



## The Ocean of Love

It was the 3rd of June 1996, and my birthday. I woke up in the morning to a beautiful cloudy sky, a cool breeze, and a light but steady drizzle. Greeting calls from family and friends, and messenger boys bearing baskets of fruit and bunches of flowers became the order of the day.

In a happy mood, I took up my pen and began my daily morning communication with Karl. *"Hi mum,"* he said, *"those in the world want to wish you a happy birthday, and so do we. Baba, your mum, dad and sister, your uncle and aunt, both your grannies and grandpas and so many others who all love you from here; all of them want to wish you Mum. Baba especially says, 'Bless you'."*

Grateful for Baba's special blessings and attention, I jokingly asked whether I was going to receive a gift from Karl himself. Hardly had the words been uttered, there was a knock at my door. My servant Ishwar, who normally would never disturb me at prayer time, said in Gujarati, *"Bai, ain koi aapi ne gayoon che"* (Madam, someone came and left this for you). Saying this, he put an envelope on my table and departed. Staring at the blank white envelope, I could not resist interrupting my morning routine by opening it.

I gasped, for out came a big beautiful picture of Meher Baba!

Holding my precious birthday gift close to my heart, I strolled around my new home in Pune. I went into my little garden, resplendent with its hedges of pink and white hibiscus, and sat down on the bench to think about it all. The years had passed by. Everything was different.

I looked at Baba's picture in my hand and wondered what life

had in store for me. At this time, my family was scattered all over the globe. My son Neville and his family in Dubai, my daughter Tina and her family in Mumbai, and my husband, Jimmy, and I, alone in Pune, away from the place we had called home.

Yes, it did feel a bit strange. Was Baba trying to show me something? I had a sneaky feeling that in His own way, He was trying to convince me that a place called home was really nothing but a space between four walls; that home is really where the heart is, and that those whom we dearly love and call family, would always be with us no matter where we lived.

Loosening my strong attachments... is that what He was up to?

However, these thoughts being too much to handle, I got myself busy settling into my new surroundings hoping very hard that whatever it was, I would be able to learn the lessons well and that Baba had a few lovely surprises around the corner for me.

They were not long in coming. The very next morning the words of Karl's new message leapt out of the pages of my *auto writing* book, "*Mummy, I have already given you the greatest gift of love, the gift of Baba. What more can you ask for? No matter where you are, Baba is with you everywhere, and loving Him is all that matters.*"

This made me think and look back at my life. When I was a little girl, I was terrified of losing my parents. I loved them dearly. My prayer to God was that He would always keep them safe. I cried in fear whenever my father had to leave and go anywhere. I prayed that my sisters and I would always be there for each other in spite of our differences, weaknesses and strengths, especially the smallest one who was born a handicapped child. I prayed for my pets.

My prayers were answered.

When I went to school, I wanted to be as pretty as my house captain, as popular as the head girl, and as clever as my neighbour on the next desk. I kept asking God for that. I also prayed to be able to win all the sports events I took part in, and so make my father proud of me. But most of all I prayed at exam time.

My prayers were answered.

I graduated and went to college, when boyfriends were the objects of my earnest supplications to God. I wanted to become a

drama queen. I prayed for popularity, fun at parties, to be allowed late nights, and not to get caught bunking classes. I prayed for a car of my own, so I could zip around like all the whiz kids around me.

My prayers were answered.

I married my childhood sweetheart and became the mother of three lovely children. Although the deliveries were not easy, I prayed my way through all that, constantly asking God to help my babies to grow up strong, healthy and happy. To have all their dreams come true.

My prayers were all answered – till the day Karl had his accident and fell from his horse that April afternoon. Then I prayed as I had never prayed before. I not only prayed, but I begged of God to let him live.

My prayers were not answered. I prayed no more. The door was shut.

It seemed as if we had all moved into a bottomless pit that had no sunshine coming through. It was a time when the family lost all faith in God and in the goodness of the world. As for me, I was miserable and heartbroken; in fact a complete wreck. I struggled to understand why this had happened. What had we done to deserve this? What was God's role in our suffering and why had He decided to take my son away in the prime of his life? What and who was God really? Was He the Zarathustra I had pictured in my young life, dressed in long white robes and finger pointing towards the sky? Was He a man? Was He light? Was He energy? Was He there at all?

This went on for almost four years till Baba entered my life and everything changed. I will never, ever forget that blessed day when I first stepped over the threshold of the *Samadhi* and into Baba's loving care. Life took a different turn, and in spite of the inner conflict of whether Baba was God, I trusted my son's communication with me, and the very fact that Karl said he was with Him, under His care, and considered Him to be his 'Father in Heaven' began to have some meaning for me.

Then every trip to Meherabad, every new person that came, every new experience I went through, made me understand more and more. Whatever came my way, however small, made me realise that everything that had happened – be it a sign, an appearance,

or an incident – had been orchestrated to bring me closer to Him. My constant prayer became, “Let me know the Truth, God, so I do not spend my days blaming You.”

*In His own way Baba answered, “The mind cannot be turned to the Truth by sheer force. In the beginning it has to be coaxed and won over from its usual rambles, just in the same way as it is necessary to coax children in order to induce them to give up their play and take to study. The Master wins over the aspirant to the Truth with infinite dexterity. When the mind is won over to the Truth, all the senses automatically follow.”<sup>1</sup>*

So it has been with me too. Like that child, I have been coaxed by Baba into accepting His Truths.

Somewhere along the line I learned that God is not the creator of our pain and suffering. It is our own *karma*, the fruits of our past actions which automatically and spontaneously – though at times at a sub-conscious level – create such situations to balance out our karmic debts and dues. Hence it is our soul that chooses the experience of having to go through happiness or tragedy, to soar in ecstasy or struggle through a period of horrible pain. And through it all, God’s presence is always at hand to help us, guide us, and lift us out of our self-created maze, if only we care to call out to Him and experience His ever-flowing and unconditional Love for each one of us.

In other words, it is only through experiencing the ups and downs of our karma and the impressions that give rise to it, that we at last arrive at balance. Only when balance is achieved can we become free and know God.

*Baba says in His book, *God Speaks*, “It is only through these diverse opposite impressions and their respective opposite experiences, that the gross-conscious human soul in the gross world could possibly one day, after millions of births and deaths, and through these opposite experiences of births and deaths, be able to balance or thin out the residual or concentrated opposite impressions.”<sup>2</sup>*

Slowly I began to understand the role in our life of such periods of trials and turbulence as a part of growth, a balancing act of the past deeds and a move forward towards the goal.

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As soon as I began to accept all this, I changed. I began to heal. I started to listen to what God had to say, through Karl, through books, through His followers, through people around me. Although most of it went over my head, I guess somewhere along the way, just a little did sink in, then more, and still yet more. It gave me something to think and ponder over, and to know that when the difficult times come, it is then that God steps in to hold our hand to help us get through it all.

God began to be my friend instead of my enemy.

So where was I now?

Yes, Baba's presence was certainly more alive to me since I had relocated to Pune. Unbelievable as it was, I was actually in the very city where Baba had been born. His family home called 'Baba House' on Dastur Meher Road was just around the corner, and by now He was in possession of more than just one corner of my heart. Baba had definitely become more to me than just my constant companion and the centre of my life.

I closed my eyes in gratitude and looked again at the words in my auto writing book. They said, "*Baba is with you everywhere and loving Him is all that matters.*"



Baba's home in Pune.