

Harry Dedolchow, Meher Baba's Sailor Boy

Herman Alvarado has asked us to print the intriguing story of his dear old friend and fellow-sailor, Harry Dedolchow. This story appeared in the November, 2002 Glow International.

Long-lost to the Baba community, Harry Dedolchow was rediscovered by Tom Basora, a dentist from Graeagle, CA. Tom learned from one of his patients that there was a devoted follower of Meher Baba nearing death in the little lumber town of Loyalton, California. In his last days, Harry, who was then called Lance, became a dear friend to Tom and entrusted him with his special Baba archive, including many books, photos and art works of the Beloved, and a silk scarf that had been given to Baba by Mehera and worn by Meher Baba for two hours during Harry's visit to Meherazad in 1959.

Harry was one of Baba's sailor boys. He worked for the merchant marines, and in 1959, when his ship docked in Calcutta, Baba allowed him to visit, even though Baba had stopped giving darshan and had closed correspondence. And though Mehera was still in strict seclusion from men, Baba allowed Harry to meet her.

When Tom asked Harry what was his most memorable event with Baba, he replied slowly, "Baba took me to the garden area. Baba asked Mani to get Mehera and then asked her to leave. Mehera folded her hands and I folded mine. Nothing was said. When I looked at Mehera's eyes, I saw tremendous beauty, huge black eyes — very large. Baba put His right hand on my left shoulder. I think He was trying to prevent me from passing out. I believe He put me under a veil, too. Everything was out of focus. He wanted me to look at Mehera's eyes: first male, very special. She was fourteen or something like that when she went into seclusion. Later Baba said that of all the souls in the world, she is the purest, and that includes perfect masters. She is illuminated, but under a veil. When



Harry with Baba in India, 1959 (from Beloved Archives collection).

we went back to mandali hall, Baba gestured for me to come over. He handed me a scarf. He had it underneath his sadra. Baba said, 'This is from Mehera.' Mehera had given that scarf to Baba and He wore it for two hours. I just repeated "Thank you Baba...." A.C.S Chari, an attorney from Calcutta who had traveled with Harry to Meherazad said, "You are very fortunate, no male has ever seen Mehera physically."

Born of Czechoslovakian parents in Argentina, Harry subsequently immigrated to New York with his family. He left home at an early age and joined the merchant marines, retiring after 30 years. Harry never married and never had children. He learned of Meher Baba in 1955 in San Fran-

cisco, having purchased Jean Adriel's book *Avatar* in a metaphysical bookstore. The store owner referred him to Murshida Ivy Duce to learn more about Baba. He started attending Sufi meetings and befriended Herman Alvarado, Joseph and Kari Harb, Don Stevens and other members of the group.

After leaving the merchant marines, Harry developed aspirations for a Hollywood career and changed his name to Lance Marlowe. Like many such dreams, these did not play out as he had hoped, so he eventually moved to Reno, where he spent many years working at the casinos. His friend Herman Alvarado tried to track him down through the Maritime Workers Union, but could not receive authorization to bypass their privacy restrictions. Twenty-five years from their last contact, and just days before his death, Harry, through Tom Basora and his contacts with Bay Area Baba groups, was able to contact Herman. Harry, in a barely audible voice, called Herman, who immediately made arrangements to visit him.

It was a tearfully joyous reunion after so many years. Harry was in extraordinary pain, yet resisted being taken to the

hospital in Truckee, where his physician had authorized the administration of pain medication. Harry viewed a video that Herman brought of the 1962 East-West Gathering at Guruprasad in India, which showed Harry carrying Meher Baba in his chair. Harry also received from Herman a photograph of that scene, which he later took to the hospital in Truckee.

Meher Baba's sailor boys exchanged remembrances of the Beloved and of their lives together with him. Herman held Harry's hands, looked into his eyes, and said the Prayers. As soon as Tom returned home from Reno after taking Herman to the airport, the pain became too great for Harry, who asked to be taken to the hospital in Truckee, where he spent his final hours. Harry passed on to Baba on October 14, 2002. Neighbors and friends saw him off, and expressed their love and affection for him.

Herman talked about his visit in this letter to Bhau:

Dear Bhau, ...Once upon a time, when we were Sufis, Mommy introduced a friend of mine and shipmate to Murshida Duce. We all had a good relationship and also with Baba. But in the course of time, after we retired, we lost track of each other. He went to another state and completely disappeared from sight. One time, Mani asked me for his address, and I couldn't give her his whereabouts because he also changed his name. And after so many years, I thought he had passed on. Then, all of a sudden, my phone rang last week. And a voice that was barely audible and hard to recognize started to talk to me. It was my old friend Harry Dedolchow. He was hardly alive, with only a few days left to live. I made preparations the next day to go see him in a little desert town 40 miles from Reno, Nevada. The distance is many hours by car — I couldn't drive too long on account of my sciatic nerve pain. It was torture even when I went by airplane. When finally I got to him I found him completely emaciated and in great pain, dying of cirrhosis of the liver. He was asking for a shot of morphine, which his doctor wouldn't give him unless he went to the hospital. He refused to go and the paramedics in the ambulance made him sign a refusal paper.

