



In Remembrance and Joy

A talk given by Kitty Davy in Spring 1984ⁱ

Dear friends, I would like to express my appreciation and joy in being able to share with many from so far and near in this significant event of 1984, Avatar Meher Baba's fifteenth Amartithi anniversary year. Seeing you all gathered here today, I am reminded of an excerpt of a letter from Mani that was printed recently in the *Meher Baba Washington (D.C.) Gathering Newsletter*. Whilst sitting in Mandali Hall, Mani had a thought which she shared with the group. The excerpt reads as follows:

“Word comes from Baba's world family of the many personal trials and difficulties Baba lovers are facing at this time. When Beloved Baba was physically present with us, He carried the cross of the world's suffering on His shoulders. It's as if when He dropped His body, this cross fell and shattered into thousands of pieces and each of His lovers now carries a little piece of this cross for His sake, and always with His love to uphold it.”

So today we find ourselves gathered together, the pieces as it were, each with his or her own unique connection with Meher Baba—the One whose Amartithi we have so recently observed.

Thinking back on that recent Amartithi celebration, linked so strongly in the minds of many of us and connecting it with Meher Baba's New Life, two words come to mind: Remembrance and

Joy. They have a strong connection, I feel, and bring to the forefront of consciousness something we can share with one another today.

Two words that truly one connects so strongly with Meher Baba, whose message of Love and Truth certainly corresponds with the message Baba came to bring: “I have come not to teach but to awaken,”ⁱⁱ and His words in connection with the Amartithi celebration: “When I drop this body, I shall remain in all who love Me.ⁱⁱⁱ I am the Ancient One. I live eternally in the hearts of each one of you.”

For the mandali, Eruch expressed it thus: “We have not felt that we have lost Baba, but feel His presence with us all the more. May His love be awakened in the hearts of all so that he may reside in them eternally.”

Remembrance and Joy—our theme for today.

To begin with Joy. Although Baba used both the words “joy” and “happy” on occasion, and they are often used interchangeably, I feel they have a slightly different connotation. Joy can be perceived as the epitome of happiness, an experience that touches both the heart and the spirit. In one of the Family Letters, Mani points out that joy and sorrow both reveal glimpses of the poignancy of human experiences. Although joy is often preceded by an element of sorrow or suffering, it frequently results in drawing one closer to God. The dictionary defines “joy” as a forceful, sustained state of happiness that is associated with sharing, self-realization, and high-mindedness—an exultation of the spirit.

These thoughts bring to mind an instance out of the past. I was working on an article on “Consciousness” and, thinking it was finished, I put it aside. But that same night, a question seemed to come from Baba, asking, “Have you forgotten what the Infinite Divine Consciousness is?” And four words kept recurring: Love, Joy, Peace, Happiness.

Yes, joy and happiness. Has it ever occurred to you that amongst the first words Baba used during his life with us as the God-Man were “Don’t worry, be happy”? And these same words were amongst the last words Baba used with His mandali at the time of the dropping of His human form. Was this not something Baba emphasized so strongly for us to recall when He would not be physically present with us?

Baba said in 1968, “I have taken on the form of man to take on the suffering of Man.”^{iv} And He also reminds us: “I am the joy of your heart and the despair of your mind.”^v

Several other passages come to mind on this theme of joy. In the hymn from Handel’s *Messiah*: “Joy to the world! The Lord has come. Let earth receive her King. Let every heart prepare Him room, and heav’n and nature sing...”

From the Book of Psalms: “They that sow in tears shall reap in joy.”^{vi}

From St. John's Gospel before the Crucifixion: "These things that I have spoken unto you, that My joy might remain in you, and that your joy might be full."^{vii}

And later: "And ye now therefore have sorrow; but I will see you again, and your heart shall rejoice, and your joy no man taketh from you."^{viii}

It is interesting to note that although this spirit of joy seemed so evident in Christ's time, it seems generally lacking in the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. Why do I feel this is so? Recently I came across a selection of the best-known poems of that era, entitled *The Family Album of Favorite Poems*, edited by P. Edward Ernst and printed in 1959. Most of the poems seemed to have a somewhat sentimental quality expressed as sorrow, despair, disappointment, or unrequited love, but only very occasionally was there any reference to the words "joyous" or "joyful" or even "joy." This, I feel, reflects an atmosphere of something spiritually lacking in that era—a certain lack of consciousness.

