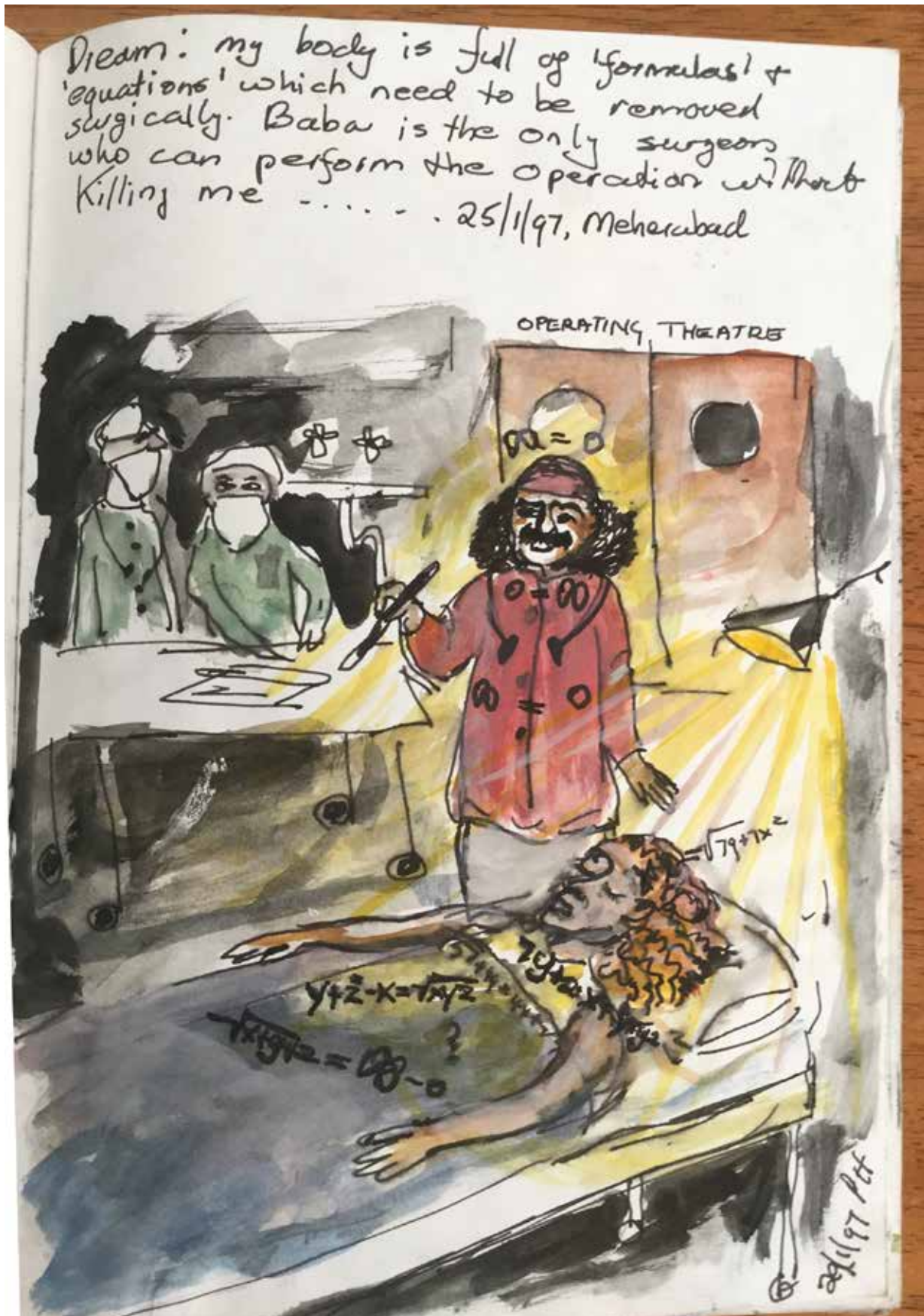


Meher Baba Australia

August 2021 – The Final Issue



Phillipa Howells cartoon from a dream she had during pilgrimage to Meherabad in 1997.

Meher Baba Australia as a showcase for artists

Over the decades of continuous publication the *Meher Baba Australia* newsletter has been a showcase for some of Australia's well known Baba visual artists, and a place where lesser known artists have also – regularly in some cases – bestowed their creative skills on the reading public.

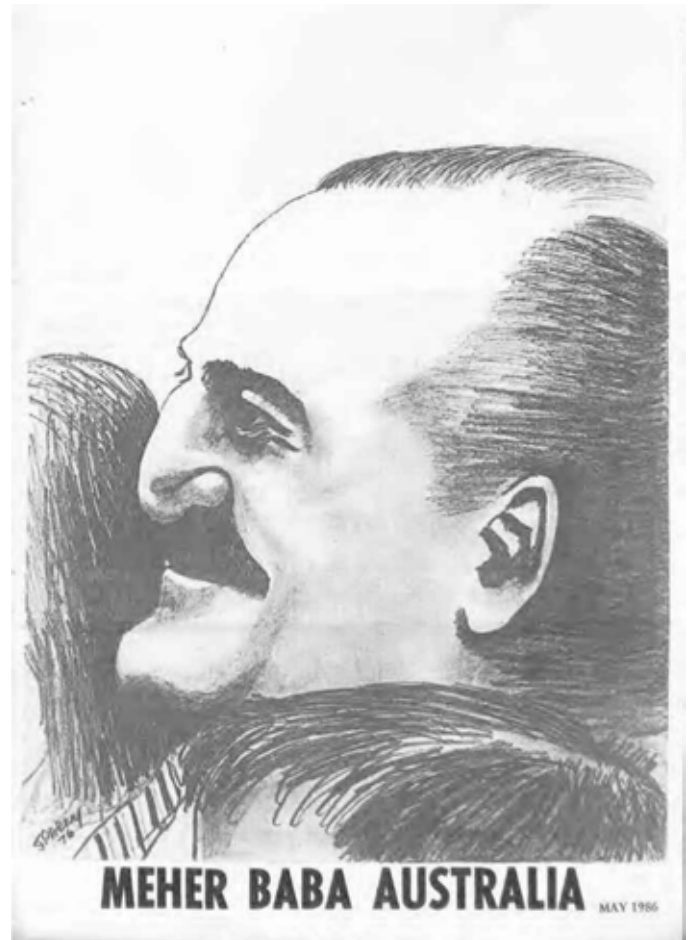
With the Avatar's Abode website archives page offering access to searchable PDF scans of all the MBA newsletters since 1983 it is now possible to take a look at these.

Please take a look at the website, and we also feature some examples of a page of covers ... <http://13.228.78.6/archives/jai/index.php/Browse/objects/facet/documenttype> then select 'newsletter' from the drop down list of filter options on the right hand side of the page.

**MEHER BABA
AUSTRALIA MAY 83**



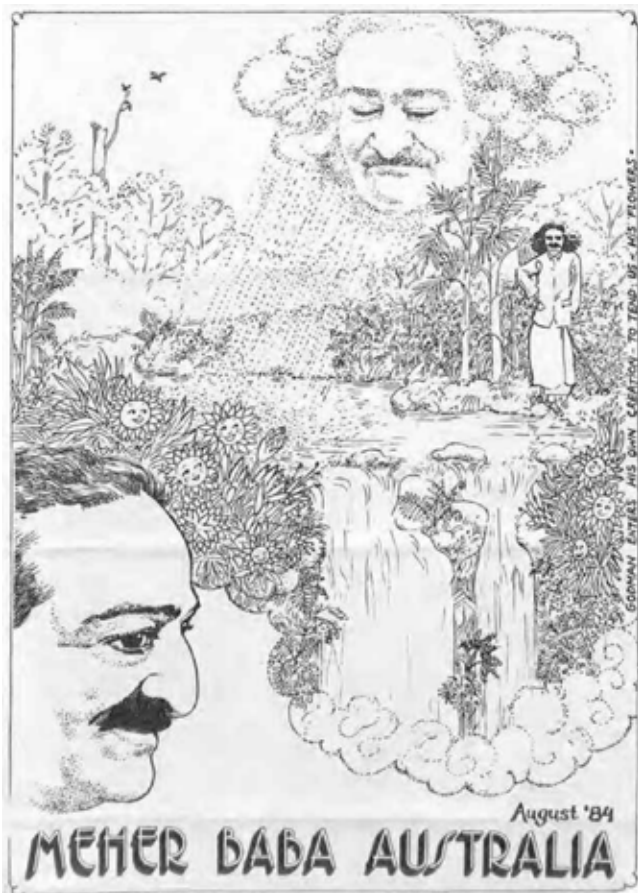
May 1983. Artist Patricia Saunders.



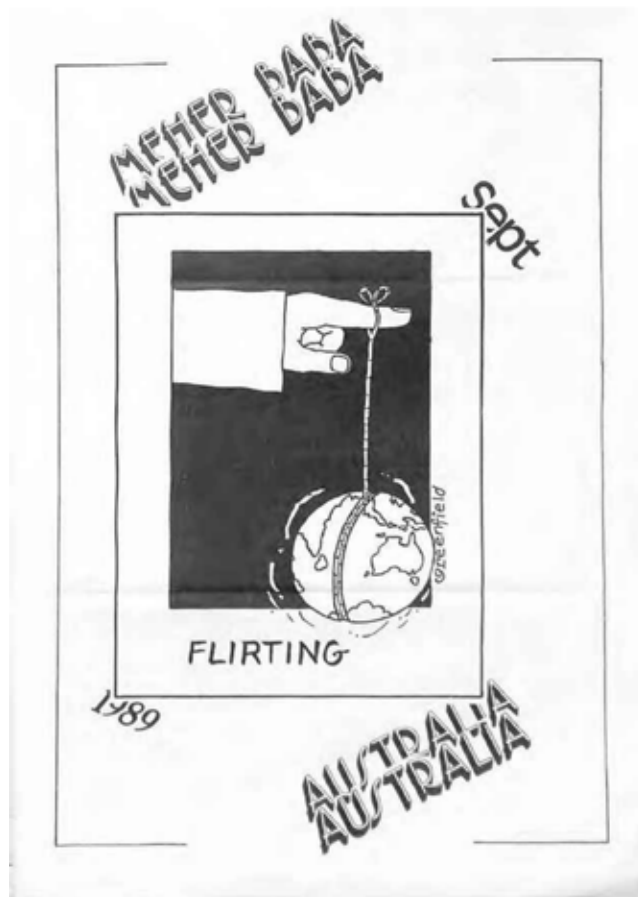
May 1986. Artist John Parry.

