

Remembering Darwin Shaw

Darwin Shaw went peacefully to beloved Baba on Sunday, October 2, surrounded by his family in Asheville, North Carolina. Darwin and his wife Jeanne first met Baba in New York in 1932, a meeting Darwin described by saying, "As he and I shook hands, we looked into each other's eyes. For me, it was an indescribably glorious moment. This was our first glimpse into the infinite pools of Divine Love that were Meher Baba's eyes. His handshake might have reached down through some two thousand years to clasp mine at that moment. I saw him as the Christ, and no words can adequately describe what poured forth from my heart as I recognized the Beloved — the living Christ. I felt instant rapport with him and experienced a great spiritual upliftment. It was like the fulfillment of an "impossible dream".

Darwin became a tremendous and loving force in spreading Baba's message. Baba told Darwin in the 1930s, "I give you and your work all my blessings." Darwin and Jeanne began holding Baba meetings in their home in upstate New York in the 1930s, something that they continued to do for decades. During the 1940s, Darwin was very involved in the development of the Meher Spiritual Center in Myrtle Beach. The Shaw family spent time with Baba in 1952, 1956, 1958 and 1962. Additionally, Darwin was one of the fortunate men who spent Three Incredible Weeks with Baba in 1954 at Meherabad. As a result of so much deep inner and outer contact with Baba, Darwin also became a much sought-after speaker. Wherever he went there was a rich, palpable feeling of Baba's loving presence all around him. In his last years, Darwin completed his recently published book, entitled, *As Only God Can Love: A Lifetime of Companionship with Meher Baba* (Sheriar Foundation, 2003).



Leatrice and Darwin Shaw

The following are Darwin's words, excerpted from this book, pp. 552-553.

In trying to describe our experiences with Baba, we often tell stories of events that took place in the past, especially so since Baba dropped his physical body. Thus, many listeners are misled into thinking that a personal relationship with Baba the Divine Beloved, cannot have the same quality of intimacy and revelation now that he is not in the physical body with which we identified him. Many bemoan the fact that they missed seeing

him and do not even suspect that a full-force, vital, living relationship with him can and should be a part of their lives right now.

I base my recognition of who Meher Baba is on my personal experiences with him, both at the physical level and at the inner level of the Spirit. During his physical lifetime, Baba repeatedly explained that he was not his physical body, but Infinite Consciousness.

Baba cannot be confined to any limited period of time, nor can he be limited to conditions of having a physical body through which to manifest himself for his Universal Work. It is true that while he was with us, using his physical body as a vehicle to draw us toward him in the Spirit, he was able to reveal so much of himself that we experienced love in extravagant abundance and were astounded. However, that experience did not end, but continues!

When Baba dropped his body, he did not disconnect from this world, but continues to remain conscious of us and to draw us to him on the inner journey to the divine Beloved he always is.

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In one of my first meetings with Baba, he said, “Through love you will see me as I really am.” And in India in 1954 he said, “After I drop my body you will love me more and more and see me as I really am.” Even while he was still in his body, Baba revealed to us some measure of the awesome beauty and sweetness, the unqualified, measureless and timeless nature of his Being of Love.

What is of vital importance for the world to know is that Meher Baba is still completely and continuously accessible; his sweet love is still available to us. It is like a secret treasure: the most valuable and wonderful treasure in creation.

My own experience is that he is as real and as intimately with me now as he was while in the body. In the Master-disciple relationship with him, I am aware of him in the Spirit. Baba himself described this relationship in a cable to me “Those who are united in love are always in spirit and know no separation.”

Since dropping his physical body, he has manifested and continues to manifest his presence and timeless love for us.

(Our thanks to Steve Berry and the L.A. Meher Baba Center. This article was partially excerpted from their Meher Chat web page.)

Mark Keller’s Eulogy for Darwin

I did not know Darwin Shaw well at all, not as a human personality. But I don’t think it’s inappropriate for me to stand here talking about him, because I believe that my experience with him was emblematic of so many peoples’ experiences, whether they knew him better as a man, or not. When Darwin told his tale of Baba, I experienced Baba’s presence in that individual profound, yet sharable way that was uniquely Darwin’s.

And later, upon reflection, I realized that it hadn’t really been Darwin Shaw beaming at me with that ferocious joy; it was Meher Baba, welcoming one more soul that was rightfully, joyously His forever.