Fortunate indeed are we all now, at the close of the twentieth century. In spite of all its turmoil, conflicts, and suffering, we find that the concept of joy in this great Avataric period seems to have come back into its own with its true focus and spiritual connotation. For example, here is a quotation from a choral work by Gustav Holst with words from Walt Whitman's poem "The Mystic Trumpeter":

Joy! Joy! in freedom, worship, love! Joy in the ecstasy of life!
Enough to merely be!
Enough to breathe!

Joy! Joy! all over Joy!

Are they not suggestive of Baba?

"Joy! Joy! all over Joy!" "Your joy no man taketh from you." And where is this joy? There came back to my memory an occasion in the 1930s when a few of us were sitting with Baba and He spontaneously spelled out on the board: "What do I mean when I say I have come to awaken?" No answer came from us, with our slow thinking, but Baba came forth with His own answer: "I mean the conscious awakening of Myself in each of you." Words that for the next forty years remained dormant within, with little or no consciousness of their import, save for the remembrance that when Baba did leave us, physically speaking, in 1969, He had told us earlier: "In Myself I am free but in you I am bound. But the binding is of My own doing, that I might realize Myself consciously in each one of you."

Baba explains fully that this process of God's awakening within is the goal for each one of us—that of perfect consciousness of His being within. When this consciousness is fully awakened within, then the spirit will make you free, Baba will no longer be bound, and your joy no man taketh from you.

Here we are visibly seeing the very kernel of Baba's work on the personal level to free consciousness of its bindings—a revolution in man's thinking. As Baba told the press in Nasik in 1937, it is the slowest of all revolutions.^{ix} Who could free the consciousness of man to its fullest degree except One whose consciousness itself is infinite and complete. As Jesus said long ago, "Be ye perfect even as I am perfect."^x

Baba warned us: "The wave of destruction must rise still higher, must spread still further. But when, from the depths of his heart, man desires something more lasting than wealth, something more real than material power, the wave will recede. Then peace will come, joy will come, light will come."^{xi}

To turn now to the other word connected with our Beloved—the word "remembrance." Francis Brabazon, in a pamphlet entitled *The Lord Is Our Brother*, tells us: "The Avatar is our eternal Lord and Play-fellow. He loves the play He Himself created; He loves our playing of the roles of this play and He loves playing with us in these roles. When we realize this our fears will vanish and there will be no "Saviour" to see—only our Brother to serve in surrenderance and joy. . . . God as Author of the play is our Father; but God as Avatar is at the same time the Holder of the thread of our lives....^{xii} And the thread of our lives is, quoting Baba: "I am ever conscious that I am in you, while you are never conscious that I am in you. Daily I support you and share your consciousness. Now I want you to uphold Me and share My Consciousness and share it one day with all with whom you work."^{xiii} "I know you are Mine forever, but I want you to make Me yours."^{xiv}

And how can we do this? According to Bal Natu: "One should not shun the world, but makes it spiritual by dedicating one's actions to the Avatar," and by remembering Him. "Thus, one's inward journey"—to be merged in God's eternal presence—"becomes not a matter of mechanical effort, but a natural and spontaneous remembrance of the One whose love makes it easy. Our meditation on Him becomes a delightful companionship with Him, overflowing into praise and gratitude."^{xv}

Another important way to remember Baba is found in His words concerning Meherabad Hill given there during the 1958 Sahavas in India. Baba tells us: "After I drop My body, My physical remains will rest here, and this Hill will become an important place of pilgrimage for the world...While bowing down at the Tomb, I want you all to remember two things: first, to love Me wholeheartedly. Love does not mean just outward expression. You should love in such a way that you forget yourself in Me, the Beloved. If you cannot love Me, I will love you and you will be My beloved. Second, to give happiness to others at the cost of your happiness or comfort."^{xvi}

To help us further retain this spirit of joy and remembrance, Baba, understanding the frailty of human nature, gives us a profound gift, His three beautiful prayers—*The Master's Prayer*, *The Prayer of Repentance*, and *The Beloved God Prayer*. Few things have brought more joy and understanding and remembrance of Baba to me.