... “Stay with God in whatever shape He shapes you and work your works within the boundaries of that shape. Art is His shape of you singing light through your hands, through your speech, imaging His Image. **STAY WITH GOD.** Let the Dream dream out the staying and the going of your form or million forms – they are not you who ever stays with God.”

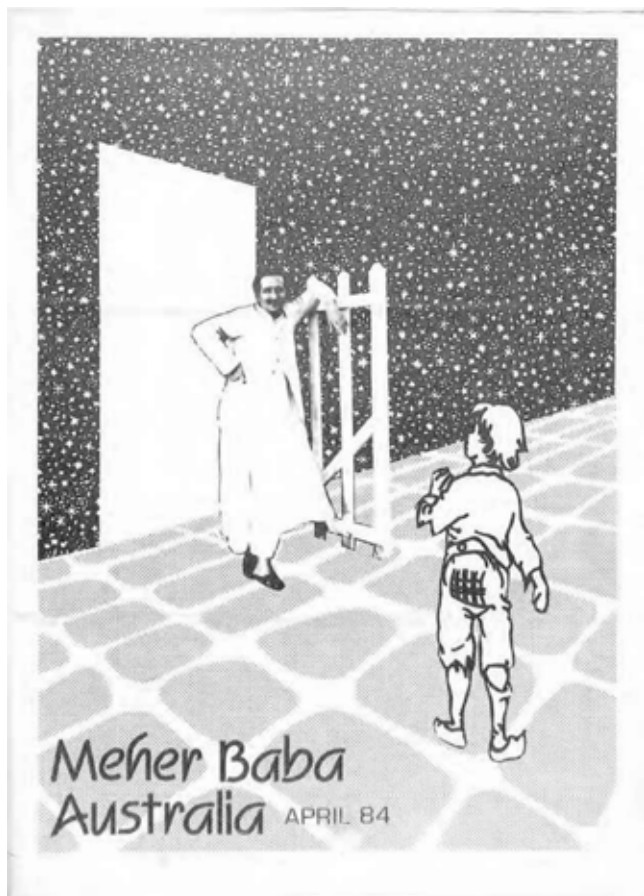
STAY WITH GOD page 154-155.



August 1984. Artist Claire Mataira.



September 1989. Artist Donald Greenfield.



April 1984. Artist Liz Gaskin.



August 1996. Artist Richard Hammerschmidt.

Art as practice of devotion

Art is a method of practicing devotion to the True Teacher, who is the Supreme Artist; the whole universe being His creation, and man His most finished work. To this Artist every true artist has ever bowed, knowing that without His inspiration he is void of any creativeness.

When the pupil has served his teacher and humanity, and learned the method of meditation, he is ready to begin the actual practice of art, which should only have one purpose: the faithful representation of the creative purpose of God, and his own self-effacement.

Representation does not mean in the likeness of an object, but in the likeness of the creativeness of the Creator. In other words, as the student attunes himself to the Supreme Artist, he begins to work in His manner.

Just as the Creator created man in His likeness (in His creativeness), so the mature, humble artist again creates his work in His likeness (in His creativeness).

Discipleship (attitude) uncovers the meaning of form.

Meditation on the True Teacher's form reveals the meaning of the objective world, as all objects are found to be contained in His Person.

When the movement of objects is seen as His activity, then the law of rhythm is realized.

Composition, then, assumes meaning. Previously it was based on preference. Preference is because of attachment.

Seer and seen are now known as not different.

Then is love born – which gives impartiality of vision and same-love to all things.

The resultant activity (production of art work) is creativeness in likeness – perfect and complete representation.

This representation, independent of similitude, is also the truth of the object. If another person, looking at

the object and its representation, should think “They are not the same,” it would be on account of his delusion as to the significance of form. Creativeness cannot be two, as it is the one Creativeness which made both the object and its representation.

Since love is the reason and cause of the objective world, only by love may it be understood.

The awakening of love is usually only achieved after years of devotion: but it is by Grace alone that it comes when it does come.

The manifestation of this love (in the art-work) is a means of revealing that love to others; it becomes a vehicle for their emancipation.

Because it clings to nothing, it creates no impression of attachment upon others, but is in itself pure in its creativeness.

Thus life is revealed as no mystery; and the artist's purpose is accomplished.

SEVEN STARS TO MORNING, Francis Brabazon, 1956, page 77, published by Edwards and Shaw, Sydney.



Thoughts from our accidental editor

Jeanette Young

It was advised in the previous newsletter that this edition is to be the last and final edition of the *Meher Baba Australia* newsletter. The previous edition of the MBA newsletter (May-July 2021) featured a retrospective of anniversaries since 1958 and cast an eye over the history of the newsletter since its inception in 1983. In this edition, the last print edition at this time, we take a quick look at some of the artists who have focused on Meher Baba in visual arts in Australia.

The theme/topic for this final edition was handed on by an interim publishing and editorial group (the indefatigable David Bowling and Gusi Carpenter – who have held the MBA together for many years) somehow to myself, Jeanette (the ‘accidental archivist’ who has now become, by accident of proximity to David and Gusi in archive work, an accidental editor) and has been guided by John Parry.

It is curious to notice, when exploring the histories of several of the recognised artists in Australia, how many were either writers who also expressed their creativity through music and/or in visual arts, or visual artists who also wrote poetry and essays and books and played or wrote music too. It seems that many people who have fallen for Meher Baba are creatively gifted and, as peers within these wider arts communities, have been moved to use these multiple gifts to bear witness to their love and devotion to Him.

From the outset of the Australian and New Zealand Baba movements there was a group of early companions on the journey to the Beloved in this advent who had met and connected with each other’s minds and hearts while studying art: Francis Brabazon and Ossie Hall being one such pair of mates.

During the 1960s there was another cohort of arts school chums across Sydney/Newcastle/Melbourne/Auckland who together met (in sometimes surprising ways), explored, and then found their way to His Feet. Several attended the 1969 Great Darshan. (<https://avatarsabode.com.au/1969/index.htm>) Some of the stories from the 1960s have been reported in detail in previous editions of *Meher Baba Australia*. [November-December 2014]

Francis, already a peer respected artist and writer, upon return to Australia after meeting Meher Baba, dedicated the work of his hands to cutting stone and building Meher

House, gathering around him a team of folk who after knocking off from their weekend labours listened to music, read and recited poetry and literature. And then later, in Woombye, carpenters, musicians, sculptors and labourers gathered around him to prepare Avatar’s Abode for Meher Baba’s 1958 visit. So it could be observed that craftspeople, artisans and artists of various arts disciplines/traditions have been the founding folk of the centres where in Australia we gather to remember Him in company to this day, and where it is intended that people will gather in perpetuity. Francis was himself a farmer, musician, artist, writer, a cultivator of people, and a cultural creative by his encouragement of entertaining pursuits and by his example.

In 1956 a play was performed for Meher Baba at Meher House for which Frances Lee designed the backdrop and since that first visit of the Beloved, there have been many backdrops, sets and costumes designed by Baba Lover artists. Several artists from Australia have paintings hanging in Meherabad. Baba’s House is to this day graced in the entrance foyer (once the open verandah where Baba’s car was driven) by a series of photographic montage panels conceived by Robert Rouse and produced by Peter and Kathryn Milne for Meher Baba’s 100th birthday arts exhibition in Brisbane in 1994, and by a changing display of paintings hanging in the main area of Baba’s House.

From the early 1970s Francis encouraged new and emerging painters by hanging their pieces on the walls of Baba’s House, and Robert Rouse continued for decades to curate the revolving displays. John Parry after assisting Robert for years now has the assistance of Jim Frisino. Some paintings are given to Avatar’s Abode, and can comprise a challenge for storing in safe conditions, given our climate and limited suitable storage space; others are rotated by local artists. Various paintings retired from Baba’s House are currently hung in pilgrim accommodations until archival storage is eventually established.

Anniversaries have featured multiple arts displays and activities – a recent notable “ephemeral” one was the multiple-piece community-painted mosaic of Meher Baba conceived and directed by Jim Frisino, assembled by the crowd at the conclusion of the 2018 60th anniversary, and viewed by a drone from above.

Continued on next page



Drone view of Jim Frisino's completed group collage project at the June 2018 Avatar's Abode Anniversary.

The talent of these many artists has had an influence across our Baba communities. Since 2001 an arts space has featured during anniversary celebrations. Children and all ages can spend time, often with some of our artists such as Charlotte White, Sally and Mehera Moroney, drawing, painting, lantern making etc. Or we've made contributions to a community arts project – as with the Meher Pilgrim Retreat courtyard tile wall project in India. We still unfurl a set of flags painted during a pre anniversary workshop. One favourite flag was done by our guest and the much loved Meherabad resident, Jal Dastur, depicting scenes from the Bhujawe Arti. Each Anniversary we can sit on carved seats and gaze at or play around mosaic installations from past “work of our hands” weekends. And here I am freshly returned from a Sunday of activities celebrating a recent creative and dramatic venture by the current generation of children around Avatar's Abode inspired and undertaken, yet again, by one of our very talented visual artists, Jim Frisino. As we now acknowledge this closing chapter of the MBA newsletter we can look back over many covers of the MBA which have featured drawings by established artists and others contributing their skills and talents with graphics and design. Over the years, the MBA has featured on its covers artwork by Robert Rouse, John Adam, John Bruford, Karl Gallagher, John Parry, Diana Le Page, Claire Mataira, Tony Zois, Paul Smith, Shirin Borthwick, Meherose Borthwick, John Isaacs, Donald Greenfield, Henry Price, Peter Rowan, Leigh Rowan, Patricia Saunders, Vitus Serelis, Tricia Migdoll, Sandra Dibbs, Thomas Zimmer (his moon planting guide), Liz Gaskin, and others. These covers can be viewed via the Avatar's Abode website in the archives digital documents

section <http://13.228.78.6/archives/jai/index.php/Search/objects/view/images/key/d699b3b6211a55461c1340391c3c8c4d>.

