



Bawa Muhaiyaddeen Fellowship Family Newsletter

"*Tawakkul*, the surrender of everything to the will of God, is man's true wealth. When one gives all responsibility to God, he will receive the greatest wealth of his life.

~ *The Golden Words of a Sufi Sheikh*, #139 - by M.R. Bawa Muhaiyaddeen (Ral.)

Introduction

Dear Brothers and Sisters,

As salaam 'alaikum!

We have a **choice** with **each thought** that comes to us 24/7. The **choice** is to do right or wrong with that thought. Here's what we mean.

Every *Jum'ah* at our school we address the students, "*As salaam 'alaikum!* Oh, you exalted creations of Allah. You are meant to live like a prince or princess with Allah's Qualities...." Last year after that address we held up a vase of flowers in one hand and a trash bag in the other. We told them that with every thought came a **choice**.

The flowers represented Allah's garden of the 99 Qualities which exist in our heart. The trash bag represented the angers, frustrations, anxieties, jealousies, greed, resentments, etc. Either we experience Forgiveness, Helpfulness, Love, Mercy, Patience -- to name a few -- or we get mad or experience much of shaitan's hellishness.

She rolled her eyes at me...he ignored me...she was unfair...why didn't I get the money...I wish I had...." The list of shaitan's responses is endless. But these are hellish thoughts and **we suffer**. We need to drop the trash bag.

On the other hand, when we smile, forgive, give, show patience -- what happens? Allah gives us His gift of blessing! Why do we feel good when we help someone?

Why do we feel good when we do a good job of cleaning up a room or the table in our kitchen? When Allah's Qualities, His Actions are used **we experience Allah**. The 99 Qualities are in the "garden" of our Heart, *Ya Rahim*, *Ya Jabbar* and others. Bawa's explanation for the latter is The Repairer.

The feeling after the act of loving, forgiving or improving is His Blessing, and it's a sign of **His Presence in our Heart**. For years religions talked about the Allah "up there or out there." Yes, but Allah is also Here in our Hearts.

In *Q&A*, Vol. 2, p.10 Bawa says: "Every duty we perform gives us the taste of God, God's happiness, God's beauty, God's bliss. This is the taste of God."

This newsletter edition is to highlight His Presence and Work in our lives.

~ *Humbly submitted, Abdur Rahman*

"God Must Do God's Work, Not Us"

"With every breath we must say to God, 'We do not want God's work. You must do Your work Yourself. Then all the faults and credits from it will be Yours. It is not something of me.' We have to give each one of our breaths into his responsibility and then we can escape. Only then can we see.

"Our entire life and everything that happens to us is conducted by God, not by us. He is the One who carries out everything. He is responsible for both cause and effect.

"Live with the faith that neither your body nor your soul belongs to you. Then God will share whatever suffering comes. Place your trust in God all the time in every moment say, 'O God, this is Your property. Your duty.'

"My children! There is a reason for undertaking this journey. You are in search of something. On the Path to God, there is only one point in life, there is only one thing to search for: the end of illusion, the end of separation--*gnānam*. You must proceed on this journey search for *gnānam*, and you must attain the

liberation of your Soul. Here is something called *gnānam*. If each breath praises God, that is *gnānam*. Accept That. When you think about it, and see it with your Wisdom, then you will say, 'Oh God, Oh my God, all praise belongs to You.' This thought and this intention will go to Him. Each and every word will go to Him. Every word and every breath will praise Him. Each breath will continue to praise Him. How could He leave us and go? How could He be far away from us? When every word is His Word how can He leave us?"

Golden Words of a Sufi Sheikh
by M.R. Bawa Muhaiyaddeen (Ral.)
#567

The sheikh said: These are the prerequisites for one to be a true believer, or *mu'min*, in *Īmān-Islām*. Know them, my son.

1. *Patience*. No matter what one suffers in the world, no matter what difficulties or losses may come, one must have patience.
2. *Sabūr* (Inner patience). One must have forbearance within forbearance at all times.
3. *Shakūr* (Contentment). One must have contentment within contentment under all circumstances.
4. *Al-hamdu lillāh* (All praise is to God). One must accept whatever is given to oneself, praise God, and give Him all responsibility for the profit and loss, happiness and sadness that come at any moment. This is man's most exalted wealth in this world and the next.
5. *Tawakkul-'alallāh* (Trust in God). One must surrender to God whatever will happen at the next moment, and do His duty as a slave within Him.

Know these as the prerequisites of *Īmān-Islām* in your life and you will know the plenitude of praising God for what happens in this moment, and you will have trust in God for what will happen in the next moment. If you acquire this wealth, Allah will conduct your life. Your soul and your body will grow in His protection, and God's wealth will be your wealth and your grace.

GW #314

My son, the human generation consists of seventy-three groups. Three of them say they have the faith, certitude, and determination in God which is known as *īmān*. Of these three groups, the people in one group say they love land, gold, and women—and also God.

Those in the second group, although they have faith in God, place their trust in themselves, their titles, and their own abilities. They praise themselves and always claim that their actions are correct.

Those in the third group lose themselves, forget themselves, and with bowed heads, worship only God. Offering their very heads into His care, they surrender to Him.

Those in the other seventy groups have the appearance and speech of human beings, but their actions do not conform to their words. They may speak of God, but their thoughts, actions, and behavior belong to satan. They perform the four hundred trillion, ten thousand actions of ignorance which are the 'miracles' and actions of animals. Although the human generation is perfectly pure when it emerges from God, the qualities and actions of these people change when they arrive in the school of the world to study. Therefore, they fail to complete their examinations. Although they come to study their history and the history of God, they give up both and concentrate on studying the history of satan. Ultimately they end up in the hell that was given to satan.

Out of the first three groups, the one which worships God in humble homage reaches God directly without having to face questioning or judgment. The other two groups have to face their verdict on Judgment Day. According to that judgment, they will spend some time in heaven and some time in hell.

May you realize this and remain in that one group without ever straying from it. It is the group of the *mu'min*, the group of true believers.

GW #786

God has given you eyes. But do not follow your eyes everywhere they look. Your eyes go in all four directions and collect visions from far away. Stand where you are and assess with your analytic wisdom all that your eyes see. Distinguish right from wrong, take the good things, and discard the bad. You must focus your attention and examine the work your eyes are doing. For if you act according to what your eyes see, you will meet with accidents and your life will end in disaster.

GW #438

A man asked a *gnāni*, "From the time I was born, I searched for God and worshiped Him. Though I searched for such a long time, I did not see God and I do not know how to reach God. What is the reason for this?"

The *gnāni* replied, "What you say is right. A fruit tree growing in the shade of a large tree, such as a

banyan, will not thrive or bear fruit. The shadow of the large tree will cover it, and the roots of the large tree will pull all the growth energy from the ground. The larger tree will draw all the magnetic energy from the rainwater and from the rays of the sun and moon. It will take all the natural energies and leave only what is useless. The smaller tree will be unable to thrive. No matter how much it is watered, it will neither flower nor bear fruit.

“Like that, all the prayers and worship you perform are shaded by the huge tree of mind, desire, and the five elements, which has grown up to the very heaven within you—the heaven in your heart. If you exist under it, no matter how much you pray, worship, and meditate, you will be like a barren tree. Your prayer will not develop, flower, or bear fruit. All the goodness which comes from God will be ruined, and all the good things will be kept from you. You will get only the waste products of the world. Pride, praise, honors, titles, the ‘I’ and ‘you’, religion, and all the things God has discarded will be yours.

“You will not reach Him. The flowers of *gnānam*, of divine wisdom, will not bloom. The fruits of *gnānam* will not ripen. You will not develop or live as a peaceful and tranquil man. Your prayer will remain just as you described it. Think of this.

“Pull out by the roots, cut down, and throw away the tree that has been growing within you, and plant the good tree. That will benefit you. Cut down and throw away everything that grew before. The tree of those things that come from your mind must be uprooted. Then if you plant the tree of prayer, you will receive what you intend. You will receive its fruits, you will receive its light, and you will receive grace.”

GW #967

Realize at every moment, with your *īmān*, that Allah is in front of your very eyes. If you think that Allah is not there, and if you do something that is *harām*, impermissible, that will become the fire in hell that will burn you.

Realize with your wisdom and faith that Allah is listening to your every word and knows your every breath. Speak only what is good and do only what is good. If you pray to God without that faith, hell will follow you, and tomorrow you will be a log of firewood in hell.

Think about this, and whenever you look at something or speak, realize that God is seeing you and hearing you.

The Only One Reality that Exists

“Sulaiha, the Light is within you. If you carry the lantern it will become heavy. If you carry the Light it is easy. The Light is Wisdom ... it is subtle and light. If you do this, then you can travel anywhere, Lightly!”

To know God’s qualities is to know Him intimately. May we all taste the sweetness of this. And may we become the qualities and merge with that One. Ameen.

When compared to the Infinite Wisdom of the Divine, we all are children, little babies. And as is characteristic of children, we lack true wisdom; we are veiled with our ignorance and our ego which loves to put a claim on whatever little knowledge it has.

