

A Song to Remember

by Herman Alvarado

We commemorate the 45th anniversary of the East-West Gathering with Herman Alvarado's story of a special shipboard experience, which led to his attending the Gathering in November, 1962.

There was a time when only small portable radios were used for listening to all sorts of recreational music while traveling. I carried one I had bought in Japan, and practically everybody in my ship had a transistor radio by his bunk. One night, after a day's work, I was relaxing and getting ready to go to sleep, when I turned the knob for the short-wave. I wanted to listen to the classical music being broadcast by the BBC in London. After a moment, I started hearing a beautiful melody from the opera *Sadko*. The song, whose title was not announced, held me spellbound for a couple of minutes. It was like being transported to another realm, floating in the air with great energy and ecstasy. Only two times before had I had the same emotional experience.

The first time was when I met Meher Baba in San Francisco, California. The second time was when I was with Him again in Myrtle Beach, South Carolina. Why did I have a similar sensation when listening to my radio that night? Could it be that Baba wanted to see me again, or was it just a coincidence? Sometimes coincidences just occur without any special meaning. Other times, they come with a motivating purpose. If Baba wanted to see me, He surely would give me an explicit indication.

Two months later, at a Sufi meeting, Lud Dimpfl told us we were invited to attend the 1962 East-West Gathering in Poona, India. I had loved Baba for a few years, but until that time, my Roman Catholic upbringing made it hard for me to accept Him as the Divine Incarnation, replacing Christ. Not until after I had read His book *God Speaks*, did I begin to understand that there was a way, an inner path of consciousness, where all humans have the potential to merge with God. That meant if I loved Baba, I was loving Christ, and also loving God as well.

My "doubting Thomas" personality started to melt away,

and my love for Baba began to increase. I prayed that if He wished, He would give me the opportunity to see Him. Perhaps the melody on the transistor radio was the encouraging link between me and my Beloved.



Herman (front row, with camera) at the East-West Gathering.

I remembered the first time Baba came to San Francisco in 1956, when I was the first person to meet Him, coming down the ramp in the airport. Joseph Harb, introduced me to Him. Raising His hands, Baba told Joseph that He had known me for a long, long time. Moments later I embraced Him. Later, Don Stevens told me that I almost broke His ribs. I do not recall the force of my embrace, because I was filled with joy. I felt the same joyful entrancement when I heard the melody on my ship.

First, I thought it was just a coincidence, but as time went by, I started to think that maybe Baba was trying to re-direct my attention. Sometimes, coincidences are meant to get your attention. When my ship returned to San Francisco, I went to a music store located in the Mission District. There, a clerk asked me in Spanish, "What can I do for you?" To my embarrassment,

I did not know anything about the name of the melody. I said, "Can I hum a tune to you?" "Go ahead," he said, with a strange look on his face. I started humming part of the tune. "Ahhh," he said, "that is the *Song of India*, by Rimsky Korsakov." "Are you sure? Do you have it?" I asked. "No," he said, "but I can order it for you."

Next week, I came back to pick up a recording of the song played by Arthur Fiedler's orchestra. He also showed me composer Rimsky Korsakov's album. "Do you know," he said, "You have something in common with him?" "Oh no my friend," I said. "He was a great composer who played many instruments as you indicated, and I only play my radio."

He laughed and said, "I meant you both went to sea." "Is that so?" I said. "Yes," he responded. "Before he became a great composer, he spent twelve years of his life in the Navy of the Imperial Czar of Russia. That is when, in a tour around the Orient, he got the inspiration for his exotic compositions."

Hermes - Passings - Shar Wiseman

Lawrence P. "Hermes" Reiter passed away at age 61, on Thursday, Aug. 23, 2007, at his home in Briarcliffe Acres, Myrtle Beach, South Carolina. A heartfelt memorial tribute (excerpted below) is posted online on Kendra Crossen's blog: <http://kendrasnotebook.blogspot.com>.