It never mattered to me if I ever saw Darwin Shaw again. My meeting with Darwin had not been a meeting between Mark and Darwin, but between Meher Baba and Mark. Darwin knew it, and I knew it. Darwin had given me a glimpse of Baba that would never leave me, and that was all that mattered. He had done his job, and Baba had done His.

Twenty-five years later I did, in fact, meet Darwin again, when his granddaughter Shari and I got married, and he came to Myrtle Beach for our wedding reception. Darwin greeted us outside the Lantern Cabin when we arrived, and, being a mere 90 years old at the time, grabbed my suitcase and carried it into the cabin for me.

When I met Darwin, I knew I had met a friend of God — I had met one of those who are set apart for that special, direct personal relationship with the Divine. And frankly, I was impressed that Baba had friends of this caliber. I knew that Baba saw Darwin individually, fully, perfectly, with absolute love. Darwin didn’t earn this

grace, and he knew it. Remember his description of Baba peering deeper and deeper into his eyes, uncovering layer after layer, finding lovely things, then turning aside, as irrelevant, the not-so-lovely things, until He had struck that core of being where the love had lodged. No one can earn this kind of grace. Darwin Shaw was about the smartest, bravest, most dedicated man I will ever know; but he knew, as we all know, that nothing merits this grace. This is the unmatched, undeserved bounty of Avatar Meher Baba, and when we see a bit of it in one another, or in one as especially graced as Darwin Shaw, we feel humble, and, that rarest of emotions, grateful. We know we are seeing a glimpse of the Divine Beloved, who loves us more than we could ever love ourselves.

Ten days before Darwin passed, I read him a verse from Rumi, that he really liked, and I’d like to share it with you:

Listen, oh you who are like a drop,
Give yourself up without remorse
That in recompense for the drop
You may gain the Ocean.

To whom, indeed, should fortune
Like this befall?
A Sea has become the suitor
For a drop.

In God’s name, in God’s name,
Give a drop and take in return the Sea
Which is full of pearls!

In God’s name, in God’s name,
Do not make any postponement,
For these words come
From the Sea of Grace.

Darwin Shaw made no postponement. He gave himself up without remorse. I entered his room about half an hour after he died. I surveyed the fallen warrior who had given his all for his Master, Commander, Lord and friend. There he was, utterly spent. And I am happy to say to you that as far as I could tell, that man was gone. He was about as gone as gone can be. Darwin Shaw knew where he was going, and who was calling him, and he was absolutely out of there. And for that I say, “Thank you Baba! Thank you for Darwin! Thank you for all of your precious dear ones. And thank you, Baba, above all, for You!”

Photo Credits

Page 1: Darwin and Leatrice, photo by Hana Peterson.

Page 3: Hana, Darwin and Jim, photo by Summer Turner.

Page 5: Ann Conlon, photo by Sheila Krynski.

Hana Peterson's Story of Meeting Darwin and Jeanne Shaw in 1969

In December 1969 I wrote to Box 1101 for information. Dear Rick Chapman took the time to look up my tiny town and let me know that Darwin and Jeanne Shaw lived nearby in Schenectady, New York. I immediately took my parents' car and found their home, a small white wood two-story at the end of a dead-end street. They weren't there, so I left a note, pouring out my heart.

When I got back home, my mother said I had received a call from a Mr. Shaw. I called and Darwin invited me to a meeting on a Saturday night. His gentle voice and manner quickened my being. I imagined Darwin with long grey hair pulled back in a pony tail, wearing a turtle neck and jeans and working as some sort of craftsman. Jeanne would have white hair in a bun and wear a shawl and she would be a potter. Imagine my surprise when Darwin opened the door and I saw him and Jeanne: the essence of normal. There were also five or six elderly ladies already gathered. I felt out of place until Leatrice, Darwin and Jeanne's daughter, beamed at me and said, "Oh look! We're both wearing purple skirts!"