Thus we may often be caught in pride about the lantern which seemingly occupies our attention more than the light within, which is much subtler and even untouchable. But we can hold the lantern, we can touch it, marvel at its engraving, etc. The parable of the lantern is like our apparent intellectual knowledge, thoughts of our opportunities and our material advantages compared to others. Then what is the best way not to be caught with the lantern-carrying job?

What is the best way to be aware that we are carrying the heavy lantern and learn to focus more on the light rather than the lantern?

And in the sayings and writings of Bawa, the Sufi master was asked,

“Why do all living beings naturally always like happiness? Why do all living beings naturally always dislike unhappiness?”

Bawa shared the following wisdom in this paraphrase of his response:

God is happiness itself, within all lives in the form of His true nature. To know one's true self is to experience this happiness. To know one's natural, divine self is happiness. Know yourself, and you will know God. Sulaiha added that according to Bawa's teaching on the Silent *Zikr* -- *Lā ilāha, illa Allāhu* (silently Remembering God within one's heart with the left and right breath, and with wisdom) -- there, within the subtle breath aligned with concentration and the intention to know GOD, can one access that Light, that *Nūr*, that True Self.

Everything else is just the lantern: the body, the mind, book knowledge, negative emotions, the mental thoughts, regrets, revenge, religions, the desire, the darkness, differences, the *duniya*, the passing dramas of the world -- all this is *Lā ilāha*.

All this is the unreal other than God. So all that remains is *Illa Allāhu*, the Absolute Power and Grace, the Only One Reality that Exists infinitely and eternally.”

~ *Sulaiha Denise Anne Sati*



Listen and Obey

786

I'm with my girlfriend Debbie, who has generously agreed to be my assistant at the Miami International Book Fair and we are sitting on the plane, waiting out on the tarmac for take-off.

Deb's mentally going over her check list and says to me, "Did you bring the Hershey Kisses? Did you remember to put them on Bawa's bed first?" "Yup! I brought them," I answered, "and I remembered to put them on the bed for blessing."

There's a sidebar about the Kisses. You see, Bawa always gave prasad in the form of Hershey Kisses to the children after he spoke. So, sharing the Kisses at public events such as an Expo or a Bawa Book Signing became a ritual. Years ago, at a book signing for Bawa's books, Doreen Virtue, known as the Angel Lady, wandered over to the Bawa Booth and pointing to the bowl of Hershey Kisses, said "You know. There's a shaft of light coming from that bowl on your table." The following year at the book signing, the Kisses were forgotten, and someone frantically ran out

to 7-11 and bought a bag of Kisses to put on the table only to have Ms. Virtue wander over again and pointing to the bowl of unblessed Kisses say, "Take that bowl of darkness off your table!" (There are so many wondrous mysteries around this ant man from the jungles of Sri Lanka! Who would have believed that his magnificent presence extended so powerfully from beyond the grave as to bless the Hershey Kisses decades after his passing?)

Arriving at the Book Fair, Deb and I are more than overwhelmed by the numbers of authors' tents, over 300. "Why are we doing this?" I ask myself. And something inside just says, "Trust me." It's Friday and the alleyways between the tents are teeming with school children, bubbly with laughter and eager to explore the book stalls.

When we arrive at what I thought was to be my tent, I'm shocked that I'm sharing the tent with four other authors. "What! I don't have my own tent like these other authors out here," my mind shrieks! And again, the voice says, "Trust me."

My Readers Magnet team has set up the stall and are ready for me to sign books. There's a wall of my books displayed behind me, and a bowl of peppermints on the table. Pointing to a picture of Bawa that I've brought to display on the table, I ask if I can replace the peppermints with the Hershey Kisses, explaining that they have been blessed by my teacher, the man in the picture. I almost lose it when I realize that I've left the Kisses back at the hotel. God bless John, my team leader, who says, "Oh, but you must have the Kisses! Run back and get them. We'll wait for you!"

Twenty minutes later I'm back, seated at the table and ready to begin. Initially, John was worried that I was taking too long with each person and was concerned because people were walking away, impatient at the wait. "Oh, but I cannot rush this. Bawa never did." Trusting me, John let me have my way so that eventually wait they did -- fanned out around and in front of the table.

Every so often someone in the group asks, "What's this 786 mean that you write at the top of each message?" So, I explain the numerology of *Bismillahirrahmanirraheem*. In the Name of God, the Most Merciful, the Most Compassionate. "Look for it everywhere," I say. "License plates, addresses, phone numbers, wherever! For me when I see it, it's like a reminder that God knows and has my back. Reminds me not to fret, but to trust. Reminds me to hurry slowly and go behind the Master."

For the next two hours, tweens, adolescents, millennials, boomers, octogenarians -- all waited

expectantly in line for the darshan of a signed book, their blessed chocolates, and a hug. And I waited expectantly as well, for the unique expression of love or wisdom that seemed to come through me to each individual in front of me.

By the end, I felt like the Hugging Mother, one girl saying to me, "Where are you from? How do you know to hug both sides.?" And I explain to her that that was Bawa's custom with us. "Renda pakam -- both sides," he always insisted.

I talked to so many high school and college students—most from underprivileged, minority families. We talked about their goals and aspirations, about the challenges they had overcome to reach their current state. I talked with cripples and addicts, lawyers, nurses, and a UN representative. I still have no idea what really happened at the Book Fair, but it wasn't about signing books. People are so starving for confirmation of their own goodness, confirmation that they are unique expressions of God, unbroken and essential to the fabric of life -- confirmation that Goodness is, that God is.

I will always be eternally grateful to the team who helped this happen. Thank you, Debbie, Faith, John, Cathy, Jose Marie, Cherry and Pebbles.

Dana Hayne

The New Digital Fellowship Press

May our father M. R. Bawa Muhaiyaddeen (*Ral.*) always guide the direction of the Fellowship Press. We purchased the new one in December and got it up and running early January.

I met Bawa in November of 1975 in New York City. I immediately moved to Philadelphia after a short trip with Bawa to open the Toronto Branch. On my second day at the Fellowship I ended up helping out in the print shop which is on the same property as where Bawa was living. The next day I was in Bawa's room and he asked me what I was doing, I said, "I am helping in the print shop." He said, "Sherri" ("good" in Tamil). So, from that day on I have been working printing Bawa's books.

Bawa's first two books in America were printed by an outside commercial printer in 1972-73. In 1972 Bawa expressed an interest in establishing an in-house print shop. In 1973 an entire print shop located in upstate New York was for sale. The Fellowship purchased everything for \$2,500. The purchase consisted of two printing presses, cutter, and plate-making equipment. We added a lithographic film camera later.

I arrived on the scene with absolutely no experience except for hand-collating at another spiritual group print shop in Canada. Shortly after I began working in the print shop the head printer quit, which meant the entire process fell into my lap.

Bawa was very supportive and even arranged for me to take some graphic art classes at a printing school in Philadelphia.

In 1975 the name The Fellowship Press was chosen. Through the 1970's we purchased a camera and a folding machine and other equipment with which we printed about eight books, several pamphlets, and other Fellowship-related needs..

The graphic arts industry is always changing and so did the Fellowship Press. Because some of the equipment from the original purchase was not ideal, we replaced the two printing presses, the plate maker, and the folding machine in 1979.

Also, an addition was built into the carriage house and the bindery was added. This completed a total in-house print shop which Bawa wanted. Several bindery machines were purchased and replaced over the years. At this time in 2019 I think the only thing that remains from the original purchase is a four-foot metal ruler.

Bawa said on more than one occasion, "When his children produce or work on his books, their good qualities enter the books and those qualities enter the person who reads the book." That has been the guiding reasoning for the Fellowship Press for over 40 years.

I spent much time learning to repair the 18 pieces of equipment in the print shop and bindery. Bawa actually helped several times by analyzing a problem from his room in Philadelphia or from Sri Lanka by telegram, and by coming to the print shop and having a look when he was in Philadelphia. In 1984 I went to Bawa and said the printing press was broken. I told him from my research what we needed. The very next day our first new printing press was being delivered. Bawa said it would last 12 years. Just short of 12 years we purchased a new two-color press which would make printing easier since it was somewhat automated.

In the early 2,000's the whole printing industry started to change. In 2014 we started to have a hard time locating film and plates, and our press manufacturer was out of business. We were relying on a graveyard of presses in New Jersey for parts. I called the press mechanic very rarely, but when I did he had to drive 200 miles round trip and he was on the clock the whole time.

When the film processor broke down it was actually D.O.A. I went looking for a replacement. No

one was making them and used ones were non-existent. We decided to go digital to move into the 20th century. We spent a month negotiating with three companies and decided on a Canon digital press, over a Ricoh and Konica Minolta.



The foundation of the decision was based on the fact that Bawa wanted to have a print shop, plus the cost to lease, plus output quality -- what fits into our space requirements and our needs.

We sold the old press and we are all on to a new adventure.

You can see Bawa's books displayed and purchase them at <https://www.bmf.org/shop/>

If you are on Facebook you can keep up-to-date with what's being printed by going to Facebook and searching for The Fellowship Press Page.

