

# Seven™

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Based on concepts and inspiration from Denise V. Wohl

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## DOSSIER: MEIR

**FULL NAME: DOCTOR MEIR MORAN**

*Doctor Meir Moran* is a man, nothing more, nothing less. He seems to be a very old soul, but...who knows?

### CHARACTER DESCRIPTION

**Doctor Meir Moran, MD, PhD**

**Height:** 1.70 meters (five foot seven inches)


**Weight:** 65.77 kilograms (145 pounds)

**Complexion:** Tan, weathered

**Eye Color:** Blue

**Hair:** Brown, graying

**Age:** 63

**Astrological Sign:** Virgo (From *Wikipedia*:  - [Virgo](#) (*The Virgin*) (mutable, earth, social): Keyword: "I analyze". Practical, efficient, critical, work and service oriented, common sense, modest, health conscious, mentally active, fussy, helpful, loving, flexible. Part of body: intestines/digestion

**Possible Actor/Type:** Dustin Hoffman (in the film *Confidence*)





**Clothes:** Style: usually casual, comfortable. Meir is fastidiously neat and clean, but his clothes always seem to look a little rumpled and wrinkled, even if they're fresh from the cleaners, or have just been pressed. Meir buys his clothes at Men's Wearhouse, Syms, and other discount retailers. Once in a while, if he sees something he likes, he'll buy an item at a thrift shop. He has no favorite designers or labels. He has no favorite colors. He generally wears neutrals or muted colors, but occasionally will mix in a brightly colored article of clothing—say, a scarf in the winter, a tie (when he has to wear one) or a sweater. Meir often wears sweaters. Meir isn't careful about coordinating his outfits. Occasionally, even his socks don't match.

**History:** Meir's parents, Ashkenazic Jews, immigrated illegally to Palestine from Eastern Europe in 1938 during the *Aliyah Bet*, or "clandestine" immigration (known in Israel today as the *Ha'apalah*), fleeing Nazi persecution and narrowly escaping the ensuing Holocaust.

They settled near Petah Tikvah, the "Mother of Settlements" in what is now the Center District of Israel. Meir, their only son, was born in 1944. They had two daughters, one born in 1948 and one in 1949.

*Meir* is a name of Hebrew origin, meaning "Giving light." *Moran* is a surname of Hebrew derivation that means "Teacher, guide."

When the State of Israel was declared on May 14, 1948, Meir and his family became citizens.

In June of 1949, near the end of the first Arab-Israeli War, Meir's father was killed in an ambush along the Syrian border.

Suddenly widowed, Meir's mother struggled to keep her family alive. Her task became more difficult a few years after her husband's death when she was obliged to take in a two-year-old niece and an infant nephew orphaned by a bomb attack. "Grinding poverty" is a cliché, but apt, indeed...as anyone will attest who has gone to bed hungry knowing the morning will bring only more hopelessness and futile struggling.

Meir grew up feeling a great responsibility as the eldest boy, the "man of the house." He was determined to succeed, make something of himself, end his family's suffering and ease his mother's burden. He worked hard to do well in school, and at age five, shortly after his father's death, he began doing odd jobs and errands after school around the settlement to earn a few extra coins for his mother. As he grew older, he was able to take more demanding and better-paying after-school jobs—but he never neglected his studies. Often, he would study far into the night after everyone else was asleep.

Many times young Meir's tiny contributions were the difference between a meager supper and nothing at all.

Meir's siblings and cousins were not as strong willed or as driven. They were often goaded into trouble by hunger, by need, by want, by fear and by the rage that grows inside one's soul as a last-resort defense against despair—rage against the injustice of their suffering, the hopelessness of their lives and the oppressiveness of the world. Mother worked long hours and seldom was there to comfort or teach them. All young Meir could do was wish that he could help them...and work even harder.