In his article as guest editor in the previous edition, (MBA May-July 2021 page 36), David Bowling quoted Wendy Borthwick from 1983... “Perhaps if we can improve our level of communication, we can gradually improve our understanding of one another, and help one another to grow in His Love.”... and David went on to write that he hoped that we have been successful in bridging spaces between His lovers in Australia over the decades and have helped one another to grow in His love. Art as a community and art for the community; perhaps it is all part of the larger theme – so significant in the culture of Avatar's Abode and of Australian Baba devotion – of entertaining the Divine Beloved.

So through this edition's glance back at the visual arts history and activity of the Baba scene there's hope that we can be reminded of many ways of dedicating the work of our hands and hearts to Him, and of celebrating what guides us personally and what might serve to connect us as a community of hearts and souls – even and especially as the digital realms currently enhance other ways of connecting. (For example I have been writing this while listening to a live zoom concert in the US, and of course stopped work as the show ended and I then had the opportunity to say hello and smile and wave zoomishly to Baba linked friends around the globe.)

May He keep us connected, our hearts open, and may we be ready and willing to respond to the nudges of that still small voice within by which He seeks to guide us Home, when we're ready to listen and to hear.

Jai Beloved Meher Baba!



Frances Lee's backdrop for a play in 1956 was on show at the Meher House Sydney 59th Anniversary, 7th – 9th August 2015.



Still from Michael Le Page's video of Jim Frisino's 'Monkey Madness' play which was based on the *Ramayana*, performed at the June 2021 Avatar's Abode Anniversary.

Francis Brabazon: Meher Baba's mandali, painter and poet

Born on January 24, 1907 London UK and died on June 24, 1984 Avatar's Abode, Australia and buried at Avatar's Abode, Queensland, Australia, June 29 1984.

In Francis' own words from *THE GOLDEN BOOK OF PRAISE*, © 1982:

I was born in England [in 1907], but when I was five years old, my father decided that The City of Dreadful Night (London) was not a fit place to bring up a family, and he migrated to Australia, settling first in Sydney, then in Melbourne and finally on a small farm in Northeast Victoria, a short ride from the Kelly country. I was the youngest, and when I was twelve, having fulfilled the State education requirements, I left school. But as I was too small for heavy work, I used to spend time on the property, and help the teacher part-time with her eight grades of thirty pupils. I wanted to go to high school, and there was some talk of the possibility of a scholarship; but Father said that the living away from home would be more than he could afford; and the rest of the family said I was needed on the farm.

Father had bought the property in the flush of the season. Followed the abundant autumn fruits; grape, peach and apricot; Followed by three years of drought when the rabbits moved at night over the hillside, eating out the roots of the grasses, baring earth's Bosom. There was not a living spring of water anywhere.

Father was a travelling man (with an all-line Gold Pass) for a reputable London insurance firm. He loved books for their own sake. He loved the theatre for its own sake. He had a facile pen – which included a genius for limericks. One weekend Father came home and told us he had bought a second-hand bookshop in Melbourne, and would have no further use for the farm. The Irish in me took this betrayal but lightly: deep down within me another Dreaming was beginning its dream; but the Anglo-Saxon which was Mother was wondering where the next loaf of bread was to come from. We (the family) arrived in the city at the same time as the Depression... There was absolutely nothing for a boy from the country to do – except read. And that's what I did – ten years of it.

Then a new world broke over my head – the world of sound and music. I put the books back neatly on the shelves; they had given me their message. Out of this were created new Song-forms, and out of them new ways of sweeping a floor, new ways of boiling a potato.

There was a Man people were calling "The Avatar". He had a shack in Love Street and was a dispenser of Sufic vintages. He used to make his disciples just a little bit drunk, and then tell them about the Divine Beloved who lives in their hearts. Such was the human glory which shone from his eyes that the young men started to flock around him, picking up the Choruses of the divine melodies... There's no end to this biographical tale; especially since in my case there has not yet been a real beginning.

There is a recent (June 24 2021) Babazoom youtube potluck presentation by Raine Eastman Gannett about Francis' life <https://youtu.be/ZfqOthrClcl>

John Parry talks about Francis' paintings during Avatar's Abode Spring Sahavas of 2007: https://youtu.be/s6_2slchK8M

“So the artist, if he is to sing or write or paint or play in truth, in praise of love, may not himself, but first find the golden Thread by which he moves, the lovely Note from which he has continuous becoming. Then find the Holder of the thread, the lovely Singer, and offer Him his body, speech and mind in service, nor asking in return the gift of art or anything, for even this finding and surrenderance is by Grace – Grace which puts us under eternal obligation of repayment.”

STAY WITH GOD page 126.

Oswald (Ozzie) Hall

1917-1991

Oswald Hall attended the National Gallery Art School at 17 years of age in 1934, where he trained rigorously in draughtsmanship, and ‘spent 2 years in the antique room copying plaster models before being allowed to progress to live models, and not putting brush to canvas until they had mastered drawing’ (Heathcote, 1991) .

In his essay for the catalogue of Ozzie’s 1991 retrospective Christopher Heathcote states “the pen and ink drawings Hall produced in the period 1944-46 ... are undoubtedly the most important early Australian surrealist drawings that have come to light in recent years.” [In Paul Smith’s opinion Hall’s later paintings related to Meher Baba were of equal importance] “... his poetry sometimes quite obscure but always fascinating and spiritually surrealist as are his paintings his masterpieces ‘The Brood in Exile’ ‘Intimations of Song’ ‘The Royal Verge’ and many others must be among some of the most important Australian poetry composed in the mid-twentieth century”.

Ozzie wrote “The Source of Styles (A primer on the Soul of Western Culture)” which was published by Paul Smith in PIE Anthology 1974, Whole Australian Catalogue Publications, Melbourne. The wide knowledge of art history evident in this comprehensive account was no doubt

enhanced by growing up with a father, L. Bernard Hall, who was the Director of Melbourne’s National Gallery and Head of its Art School.

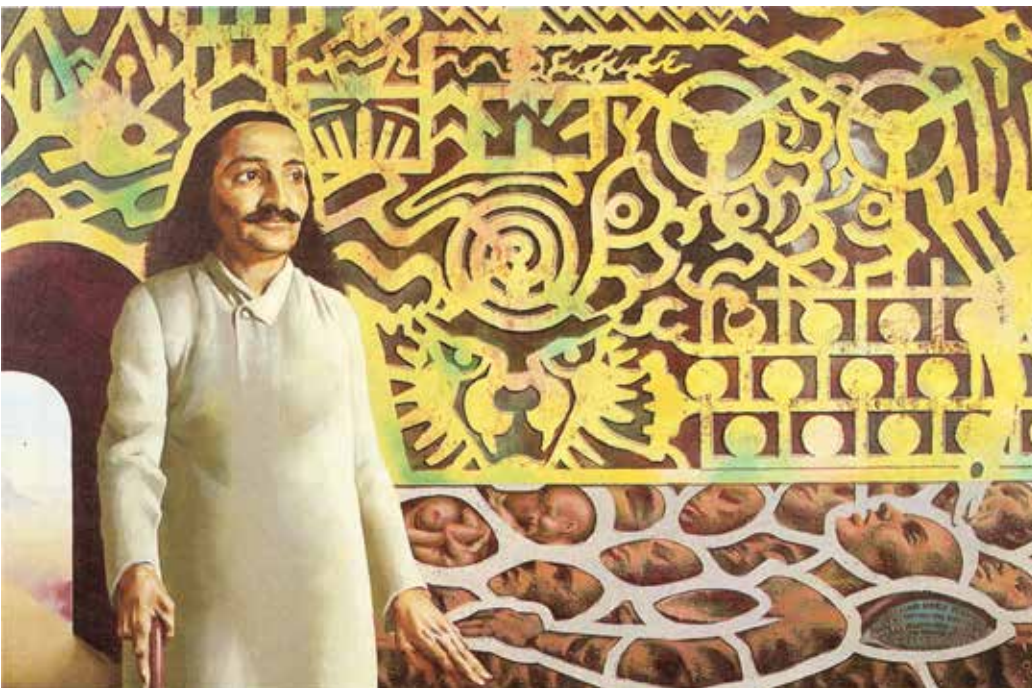
He won a prize for portraiture and a prestigious travelling scholarship in 1938. Unfortunately the outbreak of WWII meant he was unable to travel. That same year he joined the newly founded Melbourne Contemporary Art Society, along with his friend and colleague Francis Brabazon. (Ozzie was described by Paul Smith as “one of the first seekers of God in Australia to recognise Meher Baba as the Perfect Master”). Their subsequent journey to following Meher Baba was via their mutual involvement in Sufism.

Ozzie has been described as an art teacher, painter, poet and raconteur. ‘He was a dynamic person who lifted you up with his love and enthusiasm for life and art and poetry and ... everything.’ He and his wife Betty offered to host Baba at their hand-built mud brick home in Eltham in 1956, so He visited the house, and is reported to have laughed a lot during the visit, much as many other guests did also in the decades that followed. (By many personal anecdotes the house was the scene of many late night/all night sessions of wine with robust discussions about Meher Baba and the great Sufi poets, painting, culture, poetry and writing).

The Hall’s home became the scene of significant evenings for many people in Australia on their journey to discovering or consolidating their faith in Meher Baba, and was a place of celebrations of Meher Baba special occasions until Betty’s death in 2003.

<http://13.228.78.6/archives/jai/index.php/Detail/objects/2978> (Avatar’s Abode archives MBA Newsletter March 1991)

<https://www.meherbabatravels.com/arts/oswald-hall/>



The Visitation by Oswald Hall.

Robert Rouse

1930-2014

Rada Rouse

Robert developed an interest in art in his youth. In the 1950s his milieu was the Sydney Push and he was friends with several art students who studied at the Julian Ashton art school, including John Olsen. A sister-in-law married artists Peter Upward and later, Gray Smith. A friend in the Push also indirectly led to Robert meeting the painter and poet Francis Brabazon and becoming a devotee of Meher Baba.

