was shocked, and told Madhusudan not to worry further for me. I told Madhusudan, "Please don't intervene. If it is my fate to be seen by Baba, that is fine; otherwise leave me to my fate." I also told Jal, with a heavy heart, "I realize I have no right to go



Shaligram Sharma

Seekers of Love (cont.)

by A.K. Hazra and Keith Gunn

and you have the right to ask me not to go.” Thereafter I remained indifferent to the party, sitting quietly in one corner.

When the party was over and almost all the visitors had departed, I made ready to depart. As I passed out the door, I felt a hand on my shoulder. It was Jal’s. He had been watching my gloomy mood. Again he explained that since I was not on the list of the attendees, even if I went there was a great chance that Baba would cause me to be sent back without darshan, which would perhaps make me even sadder. I said, “Brother Jal, I have accepted Baba as God. If I go a hundred times and am rejected by Him a hundred times why should I feel anything?” These words touched Jal’s heart, and he fell in with the plan, agreeing to take responsibility for getting me before Baba. Thus my drooping bud was restored to bloom. But who could fathom Baba’s ways? Baba canceled the meeting! Jal wrote to me that he was going to see Baba on December 25th. It was his plan to place a report on the mela and the film that he had taken of the mela before Baba at this meeting and would speak directly to Beloved Baba about me. At his request I sent my photo that he planned to show to Baba at that meeting. Jal did see Baba; here is an extract of Jal’s letter to me dated December 31st, 1960:

“I had been to Meherazad recently and saw Baba for a few minutes. Even under restrictions I showed your two letters to Baba which you had sent me and the telegram. He was much pleased to hear about you. Also I produced your photo and He looked at it lovingly. He gestured smilingly that you should not worry the least, and be happy as He knows all about you. He gestured that He will one day call you of His own accord at a proper time after the seclusion is over, shortly. So be happy about it, dear Sharma. You are really fortunate His nazar is on you.”

This letter, sent to me during a time in which correspondence with Beloved Baba was suspended, overwhelmed me with Beloved Baba’s love and grace and the longing to see Him grew all the more. In the meantime the compassionate Beloved sent a circular on November 25th entitled “Meher Baba’s Wish” in which Baba wanted His lovers to repeat any name of God five hundred times a day from December 26th through January 15th while fasting for at least 24 hours. I repeated Baba’s name during this period and fasted for four days while performing official duties and on its conclusion sent the required card to Adi K. Irani with my name and address. And thus another link was established with the Beloved prior to His darshan and during His seclusion.

While in Bhopal for Meher Baba’s Birthday function on 24th and 25th February 1961, it came to my mind that Pukar had said that a birthday greeting telegram could be sent to Baba even during His seclusion. I rushed to the telegraph office and sent the following telegram:

AVATAR MEHER BABA, AHMEDNAGAR BY YOUR MERCY I SURRENDER
MYSELF TO YOU AS BIRTHDAY GREETINGS
SHALIGRAM SHARMA

(Continued on next page)



Shaligram Sharma

Seekers of Love (cont.)

by A.K. Hazra and Keith Gunn

At this mela (fair) and others, I delivered talks on Baba and received the love of His cosmic family. But the more the thirst was quenched, the more it was on the increase. I also feared that He might break His silence and drop His body prior to my turn to take His darshan. This kept me all the more restless.

Ultimately, with His compassionate response to my deep yearning for His darshan, Baba sent the order that I was to resume my normal diet, while assuring me that darshan for me would come soon. Soon the message came that Beloved Baba's darshan would be open for the 15th – 31st May, 1961 with the following restrictions.

1. No one should touch Baba's feet,
2. No one should offer any presents,
3. No one should pose any questions to Him,
4. No one should seek private meetings with Him, and
5. Once a person comes he should not come again, and should stay for at most three days in the Poona area.

Pukar got that circular, and I was at some other place in Hamirpur. He came to me in a very joyous mood, and said, "Oh Sharma, there is very good news for you."

So I said, "Has Baba opened His darshan?"

He said, "Yes" and we embraced each other.

My joy was now beyond limits. A separate message from Eruch was also received, inviting me to take advantage of this opportunity for Baba's darshan. I took fifteen days' leave from my job, and I wrote both to my father at my native village and to my wife at her parents' place to suggest that they attend. Of those I invited, only my father decided to attend. Since he came from my native village, we had to rendezvous, and we arranged that he would meet the train carrying the Hamirpur Baba lovers as it passed through Jhansi.