At age seventeen, Meir earned his full matriculation certificate, after which he served three years in the Israeli Defense Forces. He served honorably and well in a non-combatant, rear echelon role during the Six-Day War. After his conscription ended, he entered the Hebrew University of Jerusalem, where he completed his pre-med studies, medical school and post-graduate studies in biophysics, biochemistry and molecular biology. He served his internship, residency and fellowship at the renowned Sheba Medical Center.

Subsequently, Meir was invited to become Chairman of the Department of Biomedical Research at New York University Hospital in New York City. He was the youngest person ever appointed to such a prestigious position.

And so, Meir had succeeded, made something of himself and finally achieved the financial prosperity necessary to end his family's suffering and remove his mother's burden entirely.

Meir sent for his mother and family, asking them to join him in America. His two sisters, one recently shed of an abusive, failed marriage and the other just out of rehab for alcoholism; his cousins, both unemployed and both with histories of arrests for petty theft and possession of banned substances; and his weary, long-beleaguered mother all embraced the chance for a new life in a new place. Meir made arrangements and sent tickets.

The day came. Early in the morning, Meir's family boarded a bus to take them to Ben Gurion Airport in Tel Aviv.

Seventeen hours later, while waiting at Kennedy Airport for their flight to arrive, word reached Meir that there had been an accident. The bus carrying his family had crashed, rolled down a long embankment and caught fire. Nineteen people were killed—including his cousins, his sisters and his mother.

Everyone dear to him was dead. Not by war, or the action of some enemy, or even by disease—things Meir could at least comprehend, things that he'd experienced or dealt with in his lifetime—but by some random turn of fate. It was devastating.

Meir's relatives were buried in Petah Tikvah.

In the weeks following the accident, Meir was inconsolable. All his reasons for striving, for working as hard as he had from early childhood were gone. He felt cheated and betrayed by life. At last, he knew the soul-burning rage his siblings and cousins had so often felt—helpless rage against the atrocity fate had perpetrated against him. His rage, however, was no defense against the despair overwhelming him.

Meir resigned his position at the hospital. Every day, he simply walked aimlessly, or sat on a bench in the park, lost in his own, personal darkness, attended by bitterness and feeling nothing but gnawing emptiness inside.

One day, after wandering without purpose far into the night, Meir suddenly felt very weary, as if he couldn't take another step. He dragged himself to the Port Authority Terminal, meaning to take the train back the Upper West Side and his apartment.

As he stood on the platform watching the train roaring into the station, it occurred to him to jump onto the tracks in front of it. Death, simple and quick. A fittingly abrupt end to a life that had been, after all, a monumentally grueling effort rendered useless and futile by a random occurrence.

Then, he noticed that there was already someone lying on the tracks!

Without hesitation, Meir leaped down split seconds before impact and attempted to yank the man to safety in the crawl space under the platform.

He succeeded—halfway.

The man's legs were severed just above the knees.

Moments later, the train had been cleared and Meir was improvising tourniquets to keep the man alive. He was an older man, dressed in worn and tattered clothes.

As Meir worked feverishly, the tattered man looked up at him and asked, "What happened?"

"You were hit by a train," Meir said.

"Yeah, I know," said the tattered man. "I meant, what happened to *you*? You look terrible. You're wearing darkness like a parka."

Nonplussed, Meir looked at him, *really* looked at him for the first time, and felt himself being penetrated by the tattered man's gaze. Then the paramedics arrived.

The paramedics took over—expressing profuse admiration for Meir's expert first aid. The tattered man continued speaking to Meir—*comforting* him. "I wish I could help you with whatever's troubling you," he said, "but now seems to be an inconvenient time."

As the paramedics took the tattered man away on a stretcher, he called to Meir. "Reach for the light as desperately as you reached for me. The light will save you."

Eventually, Meir made his way home that night. He couldn't sleep, thinking about the tattered man's words.

The next morning, Meir made some calls and found out that EMS had taken the tattered man to Bellvue.

Forty minutes later, Meir was standing beside the tattered man's bed. Though his legs were cut off, again, the tattered man was the one doing the comforting.