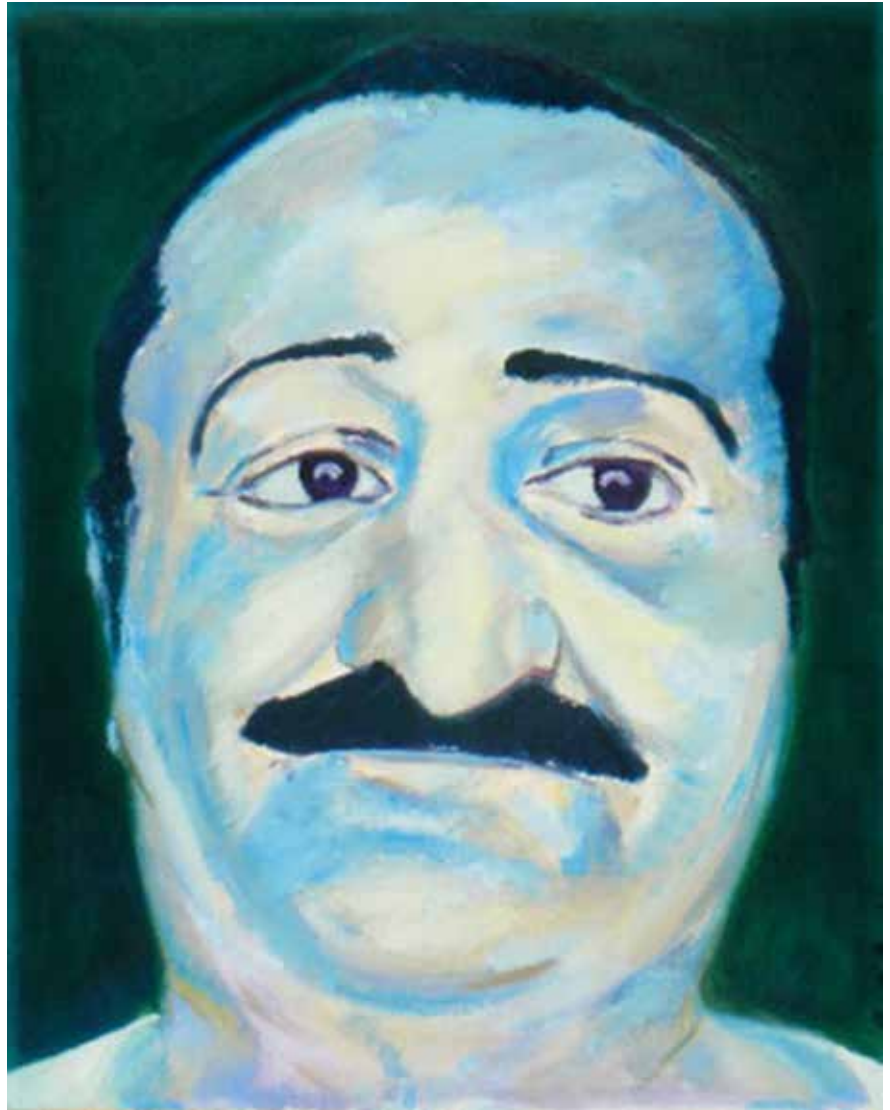
At Baba's direction, Robert and his wife Lorna moved to live at Avatar's Abode, Kiel Mountain, in Queensland in 1958. He spent the next decade farming on the property or in retail sales jobs. Giving talks and writing and singing songs were his main public expression of love for Baba – but not yet painting!

Robert learned a lot about art and art history from the books he collected. He loved stories about the Modernists, Surrealists and Dadaists, and particularly admired Matisse and Picasso. Robert was also a fan of the Abstract Expressionists, especially Willem De Kooning.

In the early 1970s he managed the East-West Bazaar store at Mooloolaba Beach then began crafting his own range of leather belts and bags, selling them along with Lorna's tie-dye silk scarves in markets and boutiques.

It was during this period of creativity that Robert began sketching and painting, with Baba often the subject of his portraiture. Baba was also the inspiration for certain abstract works and collages.

Robert attended life drawing and other classes at Mervyn Moriarty's Flying Art School in Brisbane in the 1970s-80s.



Meher Baba God Man by Robert Rouse held at Avatar's Abode.

He sold a few works through galleries in Brisbane and entered Sunshine Coast art competitions. In 1979, a graphite work was hung in the L.J. Harvey Memorial Prize for Drawing at the Queensland Art Gallery.

Several of Robert's works are in the Avatar's Abode art collection. He also illustrated two small volumes of poetry by Michael J. Rohan and drew the cover portrait of Francis Brabazon for his own book, *The Water Carrier*.

Laurie Adolphus

Born 1912, Southampton England; died 1974, Adelaide SA.

Laurie arrived in Australia as a young man in the 1930s and was part of the bohemian set around Sydney, Kings Cross and Kurrajong. Large parts of that scene were left political radicals, but Laurie, more of a mystic by nature, worked as a lone builder, designed and printed Christmas cards, built a loom and created large tapestries.

Throughout his life he had a deep interest in the spiritual: Buddhism, Sufism, Hindu and Christian mystics. He met Meher Baba when he first arrived in Sydney, Australia in 1956, then at Avatar's Abode in 1958 (to where he travelled together with two young sons.)

Cynthia Borg recollects that Laurie was a very caring person and comments that it was this "caring for children" that caused Laurie to say "no" to Baba in 1958 Sahavas at Avatar's Abode in Queensland. "Baba asked everyone present at the meeting to raise his/her hand if not willing to obey Baba 100%. Laurie raised his together with my 2 brothers Noel & Colin.He later had a private meeting with Baba." Laurie's son Paul adds "Laurie wanted to

explain to Baba that he had not promised to obey him, and so he was leaving. Baba said, 'you don't have to obey me, and I want you to stay'.

In that interaction, something significant was passed to Laurie, a spiritual gift."

Laurie's private meeting with Baba had a strong effect. Baba gave him a small stone from Seclusion Hill at Meherabad, which he kept in his pocket during all his exams at University.

As a sole parent at forty-five, he sat the matriculation exam, studied psychology at Melbourne University, and entered a career as academic and clinician.

He painted consistently, but did not exhibit nor promote himself as an artist, and called his art style "Mystic Naïve". The painting which hangs in Baba's House is believed to have been completed in 1958 and depicts Baba's Square at Avatar's Abode with Meher Baba and the Mandali and sahavasees and the countryside around, the car, flagpole, and luggage placed on the veranda.



Baba leaving Avatar's Abode 1958 by Laurie Adolphus.

“Art is an act of love in likeness of itself – Spirit moulding matter into lovely form: God’s compassion as Avatar unto men; and men’s devotion to Avatar as God, by God – for devotion is by grace alone. ...”

STAY WITH GOD page 91.

Francis Brabazon on ‘real Baba art’

John Isaacs-Young

Francis, when he came back from India, encouraged, amongst other things, Baba focused art works, including portraiture: representations of God in human form. To this end he made available the wall space of Baba’s house for aspiring artists to hang their efforts. Keen as he was to oversee the beginning of the new art for a new age, his expectations were modest given that we were starting from scratch and still loaded down with, and surrounded by the tired old baggage of a decadent civilisation.

During a stroll around Avatar’s Abode, I recall Francis discussing some of the latest contributions to the wall when he made this comment, ‘There will be no real Baba art (meaning portraiture) till all the photographs of Baba are gone’. Typically, he left such provocative gems hanging – not offering further explanation but moving on to other topics. “Is that right?” I thought, “How could that be?” “What is he saying?” “What does he mean?”

Well, I don’t know quite what he meant. Decades later I still find myself wondering – and a couple of things come to mind.

Francis admired the writings of Ananda Coomaraswami whose status Baba also acknowledged. He sometimes came up in conversation, Francis referring to Coomaraswami’s discrimination between ‘bourgeois art’ (naturalism) and high formalism. When you stand before the latter something can happen. Coomaraswami had distaste for mere aesthetic ornament that was not ‘an aid to contemplation’. If the artwork is ‘an iconography of the Real’, there’s a chance it awakens in you a shock of recognition, ‘the shock of the Real’. That is because the artist has received those images from Depth, from the Big Love, from the Source of Meaning, from God, and put them down as received; as distinct from those who slavishly duplicate scenes from mundane life, without reference to the presence of the Intervener, who alone brings charm.

You might say that the image, the human form of the God-man is something else, something special, something worth duplicating and that is true... but the inner form of the Master is, we are told, something else again, hence Baba’s injunction to, ‘Strive to see me as I really AM.’

As long as there are photographs to refer to, might artists be stuck in some way? Was that Francis’ insight? Will they

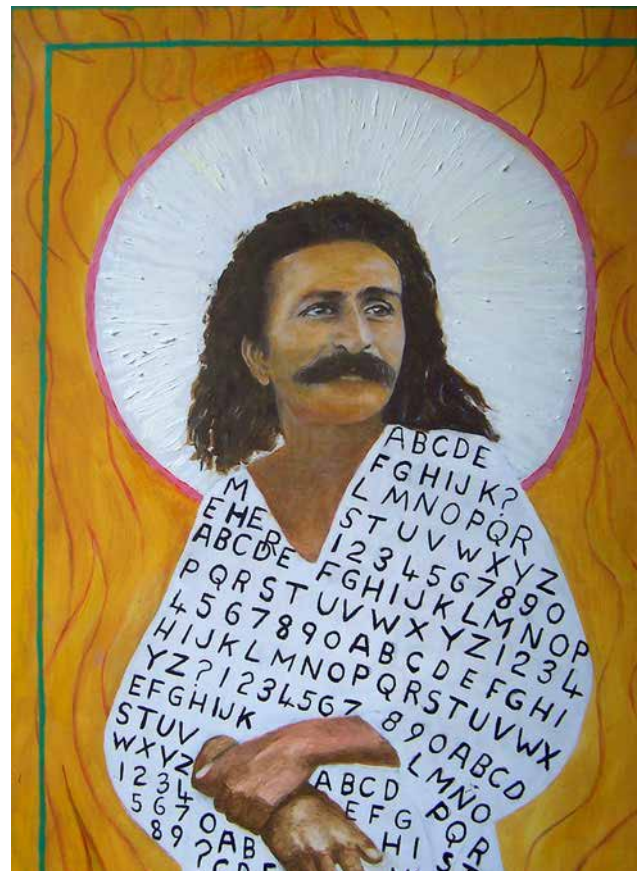
continue to miss the point perhaps and rest in mundane habitual associations with tired cultural norms and body image traps? Will they be less inclined to search inside for the New, the True Inner Form of the Man?

When we accompanied Francis on trips to Sydney, he would admire certain structures in the built environment; things like bridges, great arched spans of concrete. “It’s a pity in a way”, he would say, “that it all has to go.”

If or when the photos go, many other things will go besides. Then, for artists of all kinds, the game, (inside and out), will be somewhat different.