The evening before the morning when the train carrying us would pass through, my father reached the railway station platform. Immediately he had a problem: he was a very orthodox Brahmin and his practices required that he take bath, worship and then cook his own food. But he also had his possessions with him, and felt he couldn't leave them on the platform unattended while he went to the place set aside for cooking and bathing.

Apparently coincidentally, he encountered another person on the station platform who claimed to be a pilgrim on the way to Baba's darshan in Poona and offered to stand guard so that he could go to the bathroom. This all worked out perfectly, and later the same person offered to guard the luggage while my father slept. When my father awoke, the person who had so helped him was nowhere to be seen, but everything was intact. Hearing this story, we reached the conclusion that my father had already obtained Beloved Baba's darshan and His help.

(Continued on next page)



Shaligram Sharma

Seekers of Love (cont.)

by A.K. Hazra and Keith Gunn

The train reached Poona on 14th May, in time for the start of darshan on 15th, and on the platform we were greeted by Bhausar, one of the close lovers of Meher Baba, with the news that Baba had called the Hamirpur group for a special Darbar [Court of the beloved] on the 14th at 4 PM. We were overjoyed. However, a huge mess developed with our accommodations and our luggage. This was sorted out with the help of K. K. Ramakrishnan of Poona, but I had great difficulties right up to the hour of darshan, and it was raining like anything, and traffic was awful, and I greatly feared that I would not be in a position to appear before the Lord at the appointed time. However, by chance Ramakrishnan and Bhausar and I managed to get a rickshaw and luckily it was still yet five minutes to four when we reached Guruprasad. In the meantime God had inquired, "Have all the persons come?" He was told that almost all the persons had arrived. Just within five minutes of my arrival, exactly at 4, we were asked to come in.

We joined Beloved Baba in a side room of Guruprasad. Baba was sitting on a chair, and a carpet was spread, so I went right up to the corner of the carpet near Baba's feet and sat before His feet. As soon as my eyes fell on him, my mind stopped. I felt extreme joy, peace and a divine, wonderful intoxication.

Baba pointed His finger towards me, so Pukar introduced me, "He's Sharma, Public Prosecutor at Hamirpur."

The next question from Baba was, "Has he started taking cereals [ceased fasting]?"

Pukar said, "Yes Baba, a telegram was sent to him through Adi K. Irani and we persuaded him to start taking cereals."

Baba inquired, "Why did you leave off taking the cereals?" I had no clear memory why I did leave taking the cereals, but this much was there, that I was leading a lonely — almost a half-renounced life, but I was just hesitating as to why Baba put this question. As soon as this hesitation came to my mind, Baba immediately got up and ceased seeking the answer to the question.

Baba told us all, "Now, since there are so many persons here you all come to the hall." Between our Hamirpur group, some Dehra Dun people and some foreigners who had come by then, the room was now no longer sufficient. Moreover Baba was going to hold a Darbar. Baba left the group to enter His private quarters.

Baba had been wearing a sadra for the gathering in the small room, but He put on His pink coat for the Darbar in the main room. When my eyes fell upon him in the large room, His face was very much glorious, loving, charming, as if many times more than the moon, and my mental faculty was stopped and I was feeling extreme joy.

Baba sat on the sofa in the same position in which I had a vision of him in Hamirpur when I first heard His name. Now, the Darbar was truly in session.



Shaligram Sharma

Seekers of Love (cont.)

by A.K. Hazra and Keith Gunn

Baba inquired again about my name and my profession. Then Baba asked, “To which particular village does he belong?” (He asked this, even though Pukar had already announced that I was a public prosecutor in Hamirpur).

Pukar said, “Village Magarpur.”

Now, when Baba asked me what I wanted, in this special setting of his Darbar, immediately the reply came to my mind, referring the contents of the telegramme, “I want to be absolutely true to my surrenderance to Baba.”

In reply to that, Baba responded in Hindi with a phrase that translates to, “No one like that have I met until today. Such a position has come that I feel that I must surrender Myself to the world.”

I took this with a heavy heart, became gloomy, disappointed and silent, since I thought that He didn't accept my attempt to surrender to Him. After a pause, Baba resumed, “Sharmaji, why do you want this? If you are given this, you will become useless for the world.”

I said, “Baba, I don't want the world. I don't want anything, I have seen the world.”