"On the steamy, rainy afternoon of August 26, a crowd gathered at Jerry Edwards's home in Briarcliffe Acres (next to Meher Center) to celebrate Hermes' life. Hermes was remembered by his friends as a man who devoted his life to "the pursuit of the face of God." As the photographer entrusted by the mandali with the copyright for Baba's photographs, Hermes preserved the precious negatives they gave him and collected many additional ones, making Baba's photos available to Baba-lovers, notably through several stunning and important books: two photo collections, *Love Personified* and *God in Human Form*, and the 20-volume biography of Meher Baba by Bhau Kalchuri, *Lord Meher*, which Hermes painstakingly edited and published (under the imprint MANifestation, Inc.). This was truly an amazing life's work in itself, yet Hermes also published several other major works, including Bhau Kalchuri's *The Nothing and the Everything* and *Avatar of the Age Meher Baba Manifesting*, as well as Bhau's poetry collections *Meher Sarod* and *Meher Roshani*.

"It was not easy to get along with Hermes," John Dietz said, "but he was undeniably in love with the Truth, with the Masters, and with the images of the Masters. They say the eyes are the windows of the soul — in Hermes' case it was his refrigerator door: there was nothing there but pictures of the Master and pictures of his daughter, Mehera, and mementos of his friendships."

Interspersed with stories were songs sung by the inimitable Jerry Edwards, including "The Ancient One Blues," Louis Armstrong's "Wonderful World," and "Saint James Infirmary," the traditional New Orleans funeral song.

The memorial ended with this memorable line tossed off by Jerry: "Put on his marker: 'He was with Baba and he went out cool!'"

A tribute by Sky Wiseman

My beloved wife Sharon "Shar" (Share) Ruth Wiseman passed away peacefully on Monday, July 23 in New Bern, North Carolina. She had numerous complications resulting from bleeding ulcers and a complete loss of circulation in her legs. She battled hard for more than 48 hours before passing away at 3:45 PM eastern time. She was focused on Beloved Avatar Meher Baba silently repeating his name at her last breath.

Shar was the faithful listserv quotewalla for some ten years, intuitively gleaning the Baba literature for just the right daily quote for the listserv and the website avatarmeherbaba.org. She wrote numerous articles and reviews for the *Love Street LampPost* and *Glow International* magazines. She was very quiet and unassuming. She was an inspiration to all, and for me, her husband, the most caring, sweet, kind, loving person I have ever met. She was a fantastic Mom to my daughters Michelle and Katie, as well as her menagerie of dogs, cats, turtles, birds and rabbits. She was a great sister to her four older brothers, and a her mother and father loved her dearly.

How blessed Shar and I have been to spend 12 loving years together as husband and wife growing in love for each other and Beloved Avatar Meher Baba. How deeply grateful I am to Baba for allowing me to be a partner to such a special soul. She is soaring with the Beloved now, and I am so happy for her. I must find a way to move forward day by day to rebuild a life that has been so deeply connected in every way with Shar's life, and our love for each other and Beloved Baba. By Beloved Baba's Grace I will do my best to honor and cherish this precious love. I pray that He allows me to reunite with her in Him in His own time. All my thanks to our Baba family and friends, and the kind citizens of Oriental, North Carolina for the outpouring of love they have showered on Shar and I. And also to the staff of Craven Regional Medical Center for their compassion and valiant attempts to keep Shar with us. We are forever grateful.

A THANK-YOU TO OUR CONTRIBUTORS

Dear Friends of Meher Baba,

Last summer, the board sent out to all Center members and friends an appeal seeking extra funds to cover current expenses. The response, which has helped to bring the Center's budget more nearly into balance, was as follows:

- Three households joined the circle of regular donors, increasing the amount given every month by \$187.00;
- Fifteen contributors made one-time donations totaling \$1,258.00;
- Donations earmarked for the newsletter totalled \$95.00.

Monthly donations currently range from \$10 to \$150 per household.

The Board, joined, we are sure by the rest of the membership, is heartened by your support of the Center. Thank you, all who were able, for putting your money where your hearts are. The prospect of our organization getting out of the red seems closer. In His love, The Board of Directors

C A L E N D A R

PLEASE NOTE: For this quarter, most meetings will be held on Sunday afternoons from 3-5 PM. Directions to our center: From Hwy 80 in El Cerrito, take the Central exit east, toward the hills, cross San Pablo, go under the BART tracks to Richmond Ave. turn left, go a few blocks to Stockton (the first stop light), turn right at Stockton, go a couple of blocks, park on the street. The center is on the left side of the street, 6923 Stockton Ave. El Cerrito, CA. Phone: (510) 525-4779

Saturday, September 15th, 1-4 PM - Bookstore Inventory Clearance Sale!