Fortunately, and with the help of Baba's will, I believe, a recent friend of his, Mr. Tom Basora and I convinced him to be moved to the hospital. I had the opportunity to talk to him about Baba's love for him and also to show him a video tape. When I left him I recited for him the Lord's Prayer and the Prayer of Repentance. Perhaps when you receive this letter, he will have left his body in a more comfortable place. I will keep you informed about what transpires.

Bon voyage sailor boy, hope we will sail again in the ocean of Love, Jai Baba Bhau, Herman

Tom Basora writes:

During my conversation with Carolyn Keiser, a friend of Harry, she narrated some of the tales of Harry's meetings with Meher Baba. Carolyn said "Harry was always a sour person; not a bitter person. Baba deposited so much love

in him; this prevented him from getting mean. Baba told him, "We always get good and bad thoughts in our mind, but do not act on the bad thoughts."

A Baba story that Harry shared with Carolyn: Baba asked Harry in front of others, "When was the last time you had sex?" Harry was so embarrassed that he almost fell through the floor. Harry responded "Two or three months ago." Baba said, "Sex isn't needed." Harry lived the typical seaman's life and frequented the port brothels.

Baba then went on to tell Harry (as recorded by Eruch) "I am the Ocean and everything gets drowned in it. Now that you have come to Me, have no worry. I have forgiven you and you should be happy and not worry about the past. It is because of the mind that you feel worried. As long as the mind continues to play tricks and continues its game, you can have no peace or the happiness you seek.

"Do not be led away by your mind. Thoughts will come and pass away. Mind will wander from one good thought to another, and from one bad, lustful thought to another, but thoughts will not stop unless the mind itself is effaced. There will be good thoughts, elevating thoughts, uplifting thoughts and a moment afterwards, there will be bad thoughts, depressing thoughts and thoughts of desperation dashing you down to earth from the uplifting thoughts.

"So pay no heed to thoughts but pay heed that you do not translate these thoughts of lust into action with anyone, man or woman, and try your best to avoid committing lustful action. I have forgiven you, so be happy now.

"I have told the Easterners and Westerners that they should hold on to My garment firmly, for the time is approaching very fast when the impact of My Word of words will be felt in the hearts of My lovers. I will break my silence soon. The time is at hand.

"There is no need to fast or be on any kind of diet. You can eat meat, fish and eggs. You are free to eat any sort of food. You need not concentrate or meditate on any photo of me. The time will come when you will see me as I really am within your heart, then all your worries will disappear and you will have that Bliss you long for. In short, leave everything to Me and do not worry about anything.

There are many saints all over the place, but I am not a saint and therefore I do not prescribe any spiritual exercises. I am God in human form, and my Grace can give you the experience of the ultimate goal in a flash. My Grace can take you to the goal in a moment and not in stages, therefore it is not necessary for you to meditate or concentrate on any picture of Me. I am the only Master and God, and I want you to think of Me and love Me more, and hold on to My garment as the time for the Word is drawing very near."

Harry would often recount the following event to Carolyn: He was given a short pass to go inland, but only for a few miles. A border guard stopped him and asked him, "Where do you think you're headed?" Harry answered,

C A L E N D A R

Meetings are held Saturday nights at 7:30, unless otherwise specified. Doors open at 7 PM. Directions to the new 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, August 5 - No Meeting

Saturday, August 12, - Alcatraz Avenue Dhuni

Lose a few sanskaras at the first annual Alcatraz Avenue Dhuni! Raine Eastman Gannett will be lighting the fire. Bring an instrument and a snack to share. Starts at 6 PM. Everyone Welcome! 336 Alcatraz Avenue, Oakland, CA. For info. call: 510-547-7826.

August 19 & 20 - Urban Sahavas with Buzz and Wendy Connor

Wendy met Meher Baba in May, 1958 when He visited Meher Center in Myrtle Beach, SC. She also had the great fortune to go the East-West gathering in 1962 to see Him again. Buzz has been playing his songs for Youth Sahavas teens at Myrtle Beach for many years now. They've been asking us to invite him out west.

Saturday, August 19 - We will meet at the El Cerrito Center from 2:00 -7:30 PM. Dinner will be provided.