I feel these prayers from Baba are comparable in profundity to Leonardo da Vinci's great painting of the Last Supper—that painting being such a vibrant way to remember Jesus Christ, and Meher Baba's prayers being such a vital way to remember Him.

And how indebted we are to Eruch that his misunderstanding of Baba's order to him on one occasion in 1968—to read *The Master's Prayer* faster and faster, which caused Eruch to laugh whilst he was reciting it—later prompted an explanation from Baba, who said: “You're mad! You have no idea what is happening here. To you it seems ridiculous. For me it is no joke, in this state of My health, to participate in this prayer. I have given it to humanity, to posterity, to say it. And, whenever anyone recites it after I pass away, because of My participation now, it will help the one who repeats this prayer. So that's why I want the prayer said; it has nothing to do with your speed or how you read it out, or anything of this sort. All that matters is My having participated in the prayer. So every time anybody repeats the prayer, I am there with him, My presence is there.”^{xvii}

In thinking of the gift of Baba's prayers to us, it occurred to me that whilst Amartithi is the occasion for the world at large, assembling from far and wide to celebrate it in remembrance and joy, Baba also gave us the prayers—thus giving us both a universal observance and a personal, more intimate one.

On the subject of Baba's prayers, Bal Natu talks of the immense importance of our offering *The Master's Prayer* and *The Prayer of Repentance*. He says, “These particular prayers have the unique quality of penetrating dry minds and awakening the wellsprings of love in the heart... Every word in both prayers is imbued with a timeless significance. This is because these words have been charged with the Avataric Consciousness, through the physical presence of the God-Man, Meher Baba. As such, these words can render spiritual help to anyone, on any level of human consciousness. Therefore, offering these prayers should not be treated as a ritual; they are channels of direct communion with the Beloved that will help each one in their journey to Him.”^{xviii}

Bal reminds us of a story that is told about Rabia of Basra, the Muslim saint: “Once a man asked her if God would turn His face to us if we prayed to Him in repentance. Rabia said no. The man was shocked. ‘What? You mean even if we pray in repentance God won't turn His face to us to forgive us?’ Rabia said, ‘God does not turn His face to you to forgive you when you repent. It is because He has already turned to you and forgiven you that your heart has been prompted to repent. The fact that you are impelled to ask for forgiveness indicates that you have already been forgiven.’”

I like what Bal writes: “Remembrance of Baba, the ever-present One, has a unique quality of gracious reciprocity. When we remember Him during the prayers He has given us, we then often find out how, and how much, He remembers us. Especially in times of crisis, when we need His help and even forget to call on Him, His love, His care, His concern for us is there. Truly His love is unconditional.”

Not till this present century was the Avatar able to give to mankind His special message of raising man's consciousness to the level of understanding regarding His truth of Oneness and the consciousness of His abiding Presence within. Although periodically bound through the veil of ignorance, to a few through the ages—the mystics, the saints, and the prophets—glimpses of Truth were revealed. But today, through the Avatar's Presence, it is the masses who are experiencing the Miracle of miracles—the awakening of the heart, wherein God Himself has waited so long to be free and ascend to His own Abode, leaving behind for those to follow a fuller meaning of wholeness and perfection in the great shift of Consciousness towards its goal—Infinite Consciousness, Divine Love. "All other essential qualities," Baba tells us, "will come to the aspirant if he follows faithfully the whisperings of the unerring voice of love that speaks from his own heart, shedding light on the Path."^{xix}

How clearly can one perceive life's purpose in Baba's final statement in the form of a *ghazal* couplet He composed a few days before He dropped His physical form. Baba said, "What will we live for now / that You have left us and gone away?"^{xx}

Recently these words brought back memories of early correspondence with my brother Herbert on the somewhat parallel world conditions during the Advents of both Jesus and Baba, and talking with my friend Richard Blum, this led up to the ideas of what might occur when Baba returns in seven hundred years. I feel like this relates to our theme of Remembrance and Joy.