Anbu, Lou Walter Wilson

More About the Press

Assalaamu 'alaikum Brothers and Sisters,

We have a new state-of-the-art printing press.

There is a history of the Fellowship Press that should be shared -- what is the production work, what does it mean to make the books.

The translating, editing and then book design, cover design, interior design, font selection, etc. and all the arduous pre-production hurdles have to be addressed, and then the book comes to the print shop.

Bawangal (*Ral.*) wanted us to print his books.

Acquiring the printing press was the central focus of Fellowship Press production.

Acquiring bindery equipment was encouraged by Bawangal (*Ral.*) because he wanted us to do everything regarding presenting his words.

Lou worked as a commercial printer before he worked at the Fellowship Press.

Salihu was trained by the last master book binder in Philadelphia (Dick Barnes), and Bawangal's (*Ral.*) hand was in it all.

He wanted the production of the books of his wisdom to be done in-house, by his children. His original preference was for them to be hard-covered because these books contained the wisdom of the ages, and Bawangal (*Ral.*) felt the hardcover books were more permanent and more dignified and appropriate to hold these treasures.

Bawangal told us that what was revealed to us through the wisdom of Muhaiyaddeen (*Ral.*) has never been shared before and will never come again.

Bawangal (*Ral.*) told me that when his children's hands touch the book, the paper, the end sheets, the hardcover binding, then the love they have in their hearts for God and Bawangal (*Ral.*) is infused in the book itself -- and that love acts like a magnet, attracting other hearts who love God and search for the Truth.

He wanted the books to be done the old-fashioned way, hands-on in every stage of the books' production.

We have a new, state-of-the-art printing press now. Lou and Amy worked hard to get the best piece of equipment for our community.

Lou has worked for decades producing hundreds of thousands of books for hundreds of thousands of hearts yearning for the wisdom Bawangal (*Ral.*) brought.

Lou has mastered his meticulous craft and has focused his unique talent in service to our Shaikh and his community. The quality of the printing he produces has been recognized and appreciated by our customers and our membership for decades.

The books are printed, then folded, then collated, then sewn in our Smyth sewer. The Smyth sewer is an integral piece of our book work. This Smyth sewer is what gives our books the ease of opening and adds to the quality our customers and members expect from the Fellowship Press. The fact that we sew all our books distinguishes our product from most all other publishing houses.

After sewing, each book goes into the Nipper which squeezes the air out of the books. Then the books designated for hardcover are cut to size in our cutter, the books designated for paperback are loaded into the perfect binder where they are glued together, and the cover is glued to the signatures. These books are then cut to size and are ready for sale.

Then the books specifically designated for hardcover are cut to size in our cutter. These books are then rounded (by hand), after which the rounded books go into the Backer which gives the book the mushroom shape.

Then the book is ready to be cased-in. This means the sewn signatures are secured into the stamped or glued hard cover, and from there they are placed into the press to ensure the integrity of all the pieces coming together to form the book.

The Fellowship Press is a unique gem, a radiant niche in the world of exalted wisdom.

Each book is a treasure and part of the wonder of this treasure is the love that goes into each book at every stage of production.

The books and the wisdom they contain are alive.

They speak to you at whatever level of wisdom you have attained thus far.

As a child's wisdom grows the book reveals a new level of understanding just for them.

It is the work of Muhaiyaddeen (*Ral.*) to open the wisdom contained within his words for each of us. As we change and grow, the wisdom revealed in the books changes as well; each gets what they need at each moment. The next time you hold one of our books in your hands, remember that each book is filled with a never-ending abundance of wisdom and each book is adorned with love. The work will continue *insha'Allah*, just as Bawangal intended. May Allah continue to bless this work and bless those dear hearts who have devoted their lives to this exalted duty.

~ Muhammad Abdul Lateef (Kelly) Hayden,
Publisher, Fellowship Press

About the Bindery

In 1978, Bawangal (*Ral.*) said a bindery should be added on to where the print shop is now. There was an open porch in front of the carriage house and he wanted it to be enclosed. He actually stopped a storm from coming so that the work could be completed in one day.

After it was all done, Bawangal (*Ral.*) looked in. Sid Cohen was made Supervisor of the bindery in 1978, and together we went looking for the equipment needed. Somehow we met the bookbinder, Dick Barnes, and he helped us locate some other machinery.

We found an original model Smythe book sewing machine in an old bindery business.

Over the years we added all the other machines, which we are using to this day.

Salihu Maschwitz, Book Binder, The Fellowship Press

New Audio/Video System

New A/V system benefits (1)

High-quality sound in all locations:

- Overall, clearer sound reproduction
- More equal distribution of sound in meeting rooms
- Automatic adjustment of too-loud or too-soft audio input
- Better control over microphone-speaker feedback
- More consistent Shoutcast experience

New A/V system benefits (2)

Easier to use with touch panels in each meeting area that will:

- Allow users to easily set up, run and end meetings.
- Automatically set up microphones and adjust speaker volumes for "typical" meetings
- Make it easy to turn Shoutcast on and off
- Make it easy to record meetings
- Significantly reduce the need to interact with A/V equipment

New A/V system benefits (3)

A reliable and future-proof infrastructure and build a digital infrastructure that:

- Reflects current industry standards
- Replaces the aging wiring in all Fellowship buildings
- Accepts a greater variety of A/V inputs and outputs, e.g., laptops and live-streamed video
- Supports future enhancement, e.g., additional meeting areas and integration with a digital library of Bawa's teachings
- Will remain state-of-the-art for the next 20-30 years
- Support for diminished hearing in the main meeting room

We Honor our Authors

We want to honor those Fellowship members who have gone to great lengths to write books about their experiences with Bawa Muhaiyaddeen or with his understanding, and to present a few exemplary quotations.

Mitch Gilbert, *One Light: An Owner's Manual for the Human Being*

"If two violins are tuned exactly alike, and if you pluck a string on one, the vibration of the first violin causes a sympathetic vibration in the other. There will

be no difference between the two....In a similar way, when we are in tune with God, His Vibration and the Vibration of His instrument within our hearts become One Vibration."

Michael Green and Coleman Barks, *The Illuminated Prayer, The Five-Times Prayer of the Sufis as Revealed by Jellaludin Rumi and Bawa Muhaiyaddeen.*

"Dawn prayer comes in the sacred hour before sunrise...the angelic dimension moves into intimate contact with the ordinary world....Keeping this prayer loosens the earthly torpor realm of attachments to form our own bodies, our possessions, our blood ties and lusts. Earth energies are born at the base of the spine. If they remain there we stay fascinated with the things of the world, fearful of change and loss. *Fajr* releases these grasping earth obsessions into the flowing generosity of dawn."

Dana Hayne, *GPS for the Soul*

An autobiographical account of Dana's life, how she met Bawa and what life was like in the Fellowship with him. "I remember one morning waking to one of Bawa's spontaneous explosions of song. 'Wake up! Wake up! Listen to the birds. Hear how they sing in praise of their Creator. Wake like these little birds and praise your Lord!'"

Art Hochberg, *Life With the Guru*

"The Mosque opened in Philadelphia....Not everybody was happy with that decision. Some people said, 'Why are we going to do these kinds of prayers?' Bawa answered, 'When you do these prayers, it's not like religion. For my children it means something else.' So right from the beginning, the Mosque turned out to be a kind of mystical place for me, especially the first three days after the mosque was built."

Maryam Kabeer Faye, *Journey Through Ten Thousand Veils*

"Then, suddenly, about a month and a half after I had arrived at the Fellowship, the Sheikh called me into his room. He said that since I knew some Arabic, he would like me to edit a book that he had dictated in the sixties...would like me to go to Sri Lanka too and work on the book with him there. As he placed his book in my hand, entrusting it to me, he said, 'Every word has seventy thousand meanings. If you change any one of them, the blood will be on your hands.' How staggering and impossible a task."

Musa Muhaiyaddeen (Manny Levin), *The Elixir of Truth: Journey on the Sufi Path*

"Some people of wisdom...[are] sons of the moment, because they live in this instant, they are grateful for this instant...no place for fear which is attached to the future....By not living in the moment...we live in illusion, we live in our mind....As long as we live in the movie of our life instead of the moment of happening life, we are not connected to the reality of the present moment....We do not live in the past nor future, we exist now,,we are sustained by Him now." (There is also a Volume 1 and a Volume 2.)

Karin Marcus, *Birding Through Cancer*

"This is the story of a deeply personal journey through a frightening illness and of eventually regaining a vibrant life....When Bawa entered his room (in Sri Lanka) he found that a sparrow had built a nest right behind his bed....Immediately Bawa sprang into action, 'Bring me some wood and a saw, some nails and a hammer.' And he went to work building a bird house....[He] turned to the sparrow nestled behind the photograph. 'This is not a proper place for you to live. I have built you a new home and you should build your nest there.' And so it did!"