“...then the young poets will write poems about snow as the Japanese did, long ago.”

Quote from ‘Elegy for the Young Poets’ in *THE WORD AT WORLD’S END* by Francis Brabazon, page 34, published by John F Kennedy University Press, Berkeley, California, 1971.



The Word by John Parry (detail).
John and Wendy Borthwick collection.

On photographs and paintings

John Parry

Nowadays the general public has access to so many photographs and films of Meher Baba. In the distant past of another age only a few inspired artists had access to His real image; when He was Jesus Christ, Lord Buddha, Krishna.

But these few, through paintings, showed their inner image of Him. They would see his image and then paint it. We are not talking of your every day artist, but of a one in a million inspired soul. We now speak of these particular art works in museums and art galleries as *masterpieces*.

“You must strive to see me as I really am. But how will you see me as I am? By longing in your heart to see me. But how will you get this longing? By loving me: You must strive to see me as I really am.”*

Maybe this is what Francis is referring to? No photographs. We must start to find the real image of Baba within. It is early days in the Meher Baba art world and probably therefore just the beginnings of some new Baba paintings. We have a long way to go with this new art for a new age. Until then a photograph can be a reminder, a starting point, knowing that we have to transcend that image for it to become a painting.

As a guide for us in this endeavour I believe that there is none better than Book V in *Stay with God*.

Meher Baba says: “Art is one of the sources through which the soul expresses itself and inspires others, but to express art thoroughly one must have his inner emotions thoroughly opened. When you paint you forget everything, except your object, when you are so engrossed in it you are lost in it, and when you are lost in it, your ego diminishes. When that happens, Love Infinite appears, and when Love is created, God is attained, so you can see how Art can lead one to find Infinite God.”**

[*Ed: Meher Baba quoted page 229 in Rick Chapman’s book, *Meeting God in Human Form*]

[** Ed: from *Lord Meher* on line, page 1631]



Baba Bathing the Leper by John Parry.

John Parry

Born Ballarat Victoria 1938, I traveled to New Zealand from Australia in 1961 attending drawing classes and painting. I became involved in the NZ Art scene, exhibiting my drawings and paintings, but in 1967, after taking LSD, I became totally disillusioned with the art I was producing and stopped painting.

In 1968 I started painting again, having heard about Meher Baba, and deciding that here was someone truly worthy of my whole hearted attention, and to concentrate only upon his image.

I worked in Art Galleries and Art Museums and painted when I had time. Around 1983 I had more time

Continued on page 15

Karl Gallagher

Born: About 1943; Died: 21st March, 2016 (73 yrs.) Newcastle NSW Australia.



The Universal Thief Meher Baba by Karl Gallagher, 1984.

At thirteen, feeling suicidal despair and longing to be free of his pain, Karl began to pray at the foot of a large sculpture of the crucified Christ asking for deliverance from his life. That was in 1956 – the same time Meher Baba was in Australia. Karl felt relief from his prayers.

A few years later after falling in with a rough crowd, Karl faced court and then prison, where a catholic priest offered weekly psychotherapy/analysis sessions which began his path back to God. His desire to know more of God grew

under the influence of Father Toomey and a wide reading of books from Kerouac, Fromm, Freud, Jung, to St Theresa of Avila and other Christian mystics, and the New Testament.

“One morning in autumn 1966 I walked out the front door onto Lygon St and with my physical eyes I saw that EVERYTHING was suffused with a golden light. I saw a golden hued energy flowing through everything for several days. ...All my fears were removed and I was given the absolute certainty that God was a living dynamic presence.”

Soon after this incident Karl met Paul Smith, first heard the name Meher Baba, and gradually began to meet the older Melbourne Baba people: Ozzie and Betty Hall, Stan and Clarice Adams, Peter Rowan, Beryl Giddens, Meryl Baulch, Ena Lemon, Le Buchanan, Ethel Woodford, and then Francis Brabazon in 1975. In January 1967 reading *Listen Humanity* rang a powerful resonance within him. Karl acknowledges much needed support from Clarice (and others) when in the 1970s and early 1980s his path became extremely difficult, and she shared with Karl an interview with Don Stevens recounting a mechanism for bringing Baba’s (or God’s) help directly into one’s life. This finally gave him access to “Baba’s NEVER FAILING help”.

In 1982 on his first pilgrimage to Meherabad, in the company of Paul Smith, he delivered a painting which Eruch had earlier said had a place reserved at Meherabad. He was grateful for the active help, support and encouragement of Mehera, Mani, and Eruch.

Adapted from Karl’s account on <https://www.meherbabatravels.com>

Donald Greenfield

“All that matters is the love with which one does what one does – the love and the song in one’s words.”

– From *The Wind Of The Word* by Francis Brabazon.

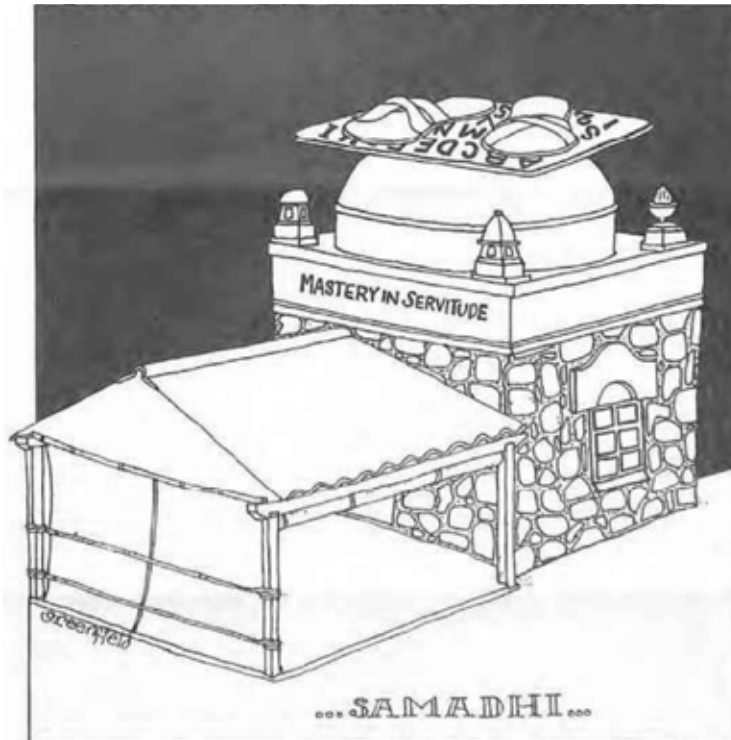
I left Brisbane during the late 1960s to live in Sydney, where I first saw photos of a mysterious man with a ravishing smile... something stirred deep within my soul whenever I spotted a Don't Worry Be Happy poster.

I soon learned that Meher Baba claimed to be Christ; had maintained silence for 44 years, and twice visited Australia. Whoever he was, I knew my redeemer liveth! Besides, I loved the idea of God wearing a pink coat. Two years after Baba dropped his body I arrived at Avatar's Abode. There, late on a Saturday afternoon in January 1971, I met Francis Brabazon.

Those early days at Avatar's Abode played an important part in my creative development – I gained valuable insights into the nature of artistic integrity from Francis, and Robert Rouse.

In the decades since I've produced a large body of work, most of it in print. My whimsical line drawings were initially published in *Nation Review* and *Rolling Stone*, then later by *The Bulletin*, *Australian Business*, *Time Off*, *The Courier Mail*. University of Queensland Press and Penguin Books Australia published editions of Greenfield cartoons – Brisbane Lines, and Executive Set – during the early 1980s.

My work is represented in the State Library of



Meher Baba Australia cover graphic by Donald Greenfield December 1988.

Queensland collection of classic Australian cartoons and the Australian Cartoon Museum, Melbourne. It has been exhibited in the Queensland Art Gallery (1975/79/80), Blake Prize for Religious Art (Sydney 1976), Queensland Performing Arts Centre (1990/91), Brisbane Museum of Contemporary Art (1994) and University of Southern Queensland (1994).

Continued from page 13 – John Parry

and painted a series of paintings depicting Meher Baba and aspects of his life. I exhibited these paintings at an Art Gallery in Auckland to very favourable reviews followed by another exhibition some years later. This later exhibition called “His Story” was depicting the various Avatars: Krishna, Lord Buddha, Muhammad, and Meher Baba.

In the 1980s the family returned to Australia and Avatar's Abode to be around more Baba lovers. I have attempted to paint Meher Baba in some fresh new way.

Images of these attempts can be found on the internet site Meher Baba Travels Arts page <https://www.meherbabatravels.com/arts/john-parry/>

Editor's note: for a YouTube version of a talk given by John in Meherabad 2014 <https://youtu.be/txk7wgBW728> or <https://www.youtube.com/user/michaellepage1894>

Diana Le Page



Diana Le Page in her studio.



Diana Le Page's paintings in the dining hall at the Meher Pilgrim Retreat in Meherabad, India.

“Art is the act of God – the action of His *likeness* in our hearts: so that we wake from sleeping and begin to dream of thousands of Brightnesses and lovely Form, and our faces grow pale and our bodies thin with love.”

STAY WITH GOD page 155.

I was born in 1943 in Annapolis, Maryland, USA with a visual handicap. An eye surgeon, Michael E. Lippman, M.D., put it this way, “Diana Le Page was examined in my office two weeks ago on June 9, 2004. She has a rare form of vitelliform macular degeneration since birth in both eyes. She has 20/400 vision in each eye and is truly legally blind. Her ability to portray form and colours in her art renderings is unfathomable to me as an eye surgeon.”

In 1963 I went to Paris, France and became apprenticed to two sculptors, Daria Gamsaragan and Lydia Luzanowfsky. Lydia was the head of the studio for Antoine Bourdelle who had been the head of the studio for Auguste Rodin. I remained in Paris for several years learning my profession.

I returned to America and lived in the Los Angeles, California area where in 1971 I was accepted into a La Cienega Boulevard art gallery. In addition to showing my work as a sculptor, they acted as my agent, procuring commissions to do monumental sculptures for site-specific public and private locations.

In 1978, I moved to Australia where I married my husband, Bill Le Page, and began drawing and painting Meher Baba, which I have continued to do ever since. Because Meher Baba represents for me all that is beautiful and truthful, the natural meditation of drawing and painting Him is a deeply absorbing experience; one that has added immeasurably to the richness of my life.