It is interesting to note that both Jesus and Baba were born in Eastern countries which were suffering the oppression of being colonized by a Western country. In the time of Jesus it was Rome occupying Palestine and making it a part of its empire, and during Baba's advent we witnessed the British occupying India and making it a part of the British Empire. During these times in both Palestine and India there was deep suffering and the desire to become free of the oppression. In Jesus' advent, zealots were seeking to rid Palestine of the Romans, and during Baba's advent there was Gandhi and the independence movement, which was seeking to rid India of the British. This brings with it suffering of two kinds: whilst some suffer in their struggle for freedom from political oppression, others seek a higher freedom—a spiritual freedom. Perhaps it is this longing for spiritual freedom that draws the Avatar to manifest where He takes birth, for He says that He comes where suffering is most acute.

It is also interesting to note that in the end it is the Western countries which originally were the oppressors, which cultivates the manifestation of the Avatar. It was in Rome that Christianity finally flourished, and Baba has said for His advent that America, in spite of its material side, is destined to lead the world spiritually.

So who can say where Baba will be born next advent? Although Baba has told us that in each advent the Avatar has contact with India, perhaps He will be born in a Western country that is being oppressed by a Far Eastern country. Baba has said that in seven hundred years when He comes again, Japan will be in His need and He will need to go there for His work.^{xxi} One can imagine Japan, with its advanced technology, seven hundred years from now dominating parts of the world—perhaps even oppressing America. If that is the case, perhaps Baba will be born

in America and visit and work in Japan. And then Japan would be the site of the flourishing of His future Manifestation.

So in answer to the question, “What will we live for?” we must carry on, each one of us, as we are doing now—in Remembrance and Joy. Remember the universal and personal prayers Baba has left with us. Remember Him constantly with love and hold on to His *daaman*—the Divine Love, His awakened love in us all—till the very end. And praise Him, being mindful that Baba tells us: The ideal prayer is nothing more than the spontaneous praise of His being. You praise Him not in the spirit of bargain but in the spirit of self-forgetfulness^{xxii}—and I would add, joy.

May we never forget to praise Beloved Baba in Remembrance and Joy, and in the spirit that Malcolm Schloss dedicated his poetry:

To
The One Supreme Self
which is in all,
communion with which
alone makes possible
Processionals of Joy.^{xxiii}

And let us now close with a song of praise to Baba written and composed by Bob Holdt, and sung by Jim Meyer, “The Ocean of Love.”^{xxiv}

The Ocean of Love
Lyrics and music by Bob Holdt

I am the Ocean where all have begun
I am Beloved sublime
I am the Ocean where all finally come
I am the one beyond time
Yes, I am the one beyond time

[Chorus]
And I am the one who made Heaven and Earth
Planets and stars up above
I am the treasure of infinite worth
I am the Ocean of Love.

I am the Ocean of limitless joy
Infinite consciousness too
I am the music that never will cloy
I am the Ocean in you
I am the Ocean in you

I am the Ocean of unending peace
Limitless hearing and sight
You from your chains I have come to release
Into the Ocean of light
Into the Ocean of light

I am the Ocean of unbroken calm
Infinite bliss I am too
I've been called Jesus and Buddha and Ram
And now Meher Baba by you
And now Meher Baba by you

For I am the One who made Heaven and Earth
Planets and stars up above
I am the Treasure of Infinite worth
I am the Ocean of Love—
Drown in My Ocean of Love
For I am the Ocean of Love

ⁱ Excerpted from the book *One Fine Thread: Talks on Meher Baba*, by Kitty Davy, An Avatar Meher Baba Trust eBook, Copyright 2014, 2015 Meher Spiritual Center Inc.