Sharon Marcus, *My Years With the Qutb: A Walk in Paradise*

"The Fellowship became my universe and my university. Everything I had learned before had to be thrown away. I had to start with an empty cup so that Bawa could fill it with the things of wisdom, the things of *īmān*, the things that would shut the door on the dunya, the world, on illusion, on duality....One of the things about the Fellowship which I found so amazing, almost disconcerting, in those days was that everyone was always talking hotly about God. His name was on the lips ready to drop into the most casual references, and in fact, it seemed to me...there was no chitchat, no idle, purposeless conversation."

Locke Rush, *Finding the Way Home*

"I asked Bawa to show me how to practice the *Zikr*....Bawa looked at me intently, 'What I am giving you is not a mantra or a secret....It is the word of God, which God himself recites. It is a powerful thing. You must store it in a safe place....You must preserve it within the qualities of God...say, *La ilāha, Ill-Allahu*....When you say *La ilāha*, breathe out with the left nostril. Then, as you say *Ill-Allahu*, just twinkle the right eye a little as you focus there and draw in the light through the right nostril....Keep saying it....At some stage it will resonate with that sound....As you say *La ilāha*, the awareness will come in through your feet and travel up to your head, and from your head it comes down and out through the left nostril, *Ill-Allah*."

(Locke has also written *The True Marriage* and a forthcoming book of poems, *Heart Whispers*.)

Lou Walter Wilson, *Mazār of Shaikh M.R. Bawa Muhaiyaddeen: Photos from the Early 1980's to 2016 M.R. Bawa Muhaiyaddeen's Northern Sri Lanka: A Photo Journey 2004-2016*.

Julie Schelling, *Invitation to Believe*:

An inspiring account of how Julie overcame the challenges of a chronic pain condition and established real faith. "Every time you chase away a thought of negativity and replace it with a positive one, another karmic stick or rock is removed from your land....Whatever happens in your life, if you can surrender your negative thoughts and conclusions and hand them over to God, more and more work will be done on your land."

Children's Meetings

Every Saturday morning at 10 a.m. a CHILDREN'S MEETING takes place at the Fellowship.

This has been ongoing since our beloved Bawa (*Ral.*) requested us to do so.

Now, so very many years later, a new generation has been smoothly transitioning into leading the meetings and preparing lunch for everyone there.

The little ones of yesteryear are now adults and at the helm passing on the sustenance they were given as children by their father, Bawa Muhaiyaddeen (*Ral.*) They are sharing his books, stories, songs, anecdotes, and their own intimate stories of growing up under the umbrella of their father Bawa Muhaiyaddeen's presence and teachings, and how it has been and continues to be the guidepost for their lives to this very day.

It is a beautiful example of how the baton is being passed to the next generation and how they are taking hold of it so dutifully and wholeheartedly.

Alhamdulillah!



Bawa's Precious Little Gems

There is so much that Bawa's (*Ral.*) grandchildren are involved in at the Fellowship that many of us may or may not be aware of. So for all those parents, aunts, uncles out there, we thought it might be nice to mention just a few.

At 10 - 11 a.m. every Saturday morning there is a Children's Meeting. There are readings from our beloved Bawa (*Ral.*) and plenty of sharing by the young children. Often a craft will follow having to do with points gleaned from the stories.

These meetings are hosted by young parents, old parents, and various aunts and uncles on a rotational basis.

Lunch is graciously offered after each meeting as well. All are invited to attend.

Other activities the children participate in at the Fellowship consist of:

- Cleaning the meeting room and mosque
- Cooking breakfast at *zikh*
- Cooking for *Jum'ah* (the summer months).
- Participating in the mauloods with various tasks
- Helping in the Print shop and Office
- Gardening
- Fundraising
- Supervised counting of charity tin monies
- Fellowship Farm work
- Arabic classes

To add your name to the Fellowship Families and Kids email list to hear about upcoming events, please contact:

Chloe Posner: chloelepichon@yahoo.com

47th Anniversary Weekend

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At the 47th Anniversary Celebration of the arrival of our Sheikh M.R. Bawa Muhaiyaddeen in the U.S., the Fellowship family gathered to explore something central to everything he taught us: "Joy and Sorrow." We were graced with sharings of special depth and poignancy, many touching on experiences with difficult challenges and profound lessons. All meetings were played on Shoutcast with video livestreaming.

Friday 7:00 p.m.

Musa Muhaiyaddeen (Manny Levin) welcomed us by honoring the memory of Sonia and Secretary Carolyn, who had played a major part in the celebrations for so long and whose sweetness still resides in us.

He then introduced the new Executive Secretary, **Fakhrurdeen Markar**, who reminded us that everything manifested or created by Allah has an end. Everything we create will be destroyed. God alone is permanent and will remain. Bawa told Carolyn to protect the teachings and the mosque, to provide for the work to be carried on. He promised he'd come and take her to the place of eternal sustenance.

Fakhrurdeen continued: Bawa spoke of how that level of clarity hasn't come in 200 million years. It came as revelation, and he gave it a form. He entrusted it to us with his clarity and divine teachings. In his discourse of 6/9/80 he said, I have brought you forth from my inner heart and am raising you. The Fellowship is really everywhere, in the universes and all the creation, but he formed the Fellowship to be our gathering place where all have the same goal, and the goodness in one can erase the badness in another. He asked the leadership to bring everyone together once a year to show unity and oneness, and increase the light of blissful awareness in such a way that it will be remembered in future times. He wanted us to come and interact. Everyone on Shoutcast who can make it here, come so you can get some blissful awareness from the interaction.

A tape from the 1979 Anniversary was introduced, which began mid-stream with Carolyn telling the story of her first experience. Mitch spoke on the beginnings of the Fellowship, followed by Sonia reminding us about the wisdom that is to be sought above all things.

Musa Muhaiyaddeen then commented: When you hear this, you realize that's what happened to you. All of us went through that. We were put in a space where truth could be brought to the questions we were encountering. This was not just my experience but everyone's – the love of God that transcended the love in the world was given freely to all who came, and all were given the same thing. We received the love, the wisdom, and the instruction to allow us to give the love, to open up so the truth could enter into us. He not only spoke, but showed how to implement these things in order to be able to love. Our obligation is to treat anyone who comes in as we would, to give the best. If we can't be free to love, we're not free to be loved.

It's reciprocal – we have to become soft; we can't be hard about it. It splits the rocky mountain of the heart. It's the heat without rancor or jealousy that doesn't resist but welcomes. We become privy to understanding wisdom, the truth. Then, as we are able to love more and more, we don't see differences – we see people's insides, the soul in them, and love it because it came from God. And so we become more God-like, closer to the truth. All in the world is false,

and all we desire now are the veils that keep us from the truth.

If Bawa was given anything he gave it away – he didn't need it. Our needs are what keep us from becoming exalted. If we relieve ourselves of them we become closer to God.

We have an obligation to help spread this to the entire world, so the whole world is turned on to the truth of the love he gave – the knowledge of how to become lovers and spread that truth. His one purpose was to bring us closer to the state where he was: "Become like me."

Each of us has to have the respect for others – that it can happen in you. There is no "special." On the Day of Judgment it will not matter that you are the daughter of the Prophet (*Sal.*). May that justice reign, become what we strive for and attain. May all of Bawa's intentions for us be fulfilled.

Friday 8:30 p.m.

Carl Marcus opened by saying, "My only prayer is that we all live inside his heart." **Dr. Ganesan** followed, noting that joy and sorrow are two sides of the same coin. Like a sine wave, the upside and the downside are equal. We hear of movie stars doing drugs, etc., even committing suicide. What we want, finally, is a straight line – no joy, no sorrow, but a state of God. Bawa spoke of a cooking pot which doesn't taste the curry -- just does its duty, as God does. When we take up a duty we should say, "Oh God, you must do this."

Dr. G. then told a story about the time when he used to deliver babies. Antibiotics given for a Caesarian birth didn't work, and there was a fatal infection which affected his standing in the community. Bawa asked, "What's wrong?" He reminded Dr. G. that it's God's power that does the work of bringing stitches together, and 98% of the time it works. If it goes bad one time, you have to bear it. Learn to pass it on to Allah – then you are free of the joy and sorrow.

Carl: Bawa gave us instructions on how to do a meeting. We must say, "Oh God, this is Your work, You have to come and fill them I don't want the praise or the blame."

Bawa showed us he knew what we were doing, and that could be frightening or wonderful — imagine that God knows all that goes on in us, while we're mostly hidden from ourselves. But on this path we have to look, and be okay with seeing what's there. The video that follows is about the fear of God. Knowing what we know, what can we do but seek to be His servant

and praise Him? I like it, that He always knows what's going on inside me.

Bawa said there are people who go in prayer and never rise up. We have to be in that state of prayer with surrender – have not two lives, but one life. The life is in God's breath, love, and sustenance. Jung said, "Bidden or not, God comes." But we do have to ask, invoke, so there's no difference between our inside and outside in how we think and act.

I love reading Bawa's words. I know I'm reading the truth, so I do it with a full heart. (Reading: *To Die Before Death*, p. 179, followed by two videos).