Baba now started explaining the significance of surrenderance. He said, “Do you know the hardships on the path of surrenderance? Imagine a log. If you hollow it out from within, it becomes a drum. You can play a good tune on it. Like that, you have to become empty from inside. Do you know what a stone is like? From head to feet, it has no thinking, and you have to become like that. Do you know, the dust is there on the ground, whether you walk on it or you put it on your forehead, it has no feeling of praise or abuse, nothing. Like that you have to become, so why do you want that? You will become useless for the world.”

He turned to one person present who knew Persian for a quote from Hafiz to the effect of “Ever since my eyes met Him, I became useless for the world.”

I said, “Baba, I don't want anything, I want to become useless for the world.”

Then He said to Pukar, “Where are his children?”

Pukar said, “Baba, he does not have a good, loving family life. His wife lives with his parents and he is living alone.”

Baba inquired, “Is your wife opposed to Baba?”

I said she was not, “but Baba, I invited her and she could not come.” Now see that Baba has remembered our family circumstances, and is determining whether others would be disadvantaged by His accepting my surrenderance.

“Now what do you want about the family and the children?” said Baba. I said that I left all that to Baba.

(Continued on next page)



Shaligram Sharma

Seekers of Love (cont.)

by A.K. Hazra and Keith Gunn

“Now,” Baba said to Pukar, “How is his voice [strictly, the Hindi word used, ‘gala’ means ‘throat’]?”

Pukar said, “Baba he has got a very sweet voice. He sings well.”

So Baba said, “Now ask him to say something, whatever he wants to.” Pukar recollected that I had composed a poem on 21st November 1950 while going to attend Baba’s celebrations at Meherastana, and in the poem there were two lines that translate to:

Oh God, I have been searching and searching for you but I could not find your address. How could I find you since this illusion is surrounding me. Oh God you have given me everything, what else could be given Now take everything from me and make me so that I become only yours.

Pukar suggested that I should sing these lines before Baba. This gave me a shock. I was not thinking that this is the right time to sing lines of poetry, because Baba is deciding my fate, and I was desperately hoping that He would grant me the privilege and power to surrender. I felt that Baba and I were in a conversation about life itself. Immediately Baba raised His hand and said that this was not the time for that, and I agreed.

Now Baba said, “Tell me something that you feel from deep within your heart.”

These words do not suggest that Baba is inviting me to ask for something, but my heart took it that he actually was, and so I said, feeling very pathetic, very emotional, “Oh Baba, if at all you want to give me something, give me total surrenderance to you, the capacity to do it, and your shelter.” When I uttered this sentence, Baba raised his hand with two fingers pointing upward, there was a big clap of thunder, as if canons were exploding, and I saw lightning inside the hall! Pointing with his other hand to the two fingers He had raised, Baba gestured, “Khuda [God] heard your voice and it is granted. This is the proof of it.” My happiness was beyond words.

This was the fulfillment of my life’s longing. My joy knew no bounds. On my very first appearance before the Divine Beloved the unique grace of surrenderance was bestowed on me. I could never imagine what was going to happen to me that day, and on my part I had no gift to offer, not even a flower garland. Still, my entire being, so to say, itself had become a garland for Him, and I must remain full of His gratitude for giving everything I aspired for, from the core of my heart. Rather it was He who prepared me and prompted me to offer myself to Him and His compassionate acceptance of my limited individuality into His unlimited Divinity. These, of course, were the most precious and happy moments of my life and much more than that, as I noted the extreme happiness of Baba Himself to accept the offer of my surrenderance to Him in His surcharged Divine mood.



Shaligram Sharma

Seekers of Love (cont.)

by A.K. Hazra and Keith Gunn

In this happy mood Baba asked Madhusudan to sing one of his ghazals that used to make me weep at the melas. After this song a drama was staged by some small children, and this special Darbar concluded.

The next day, May 15th, was the day of our darshan. On this quite hot day Baba gave me the opportunity to serve Him by fanning His divinely beautiful and delicate body.

Baba permitted us all to embrace Him, and as I approached to touch His holy feet He swiftly held me, lifting my head by placing both of His hands on my cheeks. As soon as His palms touched me I received a shock as if touching a high-voltage electric wire. Baba told me without words or gestures with His eyes on my eyes and without any sound, "Are you happy now?"

I also without words said, "Yes Baba, I am most happy." He gave me five chocolates as prasad.

Baba told all of us, "Those who are present today must leave Poona, but they may come again on 31st May if they wish." It was an exception, since the rule for this darshan was that persons were supposed only to attend for one day and then return to their homes.