The Shaws' small living room was stuffed with comfortable furniture, little tables with lamps and photos, a hi-fi, bookshelves and a cabinet with Baba treasures, including Baba's sadhra. There were doilies on the couch and chairs and it was just like a grandparent's home, so cozy and comfortable. But normal it wasn't. It was permeated with Divine Force. I sat next to Darwin at that first meeting. As he read from the *Discourses*, I began to feel I was on fire. I felt I couldn't sit still! I wanted to cry out, "I know! I know!" I couldn't believe the ladies sat so quietly. In fact one was asleep, snoring! (Jeanne said it was the only place she could get good rest). Darwin kept turning to look at me with those deep blissful eyes and his radiant chest and electrified breathing. I was in heaven.

Jeanne and Darwin invited me to come back alone a few nights later. Soon after I arrived, we snuggled into their living room and they handed me a Baba button. As soon as I touched it, I had to place it on my forehead. I felt waves of Divine Force circling my head, layer upon layer. They were silent, watching me. "Did Meher Baba touch this?" I asked. They said, "Yes." We sat silently for a long time as Baba's Love grew stronger and stronger. There was nothing but light and love, pulsating, breathing. This is what it was like at the Shaws' — always.

More young people started coming, including my best friend in high school, Virginia, and Ken Lux. The meetings were a lifeline for us. To hear the Truth of Meher Baba's words



Hana and Jim Peterson with Darwin this summer.

and share Baba's Presence with longtime lovers who were living fountains of His Light — what a rare privilege! At the end of the meeting, Darwin would turn the lights off except for a little shell lamp, and we would meditate on Baba, sometimes holding hands. Then Jeanne would serve apple juice and cookies and we chatted. After the blissful meditations, I think our chats helped bring us back to normal so we could drive home safely!

Jeanne and Darwin became my spiritual mother and father. We would meet for lunch or dinner and sometimes they would come to my parents' house to visit or to pick me up for some outing. They loved to drive and picnic in the Adirondack State Park. One favorite place was Lake Lucerne, where Darwin was born. We played Frisbee on the beach and swam. Darwin exercised regularly and stayed in great shape, even ice skating in the winter.

We sometimes visited Leatrice, her husband John and their daughter Shari, who was an angelic two-year old when I met her. One day, as Darwin and a young man were having a very intellectual conversation about God, I noticed Shari on top of a chair, rocking back and forth singing, "Baba says Love! Baba says Kiss!" That was my philosophy too!

It was Jeanne who suggested I call Kitty Davy at Meher Center to see if the Center needed help cleaning cabins, etc. Kitty suggested that what I really wanted, since I was only 18, was to leave my parents. She advised me to stay put and to make the Shaws my Baba family and attend the meetings regularly. She said they were full of Baba's Love.

I finally did move to Myrtle Beach and started volunteering at the Center and was hired as the receptionist at the newly opened Pine Lodge, where guests were received. Darwin didn't think it was time for me to go, but inwardly I knew it was.

I now live in California. This summer I married Jim Peterson, and we honeymooned in Myrtle Beach. While there, we had a wonderful visit with Darwin. Jim reminded Darwin he had given a talk at Jim's home in 1970! Darwin could barely speak but we reminisced about old times and old friends. Mostly we just looked at each other and smiled a lot, sharing Baba's Love, as always. I was so grateful to see him again. Darwin's eyes and his radiance seemed brighter than ever. When saying goodbye I gave him a kiss on his forehead and whispered, "Thank you for everything." I know I spoke for everyone.

C A L 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

Sunday December 4, 2-5 PM - Remembering Darwin Shaw and Ann Conlon - A Tea at Talbots'

We will honor Darwin Shaw and Ann Conlon at the Talbots,' 721 Crossbrook Dr., Moraga Bring tea treats and your stories to share. Call 925-376-1157 for info.

December 10, 7:30 PM - Sai Baba, the Play

Performed at Meherabad last February 25, 2005 this re-enactment of the life of one of Baba's five perfect masters features actors Peter Nordeen and Merwan Luck. Tonight we'll see the video, edited by Hugh MacDonald.

December 18, 2-5 PM - Holiday Social & Shopping

Come celebrate the joyous holiday season with fellow Baba companions in a festive atmosphere. Bring a holiday treat to share. The bookstore will be open to purchase last-minute gifts

December 24 & 31, No Meeting - Happy Holidays

January 7, 7:30 PM - Cindy Lowe in Concert!

E-mailing us from south-of-the-border, Cindy surprised us with an offer to do a concert tonight. What luck! She'll treat us to new songs and old favorites in her powerful, rousing style. Ay Carramba! Don't miss it!