Saturday 9:30 a.m. – Children's Meeting

From leader **Ayesha Weinberg**: We began the meeting reciting the 99 names of the Qutub (*Ral.*). Jeanne Hockenberry recited the Arabic and I read the English meaning. Then I introduced the theme of the weekend, Joy and Sorrow. I talked about the witness, after which the children shared what they thought the witness was. I read a paragraph from *The Resonance of Allah* which describes the witness as one that exists within us and is beyond the experience of happiness and sorrow. Three real life examples that showed happiness and sorrow were given, and then wisdom quotes from Bawa (*Ral.*) were read regarding those. *Alhamdulillah.*

The really fun thing we did with the children was to ask them to write on paper an experience that made them really happy and an experience that made them really sad. Those were the real life examples that we then addressed with quotes. It was really great the way the children shared and got the point of happiness and sadness being the same, and how we have to use the witness to stand outside of it.

Saturday 10:30 a.m. – Business Meeting

Fakhrurdeen Markar: The mission of the Fellowship is to protect Bawa's teachings and provide for the work to be carried on. Donations help us do this. The various funds are: **Audio**, headed by Hussein Bibi Bivins and Aisha Stern; the **Branch Council** headed by Patrick (which has long had a deficit); the **Mosque** (with a positive balance); the **Cemetery**; the **house next door**; the **Farm** (this fund has grown); the **General Fund** (mostly salaries and office expenses); the **Sri Lankans' Fund** (insurance, etc., currently at a deficit); the **Kitchen Fund** (we recently put in new ovens and ceiling tiles, and refurbished the whole kitchen). **Publishing**, headed by Kelly Hayden, includes the bookstore but is mostly conducted online. In addition to some reprints, *Gnana Oli Mali* will be out this year. The **House Fund** covers maintenance, utilities, supplies, safety, sewer and gutter, snow

removal, etc. Donations are currently needed to repave the parking lot. The **Land Fund**, headed by Musa Levin, is for land development. We got final approval for 23 houses with others pending. Estimates for roads and parking lots are in process, and we hope to break ground in the summer of next year.

Ahamed Muhaiyaddeen: You can't put a value on transforming people's lives. I go around the world and see the impact. There's a disconnect between value and numbers.

Fakhrurdeen: Other funds are: the **Reserve Fund** (tin collection, donations, endowment; this could provide food and basic needs at a future time of disaster); the *Mazār* (donations); **Archives** (Herbert has three more years of work to do to complete the process); and **Video**. **Jim Schardt** reported that the video of the month has been replaced by video-on-demand streaming, for which you can sign up online. For a fee you can rent over 70 different videos as often as you want, and a digital library is being planned.

In addition, restoration is being done on artwork by artists who worked with Bawa. Denise Sati has made a 5-minute video of these for YouTube. An upgrade to book publishing is being planned [now complete; see articles].

Jim Schardt described a large-scale project now underway to upgrade the audiovisual system, for which the full cost has been covered. (Bawa said, "If you're going to do a project, get the funds first.") It will have high-quality sound, be easy to use, be reliable and "future-proof," have digital signals, and allow for expansion [see page 7 for details]. **Carl Marcus** added that we will have better balance between Bawa and translators in audio recordings due to controls in the new system. Balancing video would be less practicable because synchronization would be too time-consuming. **Michael King** mentioned possible subtitles, though these would also take much time. Lighting will be changed to preserve art work.

We need to get more young people volunteering. Also, you can help the Fellowship by donating through Amazon Smile. Just go to <https://smile/Amazon.com> to order.

Saturday afternoon

In keeping with our annual tradition, a glorious variety of offerings were to be found outside – Bawa's books and media, the Maya Bazaar, a choice of delicious foods and drinks, clothing, jewelry, pictures, local honey, herbal products, plants, crafts, farm produce, and more.

This year's theatrical production was a series of three short plays based on Bawa's stories: "How to Build a Bridge to God," "The Man Who Argued with God," and "The Fox and the Cats in the King's Kitchen." The excellent cast included Jeff Sheard, Maryam Kabeer, Issa Kabeer, Jehan Morsi, Betsy Sheard, Sam Sheard, Moin and Misbah Shaikh, Kaoutar Salhi, and Fatimah Rouine. Co-directors were Sandy Ostrander, Beth Sheard, and Issa Kabeer. Jeff, Sandy and Myra Diaz made the scenery. Music was by Patrick Andrews and video by David Wadsworth.



Charismatic auctioneer Peter Lalor again did an outstanding job of turning donations into revenue for the General Fund. Auction organizer Ann Williams reports that \$12,300 was brought in from the regular proceedings, plus another \$3,045 from Jacob Hurwitz' table which sold quality products from his company, for a total of \$15,345. This was a slight improvement over last year. Next year the auction will be upgraded with a separate checking account, a spreadsheet program, a cellphone scanner, and a silent auction for at least one of the two days.

Saturday 7:00 p.m.

Ahamed Muhaiyaddeen (Jonathan Granoff):

Bawa once reflected on who could put the weight in and do the work, and named Manny. It was about doing duty in the moment, without the joy and sorrow, working from the purity of the heart. Sonia had a father like that, Max, who was deeply concerned about the welfare of others and told Bawa he was adopting him as his father. In a letter on the death of her mother, Bawa told her that all created beings belong to Him and she shouldn't be sad. God, the owner, is responsible for harvesting the crops that have grown on His farm. In this past year, we've lost three of our mothers, and remembering Bawa's words gives comfort and peace of mind.

Compassion is God in action. It's not just that we feel the sorrow of others and that's liberating. It creates a space where you know someone knows. This wasn't a

burden for Bawa -- he kept expanding the space. (Reading: Letter to Sonia, 11/20/77)

Beyond joy and sorrow: Bawa knew the state of awakening as bliss. It's an effulgence, but only a small segment is what we know. To get in that open space where you're free enough to accept it is a big deal.

Ahamed Muhaiyaddeen then related a story from 1974 in Sri Lanka in which Bawa castigated him for being arrogant and useless, saying he wasn't happy with his progress. Ahamed was about to say there was no point in his being here and he was going home, when Bawa suddenly lavished praise on him for having much wisdom, and told him to share the truth he knew that night. Another such incident had to do with being criticized for cutting potatoes and onions wrong. Ahamed decided he was doing the best he could and didn't care. Whether there was praise or blame, it was good; he didn't come there to learn to cook potatoes. He learned not to focus on externalities; if he was governed by praise and sorrow, the potato was inside him and he was it.

We have a choice: we can focus on Grace ("Spirituality 101"), or Loss, reasons to forget about it ("Spirituality 102"). If we seek grace by making the choice to exercise patience, forgiveness, and tolerance, we have to rely on Him, that nurturing power. We can't get it by focusing on joy or sorrow, praise or blame. We always have the choice to respond to any of the reasons to be "pissed off," but when we realize we have control over our inner state and get empowered, things change. Things don't happen the way we think, and we know it.

A book of Bawa's letters is in progress and will be out by next year, *insha 'Allah*.

Andrew Savinson then spoke about how Bawa gave us the example of the immanence, the saturation of God within us. We sat with the presence of God -- not the visions, but the thing that's seeing. We come not to project, but to be initiated and saturated within ourselves.

Andrew once asked Sonia why she was going on Umra. She answered that when she saw in herself that which didn't want to go, she knew she had to. The battle was inside herself. It's a tribulation, and not easy. She had health issues but refused a wheelchair. With no assistance, she went between the two hills faster than anyone else.

We remember the mothers who died this year, and Rajees. God is carrying us. May we be in that grace.

Saturday 8:30 p.m.

Muhammad Razaq: Joy and sorrow are two illusory things generated by the mind; they don't have to do with the rūh of the human soul. We see things as our possessions which are just conveniences at a certain time that we have to lose. Only Allah is permanent. We feel elation when we think we're going to Paradise, and sad when we don't think we have a chance. But everyone has a chance -- we can pray, "My mercy will overcome my wrath." Our *nafs*, our greed, attachment to the creations of Allah, peer pressure, etc. -- these things cause difficulty. When the *nafs* are triumphant we declare a temporary victory as we gather the fruits. When they fail, we declare a state of disaster. As Bawa taught us, they're two sides of the same thing.

The rūh has to do with *sakena* (tranquility), *salāms* (peace), and *riddah* (contentment). We have to understand everything is under the decree of Allah, whether it appears to our limited senses to be good or bad. Whether we have a full plate or not, finding fault will bring a state of unhappiness. God created everything for a purpose, even the "devils" in time of trouble. We mustn't be attached to getting or losing anything. Even the desire to reach God as something we have to attain can be problematic and attached to the *nafs*.

(Readings from the Qur'an and *The Guidebook 1*).

In introducing the video, the imam noted that Bawa never laughed aloud, since it would show too much pleasure in things in the world. In the video (6/15/80), Bawa was not smiling but nevertheless put us in a state of peace, contentment and tranquility. He spoke of how we can address these things, what it is that we need to avoid joy and sorrow.

Closing prayer: Give us the strength to face these things, so we can have that unity and be brothers and sisters in this world and the next.

Sunday 10:00 a.m.