ⁱⁱ From "The Universal Message" (1958). In Purdom, *The God-Man*, p. 343.

ⁱⁱⁱ May 20, 1958, in Myrtle Beach, SC. Charles Purdom, "The American Sahavas with Meher Baba," in *The Awakener Magazine*, vol. 5, no. 3 (Special *Sahavas* Issue, 1958), p. 7.

^{iv} *Lord Meher*, online rev. ed., 5381.

^v "I am the joy in your heart and the despair of your mind, for love can attain that which intellect cannot fathom." Cable to Hakumat Rai Kapil of Delhi, February 1, 1966. *Lord Meher*, online rev. ed., 5206.

^{vi} Psalms 126:5, King James Version.

^{vii} John 15:11, King James Version.

^{viii} John 16:22, King James Version.

^{ix} In an interview with the *Evening News of India*, Baba was asked, "Why don't you break your self-imposed silence and preach in the marketplace?" Baba replied, "Every great change must be carefully timed. How else could it be with the greatest revolution in the mind of man?" The interview was given on Christmas 1936 and published on January 7, 1937. *Lord Meher*, online rev. ed., 1759. See also Kitty's "Reminiscences" in *The Awakener Magazine*, vol. 10, no. 2 (Special Nasik Issue 1964), p. 1.

^x Matthew 5:48. The King James Version reads: "Be ye perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect."

^{xi} “The Avatar,” in *Discourses* (6th ed.), vol. 3, p. 16.

^{xii} Francis Brabazon, Address at the Bombay Press Conference, February 25, 1959. Reprinted in “Two Birthday Talks,” *The Awakener Magazine*, vol. 17, no. 1 (1976), p. 21.

^{xiii} From “God Alone Is” (1958), in Purdom, *The God-Man*, p. 344. See also note 27.

^{xiv} *Lord Meher*, online rev. ed., 3469.

^{xv} Bal Natu, *Glimpses of the God-Man, Meher Baba*, vol. 5 (1987): Jan. 1-Mar. 6, 1954, p. 26.

^{xvi} February 1958. *Lord Meher*, online rev. ed., 4334–35.

^{xvii} *The Awakener Magazine*, vol. 19, no. 2 (1981), p. 17.

^{xviii} Bal Natu, *Glimpses of the God-Man, Meher Baba*, vol. 4 (1984): Feb.-Dec. 1953, p. 99, 100.

^{xix} *Listen, Humanity*, p. 186.

^{xx} “During these final months, Baba had also been dictating lines to Bhau to be incorporated into *ghazals*. On the evening of the 29th, he dictated this line in Hindi and told Bhau to write a *ghazal* based on its theme: ‘What will we live for now, when you have gone away?’ Bhau wondered about the line’s meaning. Soon he would understand. This was one of the last lines Baba ever gave him.” (Note reads: “The Hindi is: *Aab jeekar kya karange, jub tumhi chale gaye?* This line and others were incorporated in *ghazals* published in *Meher Roshani* [Meher’s Effulgence].”) *Lord Meher*, online rev. ed., 5395-96.

^{xxi} A Japanese man attending the men’s meeting in India in 1954 invited Baba to visit his homeland. Baba replied, “After seven hundred years, I will come to Japan.” *Lord Meher* 13: 4465. There is no known record of Baba’s saying that in a future advent the Avatar would incarnate in Japan. Baba had stopped in Japan briefly in June 1932 while sailing from Honolulu to Shanghai.

^{xxii} “The idea [prayer to the Lord is nothing more than spontaneous praise of His being. You praise Him, not in the spirit of bargain but in the spirit of self-forgetful appreciation of what He really is.” *Beams from Meher Baba on the Spiritual Panorama*, pp. 74–75.

^{xxiii} Malcolm Schloss, *Processionals of Joy* (Hollywood, CA, 1946), dedication, p. 7.

^{xxiv} “The Ocean of Love: Song of the Divine Beloved,” by Robert A. Holdt. Copyright© by Michelle Holdt.