Our bookstore at the Center in El Cerrito is brimming with Baba books, CDs, DVDs, jewelry, photos, and more. Come get great deals on Baba merchandise, share recommendations others in the community, and help to raise money for the Center. Refreshments will be served. Hosted by Howard Jee.

Sunday, September 23rd, 2-5 PM - An Afternoon with A.K. and Leela Kasthuri at the Stovalls'

A.K. Kasthuri and his wife Leela are visiting from Madras, India. They will share stories from their many years of following Meher Baba. A.K. remembers playing marbles with Baba as a little boy. He is the grandson of Sampath Ayanagar, a devoted disciple of Meher Baba in the 30s and 40s. A.K. would like to "meet and greet" us. Come early to socialize. Please bring refreshments to share. Talk will start at 3 PM. Vern and Annie Stovall live at 869 Appaloosa Drive, Walnut Creek. Call for directions. (925) 938-2126.

Sunday, September 30, 4-7 PM - Sing-along & Potluck

A song-and-story sharing session will be hosted by Ron Greenstein. Stay for a potluck meal afterwards.

October 5th-7th - Meherana New Life Sahavas - No Meeting Scheduled

October 13th-14th - Urban Sahavas with Baidul's Daughter, Sarwar Taraporewala

Sarwar Taraporewala is the daughter of Baidul, one of Baba's most intimate men disciples. Sarwar was born in Yezd, Iran, where she met Baba when barely one year old. Baba called Baidul and his family to Meherabad to live permanently with Him in 1939. They didn't stay long at Meherabad at that time because Baba shifted them all to His Bangalore ashram, then He resumed the Blue Bus Tours in which Sarwar, her mother and sister traveled along as companions to the other women with Baba. Baba saw to Sarwar's upbringing and education along with the other children of

mandali members who lived with Baba. During the New Life, Sarwar received her nursing diploma, according to Baba's wish. Later she married and raised a family in Bombay, always making visits to see Baba at Guruprasad, whenever possible. Sarwar has many precious childhood memories of life with Baba and His mandali. She also recounts fascinating stories about her father, Baidul, Baba's mast-hunter. Sarwar now lives in Kent, England.

Sahavas Details will be sent out via e-mail and posted on our website: www.MeherBabaMeherBaba.org/calendar.

October 20th - No Meeting Scheduled

Sunday, October 28th, 3-5 PM - Spiritual Awakening in Oklahoma

Marilyn Buehler's adventures have led to three sacred places in Oklahoma: the Avatar Meher Baba Heartland Center, a seminary dedicated to interfaith and Esoteric Christian studies, and a Benedictine monastery that embraces interfaith teachings. Marilyn will share photos, stories, and plans for the Heartland Center, as well as thoughts of how the seminary and the monastery reflect Baba's work to bring together "all religions and cults like beads on one string."

Saturday, November 3rd, 6-9 PM - Remembering the East-West Gathering

The East-West Gathering was held at Guruprasad, Poona in 1962, 45 years ago! We will spend this evening reminiscing about this momentous event, when Easterners and Westerners gathered together in an outpouring of love to and from the Beloved. Baba was especially beautiful at this time. We will watch the movie and share poetry, songs and stories. If you were there, please come! Potluck dinner at 6 PM, meeting at 7 PM. Hosted by Sue Jamison.

Sunday, November 11th, 3-5PM - Women's Tea and Ocean Quilt Meeting.

Come enjoy a cup of afternoon tea and talk of Baba, and see the progress on the ocean quilt. Hosted by Janet White. If you cannot come but would like to contribute to the quilt, contact Janet at (510) 843-4417, and she will mail you cloth.

November 17th No Meeting Scheduled

November 22nd-25th Thanksgiving, No Meeting

Save the dates: December 8th and 9th, Urban Sahavas with Jamie Newell and Khaled Al-Faqih

Meher Baba Center of Northern California, Inc.