Fakhrurdeen Markar: Last year, Carolyn Secretary conducted this meeting. Everything created from God has an end. Everything we create will be destroyed. Only God is permanent.

The theme is Joy and Sorrow. In a 1978 discourse, Bawa starts by explaining that joy and sorrow relate to the mind. For example, the peacock is beautiful; it can dance and do a lot of other things. But that changes when it looks at its legs. Why? Humans tend to do that, to become sad and disappointed. It's the elements that cause us to think in this negative way. The mind gets into it; that becomes our focus and we forget the good things, forget God. We don't know what will

happen next so we try to analyze it with intellect, then start panicking.

Once you understand who is God, and what it means to hand over responsibility, there is no joy and sorrow. We also learn what it means to have faith in God, and what true faith is. In this section of a video from 12/3/78, Bawa mentions his experience talking to the Rasul (*Sal*), and how the body was created out of the Qur'an. He explains that joy and sorrow are two brothers of equal proportion, neither of which will give you peace; even if you think it's joy, it's really sorrow because it's going to hurt you. It's a cycle, and we need to realize how to escape from it. We need to find a father, learn to surrender to his teachings, then learn to surrender to God.

After the video, Fakhrurdeen told of a question someone asked Bawa about things in his life and duty that he had to do. All Bawa said was, "God has no form. We have no eye. Next." That's what it is. We surrender to God, who has no form; we get rid of the ego, the "I" in us. This cuts the connection to the cycle of joy and suffering, then duty happens because He does the work. We're in total surrender to God. (Reading: Our sole duty is to take the qualities of God within ourselves.)

God is a power intimately mixed with all things, with no beginning or end. He has no mouth or tongue, but speaks through us -- our eyes, nose, and hands. He makes our hands the agency. The qualities create a different form within us, with no connection to the *nafs*. Those qualities are His form and that power is God.

You have to build your faith. We're attracted to various forms of faith, but when we begin to understand the kind of faith given to us at the beginning of creation, we can understand true surrender to God.

You need a teacher, a true sheikh. As Carolyn said, this is the teaching; you're not going to get it anywhere else; just accept it. And Bawa said, be in the Fellowship, stay in the Fellowship. Surround yourself with good people to develop good qualities. "You will understand later. Be here."

We have small illnesses and tend to enlarge them, spend a lot of time talking about them. We don't realize the beauty, like the peacock.

We are one family, created out of the love of our father. May we continue to remain as one family, continue to progress and grow. We can only hear these explanations from a true *Insan Kamil*. May he continue to shower us with that blessing so we can get to our Creator.

Sunday, 11:00 a.m.

Musa Muhaiyaddeen (Manny Levin): Bawa's first teaching was about consciousness. In his first book, *The Divine Luminous Wisdom*, seven levels are what are explained. As your consciousness progresses to wisdom, your perspective changes – you see things in different ways. If you remain at the level of Intellect, you see things from the perspective that animals do; it's a point of consciousness.

If you start to ask what's going on, you see differently. You're in the searching phase, looking for an answer. With God's grace, you may find a teacher, at which point you're in the "I have a teacher" phase. But the "I" is still hanging out pretty strong. At each phase we think we've gotten somewhere; we proclaim, "I am at that phase."

A pilgrim understands there is no resting place. Let's take on that perspective: "Until I've reached annihilation, I'm moving on this path." The path, and we ourselves, take time to mature, until we find a teacher. Then the question becomes, can we enter into wisdom? It's a different perspective, an altered *modus operandi*, which incorporates God's qualities.

You can get stuck in a maze, but if you had a drone it would be easy to get out. Our perspective drives us, makes us do things we want to do. The perspective prevalent in our world and nationally is about needs, and satisfying them. It's necessary to destroy their neighbors to satisfy their needs. People have to harm others to gain joy. Believe in that.

These people are dangerous, but they hide it. You have to be aware of these hidden people. Satan knows how to hide. Sometimes he'll walk around carrying a sign saying, "I am satan here." In other places he may preach from the pulpits. But if killing and hatred toward others is being preached, is that a godly perspective? We're bombarded constantly, and have to choose carefully what to listen to.

We had a teacher with a perspective that was clear, real, and wise. *He* was real, without the needs of the world. We who have needs run into problems – we run to satisfy them, or become sad. Our imagination makes us happy by satisfying them in a way we consider appropriate in line with our perspective on the world.

In Bawa's perspective, only Allah exists; all else is spurious. We deal with these things as if they were real, even though we know they're transient. What makes us fall, causes our attachment to them? The energy looks to get certain results. Do what you have to do, leave the result to God, and be satisfied with whatever the result is. Until we really believe "God giveth and taketh away," we have a form of mental illness – we don't see reality.

We had a perspective that saw reality. What made you stay? You saw a perspective that all of a sudden you knew was real. At eleven or twelve I'd begun to see what I knew wasn't real. It got even worse in college and law school, where much of it seemed irrelevant, with no meaning. With the threat of the draft and possible death hanging over me, I wanted to find better things to do. I went to bookstores and found spiritual books that changed my perspective.

If you understand the truth, the law is simple. You can resolve situations just from instinctual knowledge of what the truth is. Most who write about it don't know.

My first time before Bawa: I'm outside time and space -- apart from the needs others have, and want me to also have so I become like them. I wasn't sure, but I know the truth deep inside; I learned how to do things in the world so there was justice instead of just the law. Relationships had to be kind, or be ended. – that's a difficulty you don't need. I became kinder, more gentle and loving, capable of not needing to react to stuff thrown at you. Monkeys throw back – that's the way of the world.

Bawa was a manifestation of what couldn't be explained, but was in the center of the universe. If your perspective is to comprehend God, you're in the center of the universe. That's the alchemy that occurred here – turning man into *Insan Kamil*, God. It was done with kindness, love, and patience. You didn't even notice what was being done to you, or you may have run away.

It's an open secret that we're all going to go, but we act as if it's never going to happen. My dear friends Sonia and Mitchell disappeared on me. We all will. Why are we hanging on to things of this world as if they meant something, as if we could hold on forever? It's the constant whispering of the devil that this world is real, but Bawa showed us it's not.

How does God react? With mercy, compassion, and constant giving. He doesn't stop. Bawa gave and didn't stop – lovingly, with open hands. He didn't need or hold on to anything. He didn't have desire.

He came to our home three times, not for an agenda but for the children. He taught the perspective that loses seeing differences, what holds us from the truth: I'm this, you're not. He disappeared in you, became you; and because you reacted as if he *were* you, it could be frightening. When differences disappear, there's room for love to overwhelm us entirely. Mysticism isn't complicated. Be able to find yourself in everyone else, then God in everyone, then God in yourself. Then the mystery has reached its conclusion, and becomes the way you are.

In the religions, who we become can change. But we can't wait for the other. We must be the protagonist

in love – hold on to everyone with love, have the courage to give all we have to each one ... become friends of God, lovers and givers, with love, mercy and compassion. Don't hold back; truly care for each other. He wanted us to be in that unity.

We have to thank God that we were given a teacher to open our eyes so we can see truth. Let's be in a place where we see the truth. A problem is our inability to see perfection. He saw it in each of us. When we see it in each other, that will be the moment we'll see the truth.

After the meeting we assembled outside for the annual Family photograph.

Sunday morning Branch Breakfast

As they do every year, branch members gathered to plan and share activities over breakfast. Among the topics they discussed were the following wisdom weekend events scheduled for 2019:

- April 13-14 - Los Angeles Wisdom Weekend
- April 19-20 - Boston Retreat
- May 3-5 - Sacramento, CA Wisdom Weekend
- June 29-30 - Unity Days Wisdom Weekend at the *Māzār* and Philadelphia
- July 26-28 - Sacramento, CA Wisdom Weekend
- September - Toronto Anniversary Weekend
- October - Philadelphia Anniversary Weekend
- November - Boston Anniversary Weekend

The two raffle tickets were won by Margot and Rob Weening.

Sunday 7:00 p.m. (Branch members)

Patrick Andrews said he would do a special sharing about one of the last visits with Bawa, a group of Methodists who wanted to know who he was.

Graham Bell (California) read a note from David Katz thanking us for prayers for his mother. David asked us to read a little discourse called "I Am Wiping Your Tears" to any children who are sad. Mention was also made of our brother Bilal, who is in jail though innocent.

Jerahme Posner spoke about a chapter in *prayer* (p. 122) called "The Bank of the Guru," about phenomena being revealed now that couldn't be seen at one time. At this point, if you don't understand, it's not God's fault.

Patrick: It's been a day of connections, including the Branch Breakfast. Bawa used to go around and ask what's going on. He was concerned about how we represent him and present ourselves at public meetings, etc.

John Barnett (Boston) reflected about the early days in 78-79 when he was working on a documentary

project. He was told to just go ahead, and arrived with his equipment only to find that everyone was at the Posners'. He went there, where he was greeted by Bawa saying, "Welcome home." John felt as if it had always been his spiritual home. When he asked if he should move down Bawa replied, "What about the branch?" and said he'd visit there once in a while. John got the point that it was his duty. Bawa mentioned that the seven-hour trip was the same as from Colombo to Jaffna, and he had duty in both places. John understood that he had to find the teacher within.