For over forty years I have studied Meher Baba's life and teachings in books, spoken with those who knew and lived with Him, and immersed myself in the extensive collections of photos and films of Him that exist.

The most significant commission of this period has been the Mural Project for the Dining Hall at the Meher Pilgrim Retreat in Meherabad, India. It consists of 16 paintings, each 5ft. x 10ft. (1.5m. x 3m.), depicting times in Meher Baba's life that particularly touched me.

Tricia Migdoll

1948 –

“To penetrate into the essence of all being and significance”

This is my inspiration. This is what I try to tap in to when I paint: Whether it is a still life, a portrait, or simply a leaf, or a flower.

I did my first drawing of Baba in India, and showed it to Rano, who was most encouraging. Eventually, I began painting in earnest in 2003 at the age of 55.

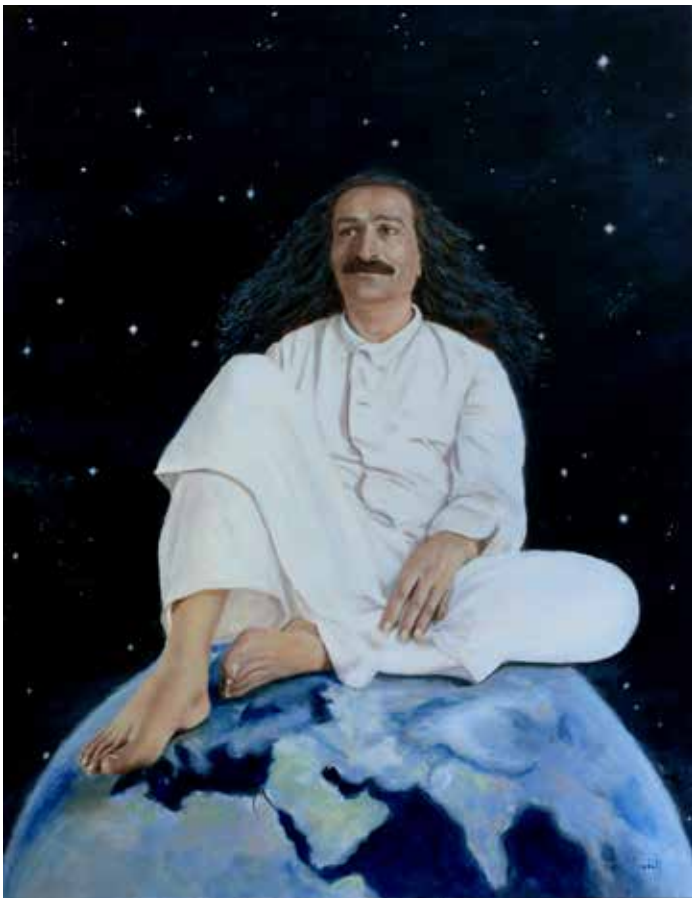
It is an enormous privilege to paint Meher Baba, and also Mehera. To study His beautiful face and form is a delight and a powerful meditation.

Painting Mehera is actually tougher as I feel the weight of responsibility to capture her beauty. I actually pray to Baba to help me when I paint her.

The Paintings in Baba’s House: The painting of Baba was a whim to paint some powerful lines from The Masters Prayer. Thus “O Parvardigar” is a start.

The painting titled ‘Mehera Magdalene’ was inspired by a William Bouguereau painting of Mary Magdalene. My aim was to blend these two loves of our Lord into one. I hope it pleased Him.

As Francis Brabazon says ‘Art is His act, in us, for Him’. (*Stay With God*, Book V, Part 1 Theme, page 91)



O Parvardigar by Tricia Migdoll.



Mehera Magdalene by Tricia Migdoll.

Jim Frisino

Born: Brooklyn NY USA 1948.

From childhood I loved to draw. When I was about 10 I was given a large mural size printed outline of Jesus' opened tomb and the hills of Jerusalem, I was to colour it in for our church for Easter. While colouring it in I felt instinctively that I knew how to apply layers of colour and had the sense that I had done this before. For university I selected architecture as my major, in the hopes that I might design housing for the poor, but in 1968 I decided instead to shift to Fine Arts with the intention of finding a way to create artwork that would inspire an inner experience that might uplift people no matter what they may experience in life. In the winter of 68-69, one chilly rainy evening while thinking about what I wanted my art to be about, I saw a neon sign flashing outside a record store, "SOUL"! I had my answer. In 1969 I transferred as an art major to Pratt Institute in NYC. I was unaware at that time that a number of Baba artists had attended this school, Jim Meyer and Sheila Krynski to name two. 1969 was a year of personal loss with the death of someone I was close to, and then in the summer of 1970 I was mugged in NYC. I decided not to return to New York but instead went back to Detroit to be with friends and be part of Buckminster Fuller's World Game Project.

In late 1970, I read Pete Townsend's article in Rolling Stone magazine about Meher Baba. On reading it I felt an immediate affinity and a sense that I had found myself again. A roommate, on seeing the cover with Baba's photo, responded that he knew all about Baba; "John Dennison's Guru". I immediately asked for John's phone number and he became my initial contact, sharing his Baba books. In the spring of 1971 I went to Berkeley California where Baba took me very lovingly under his wing. I heard Darwin Shaw speak on Baba, and then found a ride to the Meher Center, Myrtle Beach S.C. On meeting Lynn and Phylis Ott, Baba artists, I saw a path forward and began painting my own Baba paintings.

I gave my first painting to the Mandali in '72 on my first trip to India, it's in Mandali Hall. A few years later I returned with a painting for Mehera, which is on her porch. After



Meher Baba: Meherasad Sitting Room by Jim Frisino 2019.

moving to Myrtle Beach in '75 I worked with Lynn Ott in '79 as part of his new collective art project called "The New Life Conference of Visual Art" where we worked together mainly as a three man team on a series of very large paintings "in conference". I also created my own business called New Life Signs, painting signs and murals. Over the years I gave some of my paintings to other Baba locations: Hamirpur, London, Iran, and Avatar's Abode. Years later, when I moved to Australia in 2001, I located the painting I had given the Abode. It was in the tool shed in disrepair and needing work, and when finished was renamed "Tadaki's Baba". It hung over the teenage Tadaaki Iimura's bed during his final days of palliative care on the Abode.

Over the years I've worked in various art related professions; signs, murals, corporate illustration, graphic arts instructor, and, on moving to Australia, caricatures and portraits. These days I continue to do a variety of community and art related projects (mostly for Avatar's Abode) as well as my own art.

Claire Mataira

1949 –

Claire Mataira was born in Holland, the oldest of 7 children. After completing high school she went to the Academy of fine Arts, in Arnhem, Holland. In 1971 she immigrated to Australia, and went to the Stanley Street Art School, which later was incorporated in the University of Adelaide. There she completed a Diploma of Fine Arts Painting in 1979 (after having a break and giving birth to her daughter in 1976).

She was “captured” by Meher Baba in Oct. 1974 and started studying His life and teachings and began to paint His portrait. After finishing her Diploma in Adelaide in 1979, she travelled with her husband and daughter to Avatar’s Abode in Queensland, and settled in Brisbane. From that time on she became a regular visitor to Avatar’s Abode, taking part in almost all of the yearly Anniversaries till 2005, when she was called to work in Peru. In 1980 her first son was born and in 1988 the youngest son.

During these 25 years of Anniversary attendance she often painted backdrops for the plays and helped decorate the Baba House, and helped with the dishes and cleaning during the large gatherings. From 1988 till 1994 she lived in Christchurch, New Zealand, where her last child was born. During these years she still managed to come to the Anniversaries, by bringing a finished portrait of Meher Baba which paid for her travel expenses. These paintings would often hang in the large tents where the Anniversary



Baba with blue background by Clair Mataira.

crowd would gather.

Apart from those paintings, in 1980 she started to do pen drawings of Meher Baba and these were accepted for the *Meher Baba Australia* newsletter. There may have been up to 25 drawings that got published in that way. This happy activity came to a halt when she went to Peru, where her energy was taken up with coping with the new environment and learning and practicing shamanism with Amazonian plant medicines.

From 2017 she contributed drawings to several book publications, like “101 stories of finding Love”, 3 issues, and “The Boys”, about Meher Baba’s early work at the Prem

Ashram. She also produced several covers of CDs, and has a YouTube channel about Amazonian plant medicine work and Meher Baba themes. She also wrote many short articles and stories for *Meher Baba Australia* newsletter, and produced a few books about her life and experiences, which are mainly unpublished to date.

Here we feature one of the paintings that were presented during the Anniversary in 1999, when she had returned to Australia and was living in NSW. Again this made it possible for her to attend and bring her children and grandchild.

With deep gratitude to Baba, who always heard the cry of the heart! AMBKJ

Henry Price

In 1973 Henry heard of Meher Baba while studying painting at National Gallery of Victoria Art School (now Victorian College of the Arts). Immediately attracted to this mysterious, spiritual man, he bought *Avatar* by Jean Adriel and *Listen Humanity*, and halfway through reading *Avatar* sitting at a Melbourne bus stop, had a mini-epiphany and burst out laughing ... His 'search for meaning in life' had unexpectedly been fulfilled.

It was three years before Henry met another Baba lover, attended the June 1976 anniversary at Avatar's Abode and in January 1977 was welcomed at Meherabad by Eruch Jessawalla, who became a personal hero. Being a lover of Meher Baba was not an easy journey. Henry says "I have had periods of losing my grip on his damaan, yet somehow he grabbed me by the ankle and held on to me."

At art school Henry's art was abstract, sometimes with surreal landscapes. He made no attempt to integrate imagery of Meher Baba into his art, although "He informs all of it, and occasionally appears."

The painting now hanging in the Farmhouse at Avatar's Abode, from a loved photograph in Naosherwan Anzar's book *The Beloved*, was painted in the early 1980s after abandoning aspirations for an art career and instead beginning what became more than three decades working as a consulting psychologist, counsellor, facilitator, mediator and workplace complaints investigator. This picture is among the few of our Beloved attempted by Henry.

Later in 1992 Henry became the first Master of Visual Arts graduate from the Canberra School of Art – now ANU. He has featured in various solo and group exhibitions and was represented in the 1989 Sulman Prize, Art Gallery of NSW, with a larger painting called 'Three Fates Conspiring'.