So I did go back to Hamirpur, not in a mood to resume my office duties but simply to comply with Beloved Baba's instructions to go back and return. I therefore extended my leave from my office, planning to return to Poona in time for the meeting on the 31st. We --- the Hamirpur attendees granted this second darshan --- wanted to reach Poona by the 30th, but on the way there was a train derailment. The wheels of the railway car in which we were traveling came off the track and it was a miracle that our car did not overturn. Although this stopped us and we could not proceed further on this train, a relief train came up and we proceeded thereby to Poona and reached Poona late at night on the 30th --- far later than we had planned on arriving (a consequence of the train accident). Of course we arrived after the afternoon darshan hours had finished. But the Compassionate Beloved called us specifically at 9 a.m. on May 31st as an exception, saying that it would have been better if we had come the previous day.

When we arrived to see Him on the morning of the 31st, He said, "How did you feel when the train derailed? How are you performing your official duties? Are you doing your duty 100% honestly?"

I said, "No, Baba. So many false cases are coming up before us. It is difficult to discriminate between false cases and correct cases. Justice is therefore sometimes not done." I felt that I could not do my duties honestly.

Baba said, "Do you accept bribes?"



Meher Baba Center of Northern California

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Shaligram Sharma

Seekers of Love (cont.)

by A.K. Hazra and Keith Gunn

I said not . . . “but it is a different thing. The police people come, they try to entertain us, we may take some tea from them without ourselves paying for it. . .” Baba made it clear, He did not care for that. Now Baba gave me certain instructions:

1. Perform your duties 100% honestly.
2. See that the guilty ones are punished and the innocent let off. I explained, “I do not know who is guilty and who is innocent, though I try, but I don’t have the insight.” Baba said, “Don’t worry. When it is time to give you that knowledge, I will give it in a split second. Now do as your heart says.”
3. See Me in everyone, as I am in the judge, in the criminal and all others. Again I said, “Baba, I do try to see you in everyone, but I do not have that sight.” He said, “Don’t worry. When I would like, I would give that sight in a fraction of a second.”
4. Don’t worry, but even if you can’t do that, don’t worry about even your inability not to worry.

These orders were so significant that I am continuing to depend on His mercy to fulfill and follow them in their totality and I seek His mercy to enable me to obey them.



for
Meher Baba

It is an odd fact of our civilization
That people hunger for a lifetime
For simple human warmth,
And yet are afraid to show it,
And suspicious when it is offered

It is a rare person who blossoms
In a natural plenty of warmth and affection.
Most people want it,
Most people look for it,
Most people are deeply touched when they find an honest trace of it,

And yet few people are capable of giving it.
Meher Baba slices perpendicularly through the tangled mass,
And shows a wealth of warm love,
Expressed in simple physical actions
That melt the ice of human inhibition

Like a blow torch.



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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 book case 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

Meher Baba Information

For introductory information about Avatar Meher Baba, e-mail info@MeherBabalInformation.org or write to:

P.O. Box 1101,
Berkeley, CA 94701.

<http://MeherBabalInformation.org>

Meher Baba Center of Northern California

6923 Stockton Avenue
El Cerrito, California 94530
(510) 525-4779

Meher Baba Center of Northern CA website

Meeting schedules can be downloaded in pdf form from website (above).
The center is open for drop-in and book store most Saturdays 1 p.m.–4 p.m.
(check [website](#) for details)

Directions to our Center:

From Highway 80, Interstate 5, going north or south, in El Cerrito, take the Central Avenue exit. Exit 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 on previous page.

More Local Meetings (Continued on next page)



Meher Baba Center of Northern California

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Announcements (cont.)

More Local Meetings

Lafayette – Sunday Afternoons

Monthly meeting at the home of Kirk and Marlene Allen.

Please call to confirm. (925) 284-4066

Sacramento – Several Gatherings Each Month

Times and locations vary.

Contact Marilyn Buehler (916) 812-9496 info@premsay.com

Los Gatos – Sunday Evenings

At the home of Clint Snyder

Call (408) 395-6865

Sonoma County - Arti happens once a month,

Usually the first Sunday. Locations vary.

Call Ellen Van Allen at (707) 528-0357 for specific information.

See more information on the [website](#).

Contact for messages to newsletterwallas: meherbabacenter@gmail.com

To subscribe: click on 'join our mailing list' in the side-bar above