How do we present ourselves to the public, and also to newcomers? With "Welcome home." In the end, that's what we have to do to the ones who would be coming home (among Sufis, Muslims, and others). These are special connections.. There's also another kind of outreach – to friends. I had a friend who was also looking for truth, was a total lover, but didn't have the benefit of a teacher. After forty years of not talking we had a two-hour phone talk about what it had been like and what Bawa meant. I said it was difficult, but there was a benefit in the duty. It's a structure, a framework for the mind through which we can work out karma, etc. ... a way to do duty directly.

Patrick: It doesn't have to be a formal branch; there are just groups for the sake of being able to have this kind of community. One of the early interfaith groups was a Methodist study circle that studied other religions. It was an example of how Bawa personally connected with each one – finding something that relates to them, then relating it to the point of God.

Yusuf Stephen Aigner (Colorado) spoke about when he had just moved from Iowa, and had to assess the nature of the local population. After hearing two Islamophobic speakers he decided to become a public Muslim, and started a group called Exploring the Sacred in which people from Senegal, Jordan, etc. became his family. Their rent was doubled and they had no place to meet for 20 months, but were then given a haven by a Methodist church. Members asked to join them for prayers, and invited him to talk about and explain things. Yusuf was inspired by a video of Bawa addressing a group like that (4/13/86). He was really interacting with them in a vital way, making sure they got whatever he could bestow.

Bawa told us that God sent the Prophets one by one and gave them the teachings, increasing step by step with each Prophet. Jesus exemplified how the five elements keep us nailed to this cross. The heart of purity will burn up ghosts and demons so that they can't approach it. We need to attain that state to find peace; we'll never find it unless we do.

In the next meeting we'll remember those who have moved on to their real home with our father, God.

Sunday 8:30 p.m.

Patrick Andrews: This weekend has been about discarding joy and sorrow, freeing ourselves from the attachment to them, understanding what it means to be attached to sorrow. Bawa was unable to complete his duties but remembered that nothing happens without God's knowledge, and it was time to merge with God.

In a morning discourse on 3/15/86 soon after Mitch died, Bawa spoke to Sonia about the importance of Mitch's life to him. His death is a great sorrow, a loss to all; he was a child who could lead the way. Bawa went on to speak (roughly summarized) of how God was taking his children one by one. He asked Him to please accept and take some of the children that were on this path with him before the time of destruction. These are evil times and satan's qualities are coming up now; please comfort them.

Bawa continued: God must come to protect my children from danger till they are ready to go. My children must reach the state where the Rabb will take the responsibility of taking care of them. Till then I will protect them, but I'm losing blood and strength. My children must take on God's qualities and help the others while we're still here. This is the one day when the body separates, but the love doesn't separate from the Love. Protect my children, help them and strengthen their hearts.

Yusuf Stephen Aigner introduced an audio talk from 3/22/86 about how the disciple with faith and determination merges with the guru. The guru suffers over how he can transform the child and bring him back in the same form in which he left him. (Audio song)

Patrick – When I arrived in 1973 I didn't even know you could see Bawa. I was outside the room and a song was going through my head. When I came back in I heard him singing, "Sing we, sing we...." This led to my writing the song, "There Is No Other Like My Father," which all three of the departed members we're honoring had a particular fondness for. Tomorrow's prayers at the *Māzār* will be for them and all others who have gone before us.

Monday 10:00 a.m.

We gathered at the *Māzār* at the Farm, where *Ya Sin* and *Khatmatul-Qur'an* were recited on behalf of Ameen Macan-Markar, Fatimah Carolyn Andrews, Sonia Gilbert, and all who have gone before us. Then it was time to take our leave -- with deepened awareness of the roots of Joy and Sorrow, heightened love for and connection to our father Bawa, and renewed

appreciation for the light and profound wisdom he brought to us and the world.

With anbu to all, Nailahannum (Claudia Schulte)

Branch News

Update from the Iowa Branch

786

The Iowa Branch continues meeting weekly, alternating among members' homes. Our numbers are small now, as our children grew up and moved to new jobs and cities, and some members later relocated to be near them. Two years ago, we were graced by a most welcome addition: Jonathon and Carol Harrison, formerly of Wisconsin. They bring our numbers to nine—incidentally, the same number of ex-Iowans in Philly!

We meet every Saturday, weather permitting, followed by a potluck lunch. Like the location, leading the meeting is rotated among members. We often read from Bawa's books, or listen to discourses on a particular theme. Currently, we are in the second part of series on the marketplace of the world. Other themes have included Bawa (*Ral.*) as a traffic policeman at an intersection, and the terms *tanam*, *nidanam*, *avadanam*, and *gnānam*.

Members often stay active with other branches and with Philadelphia. Some participate in a Skype group on Wednesday afternoon organized by Shiama Goldenbogen. Some help Patrick and others with various projects in Philadelphia, and we have ongoing electronic conversations with brothers and sisters there as well.

As-salaamu 'alkaikum and anbu,
Yusef Hammans, Secretary

Update from the Boston Branch

786

Salāms Brothers and Sisters of the Fellowship. We've been asked to say a few things about how our Boston Branch is doing. In this past year, we established a new meeting place for our regular Sunday meetings. For about 31 years starting in 1979 we met at the Cambridge Center for Adult Education in Harvard Square, until the director retired who had kindly kept our rent very low.

So, in the fall of 2012 we had to find another affordable arrangement and moved to the Cambridge Community Center, closer to Central Square, Cambridge. This was a warm and welcoming place focused much more on community service rather than the business of public education. We met comfortably there for our weekly wisdom study for about six years until about a year ago. At that point, the CCC, for their own budgetary reasons, closed its facility for all uses

on Sundays, which was the day when by our own consensus all of our Branch could most easily meet. So then, last February 2018 we came across another solution and settled in at the Brigham House, part of the Newton Highlands Community Center. This has since been a very good arrangement for our meetings and will likely be for years to come, *insha'Allah*. It's very convenient to drive to, has a lot of parking, and is a couple of blocks from a station of the Boston subway system. *Alhamdulillah*.

The address is:

The Brigham House, 20 Hartford Street, Newton Highlands, MA 02461 and our weekly Sunday meetings are from 10 a.m. to noon.

Our numbers are about 16 to 18 members with perhaps five to eight at any given Sunday meeting. Other than our regular practice, we have a special anniversary meeting during the most convenient weekend for us all, as close as possible to our original founding by Bawa on November 10th, 1979 when he visited us here in Boston for that weekend. The anniversary weekend is usually a bit more involved, with a wisdom workshop most of the day on Saturday, most often out at Leslie and Paul Wittman's home in Bedford, MA.

We also continue to host our annual Boston Retreat in April. This year it will be Easter Weekend, April 19-21 at our usual place -- the Quakers' NE Retreat Center, Woolman Hill in Deerfield, MA. We'll be sending out information soon about it, *insha'Allah*.

We are most grateful for having the love and care of our father Bawa Muhaiyaddeen, the unending wealth of guidance he has left for us to study and grow by, as well as the opportunity in our lives to study this wealth together regularly and thereby grow and enrich our lives here even more. *Alhamdulillah*. Allah is most merciful, most compassionate, and provides for us all. Ameen.

We of the Boston Branch send our anbu to all our brothers and sisters of this most precious Path.

John (Hussain) Barnett, Treasurer, Boston Branch

Update from the California Branch

786

Last August Ahamed and Moon joined the **Northern California** branch of the Fellowship for a wisdom weekend. About nineteen Fellowship members joined together to study Bawa's teachings. During the weekend, Ahamed spoke three times. He first spoke in one of the meeting rooms at the **Unitarian Universalist Society of Sacramento**. He facilitated a wisdom meeting of the Bawa Muhaiyaddeen Fellowship, California Branch, as well as others who

wished to attend. The theme of the meeting was Unity. As a result, the local Interfaith Council of Greater Sacramento asked David and Anne to join them, which they have.* They are hoping that Ahamed will again visit in May, 2019 to speak at their end of the year meeting. A second meeting on world disarmament was held at the Unitarian site the next day. Ahamed shared many anecdotes, including references to Bawa's teachings as they impact the work he does at the U.N. The audience was very engaged and asked quite a few questions.

The second meeting was Saturday evening at the local Islamic Center - SALĀMS (Sacramento Area League of Associated Muslims) CENTER. About 40-50 people attended. After Ahamed's talk the branch members helped by speaking with those who attended. His final talk was at the Unitarian Universalist Society after their Sunday morning meeting. About 45-50 people attended. Branch members again spoke with those who attended and Bawa's books were available for sale as well. It was a very successful weekend.

There will be two Wisdom Weekends in Sacramento, California: May 3-5 - theme: "Learn About the Religions Through Your Experience." July 26-28 - theme: "Iman- the End of Doubt."