Since retirement Henry is able to devote time to his love



The Beloved by Henry Price.

of painting without aspirations for success or acclaim. For Henry art is a personal journey between an individual and their muse who fortunately happens to be the Avatar. Living happily with his wife Teresa in their strawbale house and studio in the country outside of Canberra, he also enjoys being a musician, (in bands and recording his own music) and writing ... from poetry to philosophy.

Katie Pye

Weaving the golden threads of my first love – painting – into the grace and presence of God began in 1982. After receiving a Visual Arts Board grant for a 3 month studio residency in Italy, I found myself questioning my purpose. Up until that point I had a fantastically social and flourishing career that bridged the boundaries of art and clothing design. Unbeknownst to me, it was on a collision course with God.

The tranquil mountainous countryside north of Milan, with its unfamiliar beauty, was the perfect place for my isolated introspection. Iconic monuments sparking my Catholic childhood memories encircled my studio. Opposite, a narrow lane led to the village's Cathedral, its stone architecture dominated the hilltop of Bessozo. On a peak above my studio stood a small chapel, on a road lined with the Stations of the Cross that wound down to the rose garden outside my balcony. Time spent in this foreign landscape unraveled my sense of comfort and familiarity and my mind became consumed with looking for a deeper meaning and purpose in life. A restless emptiness was sweeping through my creative concepts and I found myself standing in a ruin of my own imaginings.

Fed up with these endless examinations of my own mind, I surrendered to my cluelessness. On a bright sun-filled morning, as I stood internally drawn into my helplessness, a prayer spontaneously arose from my heart: "PLEASE ... What is it that I am looking for?"

In a flash, every fibre of my being knew with absolute certainty that I had taken birth to find God. This field of consciousness consumed me – there was not me and it, just One illuminating,

radiant presence of LOVE, love, love, love.

Oh God! You blew open the doors and windows of my heart and every cell of my being was filled with your presence of LOVE

An Epiphany: The stars of the heavens had shown me the Truth of my experience and had awoken it in my mind and heart. My journey to God had begun; back in Australia I was consciously seeking the 'path without a path'. It has been studded with jewels, potholes, dead-ends and extraordinary turns of events – full of grace – right to the Beloved's door.

"Every being is a point from which a start could be made towards the limitless Ocean of Love, Bliss, Knowledge and Goodness already within him" – Meher Baba

This experience of Divine Love informs my everyday art practice. I am remembering I am not the artist but the instrument. Surrender to getting out of the way; let the grace flow through in collaboration. It is here that the inspiration comes in, with courage and trust, and makes all great art possible.

There is no need to ever hold back from the challenge to be creative with the Creator.



Katie Pye community built mosaic of Meher Baba at Avatar's Abode.

On painting Meher Baba

Ross Keating

Photography arrived with Meher Baba's Advent, as did wireless communications and aeroplanes. It is obvious that Baba wanted Himself photographed. Photographs of Baba give irrefutable evidence of His historical existence, and considering there are thousands upon thousands of them His existence cannot be doubted. But His photographic image is also His gift to us for they show God in human form; the Lord of the Universe for this Age. And like Baba's words these photographs point to His divinity.

I think George Bernard Shaw was thinking along these lines when he remarked "I would willingly exchange every

single painting of Christ for one snapshot." And I can recall Eruch once remarking in Mandali Hall that Baba's photographs were more real than any of us sitting there.

A photo of Baba has a kind of pure existence that a painting of Baba does not have. Many Baba lovers had their first contact with Baba through a photo before they read any of His messages. And over time, each Baba lover seems to develop a particular affinity with a particular photo or photos and not with others. In all this, one thing is certain, Baba uses His photographic image to do His work of contacting people inwardly.

I have heard it said that there can be no real painting

of Baba till all the photos of Him are destroyed. But any painting of Baba has to make some reference to Baba's photographic image, otherwise who/what is it a painting of? The alternative is to paint some impersonal aspect of Baba as God or say that all paintings are of Him as He is in everything and beyond everything. But it is God in human form which is the most powerful expression of God. Francis's advice to the painter Ozzie Hall was to "paint the man" not some "divine" abstraction.

But there is still the pressing question: what do Baba painters do with all of these photographs of Baba staring them in the face?

I think they can do what they like. But, as always, no real art is going to come by responding to an expectation imposed externally by others or by following an internal impulse to satisfy a need other than one's deepest heart desire.

In my opinion, what a Baba painting does that a photograph of Baba doesn't, what makes it unique and wonderful, is that it expresses something of the dynamics of love between the lover-painter and their Beloved-subject. This for me is what generates the beauty of a Baba painting; it has that unnameable and mysterious flavour of this love dynamic. And this feeds the viewer and reminds them of their own love relationship with their Beloved.

Phillipa Howells

Phillipa Howells' cartoon on our cover was from a dream she had during pilgrimage to Meherabad in 1997. The cover features a page of her journal then.

The idea of letting Baba take from us what is no longer necessary, or ridding us of awarenesses which distract us from the task of dedicating moments to Him, somehow echoes with various artist's comments and ponderings within this newsletter about letting all else fade and allowing the "third hand" – the hand of God – take over in the creative process. Darwin Shaw, in the unpublished but widely read *Effort and Grace*, offers us a piece of advice or encouragement in dressing our souls each day for Him and with His remembrance.

In Chapter 16 'Dressing our Soul' page 103, he writes: "As we grow little by little in spirit, we find that we can no longer tolerate some actions, thoughts, and feelings in ourselves anymore. We also become more aware of actions, thoughts, and feelings that are compatible with our inner being. More and more we want peace of mind, which means more harmony, upliftment, more light within, and deeper and deeper values. We see that it is not so much accepting a doctrine as weeding out things we had not known were affecting us."

May we surrender to the Master Surgeon doing as He will with the scalpel He wields so artfully!

Mountains are corruptible. But the work of our hands
 time and wind and rain cannot destroy.
 For our hands are the purpose of our blood,
 and our blood is the river of our soul –
 which sings the river, the purpose.
 Death's scissors may cut the bands
 of love a million times; but we can enjoy
 new voyages on another flood:
 and all rivers wander to the same Ocean-goal.

Man's life is more numerous than all the sands
 of all the world's beaches; and reaches back beyond Space
 (God's sackful of suns) to the primal tone
 of the Creation Song.
 Though faith is as brittle as burnt bones,
 and our vision reduced to the size of our face –
 the Word of your Silence will restore to us the work of
 our hands.

*from THE BELOVED IS ALL IN ALL by Francis
 Brabazon, p. 23. Published 1988, Beloved Books.*

“I repeat: Materialism and spirituality must go hand in hand. The balance of head and heart must be maintained; the head for discrimination, the heart for feeling, whereby it is possible to realize infinite consciousness in art, science, nature and in every phase of life.”

LORD MEHER page 1408.

No road like the blues

(a song by Ember Swan) aka Elischa

I'm crazy for a colour
 I've seen its shadow in clear skies and the pale eyes
 of a horse who I met down a lane.

Its fragrance is in drops of rain and echoed nightingales'
 refrain –
 its taste in eucalyptus smoke at dawn
 I search for it:
 in haystacks
 next to chewing gum on the underside of bars,
 deep inside
 old Spanish guitars
 I've painted pictures of dancing gods
 white robed in tangled forests: angels above,
 Heaven-Earth's-brown roots below.

I've studied names that breathe peace into my lungs
 like tapered candles
 or purple-centered lilies;
 some chime like a brass cymbal or trill like a wooden flute,
 some crackle like crushed sage for the incense-flame.
 But this colour has a secret name.
 I'll take tides that turn, waves that roll and sands that
 churn
 I'll take roads that sing, that lift and spin like birds on the
 wing
 For there's no road like the blues.
 O The empty-full
 wild-still
 beat track dance blues
 There's no hope like you
 song friend
 that can take me straight back
 To the colour
 of that voice.

“It is true that the voice of God, having once fully
 penetrated the heart, becomes strong as the tempest and
 loud as the thunder. But before reaching the heart it is as
 weak as a light breath which scarcely agitates the air. It
 shrinks from noise, and is silent amid agitation.”

*St. Ignatius of Loyola in Carol Kelly-Gangi
 THE ESSENTIAL WISDOM OF THE
 SAINTS. NY: Fall River Press, 2008, p. 3.*

The themes of the different Avatars are determined by social necessity at the time

In a few recent discussions around Avatar's Abode the quote below from *Lord Meher* has shown some helpful light on various perspectives. It is included now in case it is also something which might be useful for others to ponder at this time.

While Baba was in London, the Countess Kitty Pahlen hosted a reception for him at her home on Friday evening, 29 June 1934. About fifteen sincere people came to meet Baba, and he answered their many questions and gave explanations:

One man asked, "**How can I be a true Christian?**"

From the alphabet board, Baba replied, "By following the teachings of Christ, and by living the life that he lived and wanted you to live. People speak of Christianity but are not prepared to follow Christ's words – to present the other cheek when slapped – saying it is impractical and flying at one another's throat at the slightest provocation. They create

hatred where Jesus wanted them to create an atmosphere of love and brotherhood everywhere. What wonder is it that the whole world is in a muddle about everything!"

Mrs. H. Ford then asked, "**But if you are the Christ, why don't people know about it?**"

Baba answered, "It is because people cannot know that I have to take this human form. Jesus was not known in his time, even by his own intimate, immediate companions. Judas, who was near him all the time and even kissed him, could not understand him. So do you all not understand me externally in my physical form, because as the Real, Infinite Christ, I am within you, as [I am] in everybody."



Meher Baba at the Backett's Seven Oaks Cottage, Halstead, UK, 3 July 1934. Photographer: unknown. © Meher Nazar Publications.

Someone asked why Jesus never married. Baba gave a detailed explanation (which had been dictated the year before):

The Avatar's exterior way of living is regulated by the habits and customs of the times, and he adopts that attitude which is most suited to serve as an example to his contemporaries. But in essence, all Avatars embody the same ideal of life.

At the time of Zoroaster, humanity was hesitant and lacked equilibrium. [The Persians then] were neither complete materialists nor really attracted toward the spiritual light. He taught them to be good householders, to marry and abstain from desiring the wife of another, and

to worship God. His own life was based on this principle: good thoughts, good words and good deeds. Zoroaster was married.

At the time of Krishna, the Hindus were at war fighting among themselves. Envy and greed were predominant, and a real concept of spiritual life and love was unknown to them. Krishna based his spiritual teachings on the laws of love and pure, innocent merriment. Human beings were joyfully directed toward a disinterested ideal of love.