January 14, 7:30 PM - Movie Night

Peter Ravazza will delve into his treasure chest to find a rare film of the God-Man to show tonight.

January 21, 7:30 PM - Meher Baba's Divine Theme

Brian Drygas will lead a discussion of the Divine Theme of Creation. Dust off your *God Speaks*, look up the charts in the back, then bring your questions and insights.

January 28, 7 PM - "Oh, What a Beautiful Morning" Video Premiere at the Masonic Lodge

Duncan Knowles' powerful new video *Oh, What a Beautiful Morning* tells the story of Meher Baba's great work for mankind when He had His "accident" in Prague, Oklahoma on May 24, 1952. Tonight we will premiere the video on a big screen at the Masonic Lodge across from the Center. This 2-hour video

documents the May, 2002 Sahavas honoring the 50th Anniversary of the accident. It includes interviews with Leatrice Shaw Johnston, Charmian Duce Knowles and Esfandiar Vesali, and also gives much historical background: the Cherokee Trail of Tears story and the many "coincidences" and events leading up to Meher Baba's car being in exactly the destined place and time of His crucifixion in the West.

Please be on time, we'll start at 7:15 PM.

Monday, January 30, 9 PM - Observing Amartithi

On Amartithi we remember Meher Baba's departure from His physical body in 1969. We will have readings and a viewing of the interment film, followed by silence from 10:30 to 10:45 PM to coordinate with Baba's lovers observing silence on Meherabad Hill.

February 4, 7:30 PM - Meher Baba Book Club

A new tradition! The first book we will discuss will be *That's How It Was*, Eruch's stories as told in Mandali Hall. If you don't have time to read the book, come and just enjoy hearing others' impressions.

Sunday February 12, 2-5 PM - Create-A-Valentine!

A replay of last year's big-hit party! Materials will be provided. Just bring your inspiration to create home-made Valentines for your Beloved. Great company, and yummys from the coffee shop next-door.

February 18 Special Videos at the Stovalls'

Come join the Stovalls at their home in Walnut Creek. Enjoy precious moments with the mandali from a private video collection. Desserts will be served. Please call (925) 938-2126 for directions.

Sunday, February 26, 12-5 PM - Come One, Come All, and Celebrate the Avatar's's 112th Birthday!!

We'll gather at the Masonic Lodge for the festivities: lunch, entertainment, children's activities, bookstore, music and more. To volunteer to help with this fun event, call Kristi Marshall (925) 352-5156.

**January 28, 7 PM
El Cerrito Masonic Lodge
6922 Stockton Avenue**



**Oh, What a
Beautiful Morning**

Meher Baba Center of Northern California, Inc.

President, Dawn Dolan, *Vice President*, Kristi Marshall, *Secretary*, Fred White, *Treasurer*, Cheryl La Rosa Longo

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Ann Conlon - A Tribute by Liz Sacalis

Ann Conlon was a reporter for a Westchester newspaper in the 1950s. My sister, Virginia (Ginny) Gloor Sadowsky, wrote a column which Ann picked up at Ginny's during the week. One day in 1957 I visited Ginny and met Ann at her house. My sister had been hinting to Ann for months about who Baba was. I blurted out that he was the Christ. Ginny was horrified that Ann, being a good Catholic, would be frightened away. Instead, more shocked than turned off, Ann accepted it!

Ginny, her daughter Dedee, and I went to the Myrtle Beach Sahavas in 1958, but Ann didn't feel she was ready to meet Him yet. During the Sahavas, Ann had an experience about Baba and felt she had to go to the Center. I turned around and went back down with her. Because the Center was closed by then, Kitty Davy had to come stay there too. Kitty was probably the best Baba person for Ann to meet. Ann was snared by Baba.

As time passed Ann and I became good friends. We had many mutual interests such as camping, hiking and nature. We bought 5 acres in the Berkshires in 1960, which we called "Merwan Hill".

We built a small cabin, an outhouse and had a well put in just for weekend camping. Over the years we had Baba people come to visit. Margaret Craske was teaching at Jacob's Pillow in summers. We occasionally picked her up and brought her to the camp for the day. Enid Corfe came up in her Volkswagen camper and stayed for a few days. My sister came up with friends. Teddy Kenyon, who came with us to Myrtle Beach in 1958, and her husband also visited one day.