*At the Interfaith Council of Greater Sacramento David and Anne are just starting to explore ways in which Bawa's teachings about God's Qualities might be helpful to the work of this interfaith organization which tries to promote tolerance and cooperation between the many faiths—the clergy as well as their congregations.

In March of 2018, the **Southern California** branch located in Los Angeles had a wisdom weekend in which Carl Marcus and about 22 other Fellowship members attended. Ahamed led the meeting on the challenges of interfaith tolerance, peacefulness, and unity based upon Bawa's teachings, providing insights and deeper understanding. He was asked to come back again and share his experiences with Bawa and at the Parliament of World Religions with the congregation.

The upcoming 2019 weekend in L.A. will be April 13-14, and the theme is Unity

~ David Katz, California Branch

Update from the Toronto Branch

786

The Toronto Fellowship conducted its meeting from Willem Poolman's house from its inception in the early 70s. Once Willem passed away in 2009, the Fellowship became responsible for running itself.

Since Toronto is an expensive city, monthly rental and utilities were very high. We faced zoning by laws

that were becoming more stringent, and so we began the discussion of buying a place for the Fellowship.

Financial budgets were prepared. We reached out to our members with the idea of purchasing a property, and within 24 hours we had commitments for a down payment. And so in 2014 the search for our home began.

We laid down criteria for our search for a suitable place and saw one or two properties a week. In 2016 we found an ideal location!

But alas, the offer was rejected; the seller wanted more money. We walked away and continued the search. But wait -- that property did not sell and it was back on the market! We made the same offer again and it was accepted.

We had found a beautiful spot with lots of parking, transportation, and a safe neighborhood. Truly a gift from our Father Bawa and a mercy from Allah.

Bawa first came to Toronto in 1975 and now, after 40 years of wandering from house to house, Toronto has been blessed with a permanent home of our own. *Alhamdulillah!* We look forward to seeing and welcoming all of our brothers and sisters from the Fellowship branches to our new home.

~ Roshan

Daily Fellowship Schedule

- Tuesday Eve: Reading from *The Resonance of Allah* after *Maghrib*
- Wednesday Eve: Video discourse ending before *Maghrib*
- Thursday Eve: Fellowship meeting after *Maghrib*
- Friday: Midday *Khutbah** followed by *Jum'ah** prayers; 8 p.m. *Dhikr* meeting in Bawa's room.
- Saturday, Children's meeting 10:00 a.m.
Evening Fellowship meeting (7:00 p.m. DST)
- Sunday: *Dhikr* 8:30 a.m.; Fellowship meeting 10 a.m.

Jum'ah's Khutbah begins at 1:30 -1:40 p.m. DST (which ends 1st Sunday in Nov.) and 12:30-2:30 p.m. EST.

Prayers, *salātul-Jum'ah*, start between 2:20 – 2:30 p.m. DST and 1:20 - 1:30 p.m. EST (ends 2nd Sunday in March)

Arabic Classes, Recitation Groups

- Saturday's Arabic class for young children is held before the meeting from 9 – 10 a.m. in the Mosque classroom.
- Sunday's Arabic class for older children runs 8:30 – 9:30 a.m.

- Saturday afternoons at 2:30 p.m. (DST) or 1:30 p.m. (EST) is Qur'an reading & recitation for adults led by Imam Shahata from Al-Aqsa.
- Wednesday Evenings, 6 -7 p.m. (depending on prayer time)

New Links to the Fellowship Ongoing Internet Streaming:

BMF 786 Radio is the Fellowship's very own Shoutcast radio station with three separate channels that will play on your computer or smart phone.

The first channel is Bawa 24/7, the second channel is the House Speaker, and the third channel is the Daily Discourse. You can now listen to BMF 786 Radio on Shoutcast via the following links:

<http://s3.nexuscast.com/start/bmf786/> – **Discourses 24/7:** Streams Bawa directly to the internet. Tune in any time to hear Bawa.

<http://s2.nexuscast.com/start/bmfhs/> – **House Speakers:** Whatever is currently live on the call to prayer, *salāt*, *Dhikr*, a live meeting, or a Bawa discourse being played in the house.

<http://s2.nexuscast.com/start/bmfdd/> – **Daily Discourse:** Whatever discourse was played after morning *Fajr/Dhikr*.

Once you're at one of these sites, look in the middle of the page for the "Web Audio Player." Click the Play button in the middle of the page to start the stream. There is also a map showing the location of the other stream listeners at that moment.

If there is no Play button, then to listen to the stream look for the "Now Playing" bar, and you may click on the media player icon of your choice. There are four popular ones listed which download a "Playlist" file which typically launches your audio player if it is installed on your local computer.

iPhone/Smart Phone Instructions

To install an icon on your **iPhones**, launch the Safari browser on Apple's iOS and navigate to the website. You may pick to add to your home screen:

BMF 786 Radio – Bawa 24/7

BMF 786 Radio – House Speaker

BMF 786 Radio – Daily Discourse

Tap the Share button on the browser's toolbar — that's the rectangle with an arrow pointing upward. It's on the bar at the top of the screen on an iPad, and on the bar at the bottom of the screen on an iPhone or iPod Touch. Tap the Add to Home Screen icon in the Share menu.

You'll be prompted to name the shortcut before

tapping the Add button. The shortcut can be dragged around and placed anywhere, including in app folders — just like a normal app icon. (To create app folders on iOS, touch-and-drag an app's icon onto another app's icon and hold it there for a moment.) When you tap the icon, it will load the website in a normal tab inside the Safari browser app.

New: To install an icon on your **Android** phones, open your Google browser and search for www.bmf.org/shoutcast, then look for and click on the three dots at the top right of the screen. This will bring up “Add to my home page.” Click on it to create an icon on your phone for quick tuning in.

~ Michael Pessolano

Official Fellowship Websites

Note: The www.bmf.org website is being updated to provide increased accessibility to information on Fellowship events, and to streaming video.

Fellowship Website

<http://www.bmf.org>

Mosque Website

<http://www.bmf.org/m/mosque>

<http://www.blurb.com/b/8110299-mazar-of-shaikh-m-r-bawa-muhaiyaddeen> (NEW)

Māzār Website

<http://www.bmf.org/m/Mazār>

<https://www.facebook.com/MazārOfShaikhMRBawaMuhaiyaddeen/photos>

Fellowship Press Bookstore

<http://www.bmf.org/m/wisdom/index.html>

Children's Stories

<http://www.bmf.org/m/children/index.html>

Fellowship Family News

The Fellowship Families and Kids newsletter is available to those who wish to know about Family activities. Contact Chloe LePichon Posner at: chloelepichon@yahoo.com to be put on the mailing list.

Considerable family news is missing due to lack of help in collecting it. Please send news you would like to have published to Clare at verifiedvotes@gmail.com. Note: Before submitting obituaries, please check with the Newsletter staff for space and content guidelines.

Our congratulations to newlyweds and parents of newborns. We give our condolences to those who have lost family members. Our prayers are with you.

WEDDINGS

2/18/18 Aliyah Novelli (daughter of Albert and Lisa) and Mark Leeper were married at the Fellowship in Philadelphia.

1/5/19 Fakhurdeen and Luthfiya's daughter Saabi was married to James Hatzell. The wedding was held in the meeting room at the Fellowship. It was a wonderful and joyous event to begin the New Year.

Saabi writes: Jimmy's uncles and aunts on both sides grew up down the street from the Fellowship, but had never been inside. For many of our guests, Saturday was the first introduction to Bawa and also the first introduction to Islam. You all worked together to welcome everyone so that they instantly felt at home. People kept coming up to us and telling us how beautiful and welcoming the ceremony and the Fellowship were.

Thank you all for your support and help to make our wedding day special. We are overwhelmed with gratitude. Your hard work did not go unnoticed or unappreciated!

BIRTHS

9/27/18 A baby boy, Essan Emmanuel Muhaiyaddeen Boardman-Csanalosi, was born to Mary Boardman, (daughter of Jeanne and Rick Boardman) and Gabriel Csanalosi. He greeted the world weighing in at 7lbs 13.5 oz. and 20" long..

1/28/19 A baby boy, Nico Eric Raheem Stokes-Eleey, was born to Kabira Stokes Hochberg and her husband Peter Eleey (8 lbs. 5 oz, 21 5/8").

DEATHS

8/11/18 Carl Hockenberry, 54 years old, youngest son of Jeanne Hockenberry, passed after a difficult battle with cancer.

9-20-18 Maryam Kabeer's step-mom Sophia passed.

9-20-18 Ahamed Kabir's brother passed

10/1/18 Estelle Katz, David Katz's mother, died peacefully at the Nursing home where she was staying.

1/3/19 Hanan Wajid, age 70, passed away in Maryland from cancer. She had been a member for 28 years. May Allah bless her and grant her His grace and mercy.

Newsletter Editors:

Abdur Rahman (Claude Crumpton), Baseerah (Clare Maher), and Nailahannum (Claudia Schulte)

To submit official Fellowship/**Branch NEWS**, please put BM NEWS as the subject box and send to: John Barnett johnbarnett.hussain@gmail.com or bmf786news@yahoo.com

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