

TO: The Avatar Meher Baba Perpetual Public Charitable Trust (hereafter “the Trust”)  
FROM: Dan Tyler and Laurent Weichberger  
SUBJECT: Protecting and Certifying the authenticity of *Discourses*  
DATE: July 10, 2004

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Avatar Meher Baba bestowed a profound responsibility upon the Trust for the proper care of his *Discourses*. The proliferation of information technologies—especially the worldwide web—and the eventual transference of the *Discourses* into the public domain create new challenges to those who would protect Baba’s words. Practically speaking, it will be impossible for the Trust, or any organization, to completely control access to Baba’s words. However, there are a few things the Trust can do in this regard:

- Help preserve the words of the *Discourses* in the **exact form** Baba left them for humanity,
- Act as a certifying organization to ensure that future printings (in any medium) **are authentic**.

The following recommendations work toward these ends:

1. The first recommendation establishes that the last version of the *Discourses* Baba left us (6<sup>th</sup> Edition) is an inviolable and authenticated standard.
2. The second recommendation promotes the dissemination of the *Discourses* under conditions that explicitly protect Baba’s work.
3. The third recommendation provides a way for the Trust to maintain some degree of authority over the *Discourses* even after the Trust copyright ownership has eventually expired.

## Three Recommendations for the Protection and Certification of the Authenticity of *Discourses*

<p><b>Protection of Baba's Words</b></p>	<p>1. 6<sup>th</sup> edition as the Standard</p> <p>2. Creative Commons Deed</p>	<p>The 6<sup>th</sup> edition is the last authenticated English version of the <i>Discourses</i> Baba personally supervised with his name as author. The 7<sup>th</sup> edition, published eighteen years after Baba dropped his body, includes extensive changes in meaning, tone, and presentation. All future publishings of the <i>Discourses</i>, in any medium, should use the wording, italics, and presentation Baba gave us in the 6th edition.</p> <p>Creative Commons (<a href="http://creativecommons.org/">http://creativecommons.org/</a>) is a diverse consortium of lawyers, artists, and others affiliated with the Stanford Law School, in California. Creative Commons makes available, free of charge, various licenses (deeds) for the dissemination of creative work. From the Creative Commons web site: "<i>We use private rights to create public goods: creative works set free for certain uses. Like the free software and open-source movements, our ends are cooperative and community-minded, but our means are voluntary and libertarian. We work to offer creators a best-of-both-worlds way to protect their works while encouraging certain uses of them—to declare some rights reserved. . . that helps people dedicate their creative works to the public domain—or retain their copyright while licensing them as free for certain uses, on certain conditions.</i>"</p> <p>Of the various Creative Commons licenses, "<i>Attribution-NoDerivs 2.0</i>" is ideal for the <i>Discourses</i>. It allows them to be republished under the following conditions:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) Meher Baba must be named as the sole author</li> <li>2) <i>Discourses</i> <b>may not be altered</b>, transformed, or built upon</li> <li>3) Any reproduction of <i>Discourses</i> must include the entire text, not merely a portion of it, thus keeping the words from Meher Baba in context.</li> </ol> <p>This license promotes dissemination of the <i>Discourses</i> without diminishing or infringing upon the privileges of the Trust's copyright ownership.</p> <p>The "<i>Attribution-NoDerivs 2.0</i>" deed is available at <a href="http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nd/2.0/">http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nd/2.0/</a></p>
<p><b>The Trust as Certifying Organization</b></p>	<p>3. Imprimatur</p>	<p>In the long term, an imprimatur may be the most effective way for the Trust to properly protect the <i>Discourses</i>, especially after the copyright has expired and the book is in the public domain. The concept is simple. The Trust will allow a statement (such as, "This publication of the <i>Discourses</i> is approved by the Avatar Meher Baba Perpetual Public Charitable Trust") to be used on versions that the Trust deems worthy. This imprimatur will assure readers that the version they are reading is true to the standard of the 6<sup>th</sup> edition. Although voluntary, the imprimatur will be a certification of authenticity that, for all practical purposes, publishers and readers of the <i>Discourses</i> will require.</p>