They were wonderful days full of Baba. We attended the NY Monday Night meetings at Fred and Ella Winterfeldt's. We had get-togethers with Beryl Williams and her sister Bernice Ivory. We were like sponges soaking up Baba stories. It truly was life at its best with Baba at the Center of our focus.

By 1960 Ann was almost beside herself wanting to meet Him. The opportunity came, and I hope you all know of her miraculous trip to India.

Ann and I went to the '62 East-West Gathering together with the NYC Baba group.

There's one word to me that best describes Ann Conlon, she was a person of "Integrity". She continued working at the newspaper and won journalism awards for her wonderful stories. She became an editor of the paper, working to the point of exhaustion at times.



Ann Conlon

When the editor in chief retired, she was next in line for the job. As a woman, she never got equal pay and was told that men had families to support. It made no difference that she was putting one sister through college and supported her mother who was living with her.

They brought in an outsider as the editor-in-chief. That was the final blow. Ann finally quit her job. By then her mother went to live with her married sister and her younger sister finished college and was a nun.

Ann moved to Myrtle Beach sometime in the early 70s and the rest is history.

She will be greatly missed by those who knew her. I'm sure she'd say it was a great Baba ride this time around.

Ed note: Ann described her 1958 "experience" in her online column *Dreams*. All of Ann's columns "All (Baba) Things Considered" are archived at sheriabooks.org

Dreams

I'm one of those people who seldom remember dreams, so my repertoire of dreams about Meher Baba is pretty slim. But they are choice. There were only two of them and they are both, after thirty or more years, as sharp as when they occurred. Actually, they are as sharp as my memories of meeting him. I had the first dream when Meher Baba was in Myrtle Beach in 1958. I hadn't gone to meet him because he said only those who loved him and were willing to obey him should come. I realized I didn't know if I loved anyone, let alone him. One night when I was sound asleep at home, I "awoke" very suddenly to see Baba standing at the foot of my bed, wearing his blue coat, with one hand on his hip and the other on the bedpost. He was smiling and the feeling I got was that he was saying "Well, are you coming or aren't you?" I was so startled that I jumped out of bed. I heard my heels hit the floor so I knew I was awake. And he was still there. Then he was gone and I was so shaken by the experience that I got back into bed and went right back to sleep. But I remembered it all the next morning, and it led to my first visit to the Meher Spiritual Center a few weeks later.

The second dream took place sometime after I had gone to the East-West Gathering but before Baba dropped his body in 1969. Baba had told us to get close to him "now" (1962) because the day was coming when there would be so many people that we wouldn't be able to. In the dream, I was in a huge hall where a great crowd was waiting for Baba to come in and walk down the middle

aisle to the stage. I was stuck standing in a side aisle with hundreds of others, unable to even see Baba as he entered. Suddenly the crowd in my aisle parted and Baba walked toward me. I went down on my knees in front of him and when I looked up at him, his face was a death mask. I awoke very disturbed and it was a long time before I understood that dream, but I have become increasingly grateful for it.

The odd thing is that I've only just realized as I write this that Baba's message was actually the same in both dreams, that he was saying to me "No matter what happens, I will always know where you are, and I will come to you." And he has, whether he has been here physically or not. As he has for all of us. After all, to my knowledge, he has yet to misplace any of his lovers.

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HAPPY TRAILS TO BABA'S FAVORITE TRICK RIDER

Marguerite Poley, who first met Baba in 1956, passed away on November 14 at the Canoga Park, Nursing Home where Bhau Kalchuri had visited her this past summer.

Adele Wolkin writes, "On November 14th at 4:15 PM, Marguerite Poley, one of my greatest, beautiful friends, true sister, "raced off" to her White Horse Avatar, after living triumphantly until 95 years or more.

"Marguerite has been released from the unnatural restraints so alien to her incomparable skills, such as trick rider of circus horses, as well as outstanding, honored protector and "savior" of animals, particularly cats and horses.

"Mehera loved Marguerite's painting of Baba, which still hangs in the Meherazad house where Mehera and Beloved Baba lived."

In loving memory of dear Marguerite, Jai Meher Baba!"

A memorial service for Marguerite will be held January 22 at Meherabode, the Los Angeles Meher Baba Center.



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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 or Jeanette 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/SacMeher Baba

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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