President, Ron Greenstein; Vice President, Billy Baum; Secretary, Jeff Auen; Treasurer, Cheryl La Rosa Longo

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"Gracias amigo, you have now given me a big encouragement to make a trip to India. The opportunity is in the works." We shook hands and he said "Vaya con Dios," which in Spanish means "Go with God." He probably never knew the intrinsic meaning of his farewell words, but I did.

On November first, 1962, our group boarded a Pan-American Flight to Bombay and attended the week-long Sahavas for Westerners and Easterners in Poona, India. My opportunity had come, and was being fulfilled to my heart's desire. My obvious coincidences had become fact. Throughout the many years since I heard the *Song of India*, sometimes in the silence of my thoughts, the tenuous melody still prevails, accompanied by those remarkable Sahavas memories in the yearning of my soul.

Jai Baba to all. Herman Alvarado

Ongoing Meetings at the Center

2nd and 4th Fridays, 6:30 PM - Just Conversation

A new venue for exploring Baba in our everyday lives - no structure, just conversation. Doors open at 6:30 PM, but get there when you can. Bring pot-luck dinner food. Dates: 9/14, 9/28, 10/12, 10/25, 11/9.

Our New Board Members

Ron Greenstein - President,

Billy Baum - Vice President

Jeff Auen - Secretary

Cheryl Longo Treasurer

Brian Collins - Finance

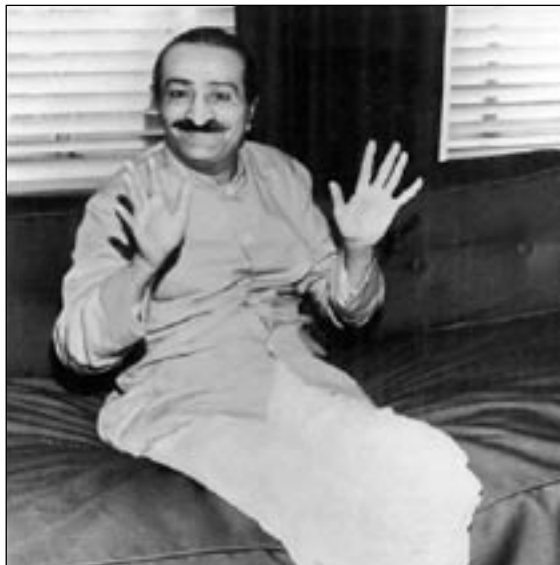
Greg Dunn - Board Communications

Philip Karantzalis - Program Committee

Howard Jee • Janet White

MEHERANA EVENTS

October 5-7, New Life Sahavas with Sarawar Taraporewala and Debbie Nordeen. Info. at www.Meherana.org or call 209 966-5078



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LOCAL MEETINGS

Lafayette - Sunday Afternoons

Monthly meeting at the home of Kirk and Marlene Allen. Please call to confirm. (925)-284-4066.

Los Gatos - Sunday Evenings - 8:00 PM

Arti, singing and readings at the home of Clint and Sharon Snyder. Call them at (408) 395-6865, or Betty Lowman at (650) 323-1900.

Petaluma - Sunday Mornings - 11:00 AM

Arti, readings and fellowship. Contact Hermann Loew at (707) 778-1195. Please call ahead.

Sacramento - Several Gatherings Each Month

Times and locations vary. Contact Mike and Jean Ross, (916) 359-2954 or Cheryl Johnson (559) 312-3751 for details. See more info. on the web: www.garlic.com/~cdjohnso/SacMeherBaba

FOR ADDRESS OR PHONE NUMBER CHANGES:

e-mail: mbe3@sbcglobal.net call: (510) 525-4779
write: MBCNC 6923 Stockton Ave. El Cerrito, CA 94530

To receive e-mail updates from the Center, send an e-mail to: elist@MeherBabaMeherBaba.org

Our Center's Web Site: Program information and more!
www.MeherBabaMeherBaba.org

THE TRUST

All who wish to share in the commitment laid down by Meher Baba through the Trust should contact Jack Mormon, P.O. Box 70383, Richmond, CA 94807-0383.

MEHER BABA INFORMATION

For introductory information about Avatar Meher Baba, e-mail MeherBabal@aol.com, or write to P.O. Box 1101, Berkeley, CA 94701. See our online catalog of books and other materials at www.MeherBabalInformation.org.

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