2:00 - 2:30 Greet our guests

2:30 - 3:45 Wendy's stories of times with Baba

4:00 - 5:00 Movies of Baba and Wendy

5:00 - 6:00 Dinner (provided!)

6:00 - 7:30 Buzz in Concert

Sunday, August 20 - We will meet at the Talbots', 721 Crossbrook Drive, Moraga, 10:30AM - 4 PM. Call (925) 376-4325 for directions. Bring potluck lunch.

10:30 - 11:00 Greet our guests

11:00 - 12:15 Wendy's stories of times with Baba

12:15 - 1:15 Pot-luck lunch

1:15 - 2:45 Buzz in Concert

3:00 - 4:00 Films of Baba and Wendy

Suggested donation: Full weekend (Sat and Sun), \$25 for adults, \$10 for ages 18 to 29. \$40 Maximum per family. Single day (Saturday or Sunday), \$15 for adults \$5 for ages 18 to 29. \$25 Maximum per family.

Saturday, Aug. 26, 7:30 PM - Remembering Eruch

An evening of remembering and sharing about our dear brother and friend. Whether you met him or not, come delight in stories of this dear man, the voice of our Beloved. Doug Ross will host.

Saturday, June 3 - No Meeting

June 10 - 18 - Bhau Kalchuri visits the Bay Area

Sunday, June 25 - Annual Meeting & Celebration

Our Center lease is coming up for renewal soon, and we will be discussing the direction our community should take. Your input is important. Please come and share your perspectives. Schedule is as follows:

11 AM - Arti (to set the tone)

11:30 - 12:30 PM - Potluck Brunch, followed by Open Bookstore Inventory Clearance Super-Sale!

1 PM - Meeting starts

Saturday, July 1 - No Meeting

Sunday, July 9, 1-5 PM - Barbeque & Video at the Stovalls'

We'll have a pot-luck lunch barbeque followed by a video of Bernice Ivory telling her coming-to-Baba story. Grilled meats will be provided. Please bring side dishes or salads. RSVP and directions: (925) 938-2126.

Sunday, July 16 - 3-5 PM - Baba Quotation-Fest

We'll explore the well-known (and not so well-known) quotations of Meher Baba. Covering virtually all topics: animals, agents, miracles, love, spirituality, the Path, and many others. Bring your favorite, most unusual, or most puzzling quotes. Ben Leet will host.

Sunday, July 23, 10 AM - God Speaks Read-a-Thon

Bring a copy of *God Speaks* and a bag lunch to the center, and we will endeavor to read it cover-to-cover, including the supplement! Come put Meher Baba's words in your mouth and see how they taste in your mind. Coordinated by Janet White.

Saturday, July 29, 7:30 PM - Infinite Intelligence

Due to popular demand, we have invited Brian Collins back to talk more about *Infinite Intelligence*. Published in 2005, *Infinite Intelligence* presents material that Meher Baba gave out in the 1920s. It is a masterful explanation of transcendent metaphysical topics.

Meher Baba Center of Northern California, Inc.

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"Meherazad." The border guard responded, "You know your pass is only good for a couple miles inland. I should arrest you for trying to go further." Then the border guard said, "Why do you want to go there?" Harry said, "To see Baba!" The border guard responded emphatically, "Baba! We have thousands of Babas here! Let me see what you have in that satchel. Harry opened the satchel and right on top was Meher Baba's picture. Something about the picture made the border guard dumbstruck. He said, "Just make sure you come back in time to catch your ship." Harry was waved on through.

Harry disappeared into the city one day. Baba asked, "What were you doing?" Harry responded, "I was meditating at the spot where you once sat." Baba said, "Why do you need to go to the spot where I once sat when you have me right here?"

Harry knitted a pink scarf for Meher Baba. With every stitch, he said Baba's name. He got half way through the scarf and discovered that he had dropped a stitch way back at the beginning. He unknotted all the way back to the dropped stitch and started over. He then sent the scarf to Baba as a gift. Harry could tie all kinds of fancy knots; he could do macramé and was wonderful with his hands.

Meher Baba once asked Harry, "Would you lay down in front of an approaching freight train if I asked you to?" Harry said he would. Another time Baba said to Harry, "I want you to drown in Love, in the ocean of my love."

Meher Baba also said to Harry, "Obedience to God comes before love of God."

MEHERANA EVENTS

For information, go to www.Meherana.org or call the Pearsons at 209 966-5078.

May 27-29: Sahavas with Bhau Kalchuri
June 3: Spring Gala Auction Fundraiser with music by Tuck & Patti



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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: amba42@yahoo.com 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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