Meir visited him every day. Every day the tattered man—who liked to be called *Sam*, though that wasn't his name—taught Meir something, with wise and simple words. He opened Meir's eyes.

Over the course of many visits, bits and pieces of Sam's own story came out. When he was young, he had met a great teacher who had started him on the path to enlightenment.

Sam said he'd traveled the world...met many great teachers, and learned much. He stays in touch with some. "When the Dalai Lama is in town, for instance, he always drops by."

"By *where*?" Meir asked. Sam explained that he lived in the catacombs below street level where *thousands* of homeless "mole people" live. There are mazes of unused train tunnels, utility conduits, sewers, old basements, and nooks and crannies of every sort all over Manhattan underground, accessible through subway stations, manholes, ungrated sewers, air shafts—there's even a secret entrance through the lower lobby of the Waldorf-Astoria! The main and biggest underground complex by far, a city beneath the streets, lies under Grand Central Terminal, Sam said, but he preferred to live in the "suburbs," that is, nearer Port Authority. That's where the Dalai Lama comes to see him.

Meir was amazed, but he believed Sam. You couldn't help but believe Sam—you saw nothing but truth in his eyes.

Sam had been on his way home the night the train hit him. He'd had a seizure—a little problem he'd had ever since he was a small boy—and that's why he fell unconscious on the tracks. Meir mused that his arrival there at just that moment was a very lucky accident. "It was no accident," said Sam.

When Sam was released from Bellvue, Meir implored him to stay at his place for a while, at least until he healed completely. Sam refused. "At least, then, let me help you," Meir said, "give you some money, or...." Sam interrupted. He said he didn't really need any help—though a cab ride back to Port Authority would be appreciated. It was a long way "walk" on still-sore stumps.

Meir protested the idea of Sam going back underground so soon. "There are people down there who need me," Sam said.

Sam went home. Meir often went to visit him, and found that, though in some ways it was a shadowy, dangerous place, the underground "suburbs," at least, weren't so bad. A real community thrives down there....

Eventually, Meir took Sam's advice and began to travel, seeking out great teachers and sources of wisdom and enlightenment all over the world. He visited Koori "clever men" in the Australian Outback, a Cardinal in South America, scholars in Europe, a revered *Babalawo* in Africa and even the Dalai Lama—who was very pleased to have word of Sam, even though it was sad news that he'd lost his legs. The Dalai Lama didn't seem to take that too seriously, however, and averred that it was a small price for Sam to pay to ensure that the chain of wisdom, the *Guruparampara*, went on unbroken, in the person of Meir. It's a living chain stretching from the spiritual heart of the cosmos to nature and mankind, he explained.

Along the way, during and in between in his travels and studies, Meir earned his doctorate in psychology, completed a psychiatric residency and became certified as a psychiatrist.

These days, Meir still lives on the Upper West Side in New York City, working as a psychiatrist. His offices are in a high-rise at the corner of 86<sup>th</sup> and Broadway. He treats and counsels a wide variety of patients, but much of his time is devoted to *pro bono* counseling troubled young people—people a lot like his late siblings and cousins.

Now in his sixties, Meir is weathered by travel and experience but brimming with life and light. His eyes are wells of wisdom, penetratingly intense, as deep as if they had seen ten thousand years and yet sparkling like a child's.

Though he has become very learned and wise, Meir is still a pilgrim on the long road to enlightenment. He still travels, whenever possible, to meet with and learn from scholars and wise people around the globe.

Meir is no saint. Not yet, anyway. He's perfectly capable of being a little cranky-verging-on-ornery. He's generous, but not exactly Brother Juniper, frugal but not an ascetic. He likes his comfy bed, and is far from ready to move into the catacombs and sleep on a concrete ledge, like Sam.

Speaking of Sam, he often visits Sam either at his home underground, or where Sam sits near the doors to Port Authority, accepting donations. Meir always brings Starbucks coffee and bagels.

MEIR





NOTE: Meir's "age lines" will be added in the color



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