At the time of Buddha, the people of India were deep into materialism. In order to demonstrate that their

Continued on page 26

The necessity of style

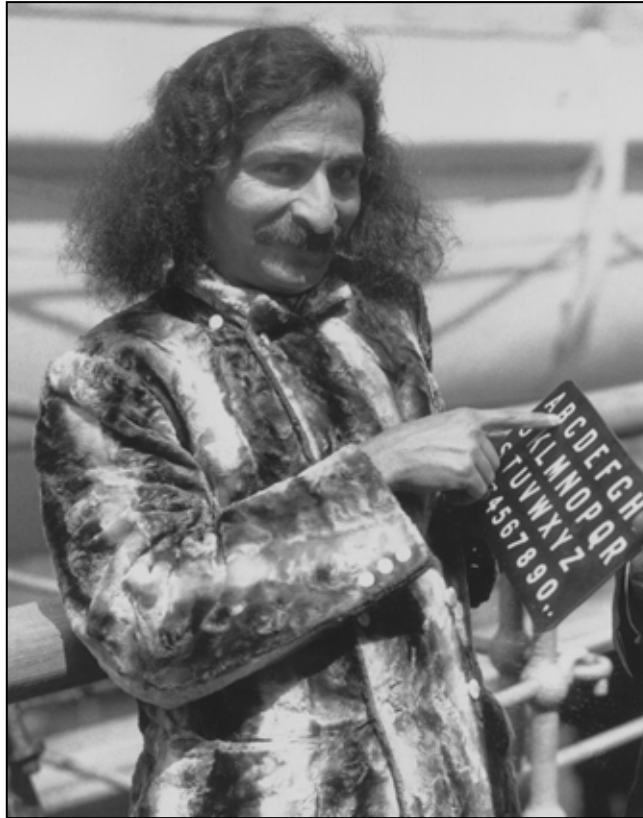
Ross Keating

Kitty Davy who first met Meher Baba in London in 1931 and spent the following twenty years in his company, some of the time in Europe and for a long period in India, made this memorable remark summing up her time living with her Master: **“All Baba asked from each was a happy face and work done cheerfully. To Baba, this cheerfulness was a goal most worth striving for, a goal of paramount importance. Baba told us, ‘If you don’t want to be old before you really ought to be old, be cheerful in thought, word, deed and appearance – most of all in appearance . . . It is a divine art to always look cheerful.**

It is a divine quality. It helps others’.”

This is a remarkable statement considering the “paramount importance” Baba is giving to what is just an appearance, an aesthetic surface. Couldn’t this be seen as legitimising a kind of phoney pretence? Is Baba actually asking people to be like the cashier who smilingly says “have a great day,” after you make your payment? I think so. But saying it with all the wholehearted cheerfulness you can muster. In a sense, what I think Baba is saying is that being cheerful in this manner has more reality, and is truer to our nature than what we consider to be real about ourselves. It is as Baba states “a divine quality,” which is there to be awakened and experienced in us as part of our spiritual inheritance.

To call the cultivation of cheerfulness a kind of spiritual practice is to burden it with a lot of preconceived ideas. What I think works, if we just focus on the appearance of cheerfulness, which Baba himself lays stress upon, is to see



Meher Baba aboard the S.S. Bremen, 19 May 1932, New York City harbor. Photographer: Acme Newspictures, Inc.
© Meher Nazar Publications.

it more in terms of style.

Meher Baba himself was distinctively stylish in his dress. You can see that he took great care with his appearance and not only managed to dress to suit the occasion but also to suit the company he kept. In the West in the thirties, for instance, Baba obviously made clear choices in what he wore from fine tailored or what looks like soft linen suits, often patent leather shoes, and sometimes he donned a felt hat or a beret. George Bernard Shaw once remarked “I would willingly exchange every single painting of Christ for one snapshot.” I wonder what he would think if he saw a photograph of

Meher Baba in the West looking suave and debonair?

I think cheerfulness in appearance, as with the finding of one’s own style of dress, begins with feeling comfortable and relaxed in what you wear. It is the opposite of glamour or dressing for affect. I would say that the test of true style is that it appears effortless and makes the wearer feel unselfconscious. This occurs when the clothes reflects the true nature of a person. And here, as in deeply moving art, the aesthetic qualities are like a thin gauze through which an underlying spiritual reality passes and permeates the surface to such an extent that the two can’t be distinguished.

I would even go so far as to say that any real style is essentially cheerful. And it is not much of a step to see how, like love itself, it is contagious in its effect and “helps others” – for it uplifts everyone’s spirit. It reminds us that we are spiritual beings and, as Meher Baba says, on this

Continued on next page

level, we are all one.

I think it was the writer Paul Goodman who coined the phrase “dignified poverty” and I think this also applies to style; there is a “dignified style” which is not luxurious or money-dependent. In India, you only have to look at village women in their saris to get a real sense of “dignified style” with all the charm, elegance, and cheerfulness that goes with any true style.

To have no style; to lack care with how you look reflects a certain sadness of the soul. It is to be locked in a world of self-imposed conformity. Meher Baba said that “life is worth living,” it is not something simply to be endured until death or until you obtain some kind of spiritual liberation. And in one of his typically uplifting messages he states: “It is infinitely better to hope for the best than to fear the worst.” To appear cheerful is to live out these words in a very simple and direct manner.

Jesus said, “No one lights a lamp and covers it with a jar or puts it under a bed. Instead, he sets it on a stand, so those who enter can see the light.” I think a cheerful appearance is a lit lamp and helps others see the light. To lack a cheerful style is to hide away from the world and be lost in the darkness of self-absorption.

And here Meher Baba’s advice to an actor having trouble performing, equally applies to the art of cultivating a cheerful appearance, the art which he reminds us is “a divine art”: “Art is one of the means through which the soul expresses itself, and inspires others. But to do that thoroughly (the artist) must have his inner emotions aroused thoroughly. If you feel that something checks you from expressing yourself, then you have to do one thing, that is, adjust your mental attitude thus: just before you do anything think ‘I can and will express it thoroughly,’ and every time you act you will find you are more convinced. It is the mind that is closed. There are many actors, who, either through inferiority or through nervousness or dryness, feel that they cannot express their parts, and this negative feeling of the mind checks expression. While acting, think you are one of the greatest actors of the world and try to express yourself thoroughly. I will help you spiritually. Just think you are the greatest actor. Where’s the harm in thinking that? If it is not for ‘pride,’ but for bringing the best out of you that you do it, then there is nothing wrong.”

Instead of trying to find some nebulous inner identity by plunging into ourselves in an act of self-centred

introspection, we can actually become ourselves through acting our part in life cheerfully. As Meher Baba says, the truth “is in everything and can be expressed in everything.”

Continued from page 24 – The themes of the different Avatars ...

conception of value was wrong and that they were victims of the goddess of illusion, or maya, Buddha renounced his wife, his family and the riches of the world in order to establish his teachings on renunciation.

At the time of Muhammad, the Arab tribesmen were very sensuous, and it was not considered bad or illegal to live with several wives. If Muhammad had not married like Jesus and had advocated celibacy, or if he had imposed absolute continence, it would have produced inevitably dangerous reactions. Few people would have followed his teachings and fewer still would have been attracted to such an ideal. Muhammad had six wives, but he had no physical contact with them.

At the time of Jesus, arrogance, imperiousness, pride and cruelty were the characteristics of people. Nevertheless, they possessed a conception of justice in regard to women and marriage; therefore, it was not necessary, as it was in Arabia, to make marriage an example. Jesus lived the life of humility, simplicity, and poverty, and he endured suffering in order to direct human beings toward the purest ideal – Beloved God.

The Avatars incarnate in this world at different times and their teachings have therefore to be adapted to the mentality of their epoch. At times, the Avatar bases his teaching on the search for the personal God, and at other times, on the search for the impersonal God.

It may be compared to a hospital, where the sick complain of thirst at different times. The doctor will prescribe tea or coffee in the morning to those who complain in the morning, water or fruit juice in the afternoon, buttermilk in the evening and hot milk before sleep. The doctor is the same and the complaint is the same, but the thirst is quenched in different ways according to the different conditions at different times.

God, manifesting as the Avatar in different periods of time, quenches the thirst of man in different ways. All human beings, either consciously or unconsciously, have the same thirst for Truth.

from LORD MEHER Volumes 6 & 7, pp. 1880-1882.

The art of listening

Editor's note: Below is an excerpt from an article by Elizabeth Morton, "The Art of Listening" that I stumbled upon on the Beads on One String website which came up in a search for 'Baba and Art'. There it was, next to a reference to Craig San Roque and his creative story-telling.

'The art of listening' has been a theme that I have spent some time engaging with over the years – in my teaching, learning and professional working life, and it is one that still inspires me with its possibilities. Deeply listening for truth – listening in one's heart is an essential practice of any genuine artistic endeavour – across all of the arts, including the art of living!

Eruch, in recorded talks in Mandali Hall, has mentioned the importance which Baba placed on listening. "Baba is asking us always: are you listening?" he emphasises, and mentions a song written by Bill Files with that title. Eruch then tells of a Perfect Master, who said that the most important thing one can have is congenial felicity, and if you don't have that, then you'll need to have a strong body, and if you don't have that then you must have an attentive ear, and if you don't have that, then have a keen eye, and if you don't have these, then have a knowing heart, and if you don't have that, ... So the listening was emphasised.

In a prayer given to the family of Darwin Shaw, Meher Baba instructed them to say: "I am here, Lord, and I will follow Thee and Thy guidance, and listen with an inward ear, literally believe, and obey the inner voice" shared by Zo Newell (Myrtle Beach these days) who obtained it directly from Leatrice Shaw.

The last paragraph in the edited article below sums up pretty well an aspiration for daily practice: The blend of material and spiritual, mind and heart, echoing Meher Baba ... So here it is, an artist's take on this theme:-

... As an actor, when I'm "in the moment," my mind quiets and something other than me seems to take over. It can happen when I'm writing, too, or when I'm giving a eulogy at a memorial service. ...

How to describe what it feels like to "be in the moment"? For me, I'd say it's a deep concentration within a force field of grace. An act of surrender is required on my part, so that I am free and available to *listen* to "the moment" and all that it encompasses. Simply put, it's being wholly present.

But this "in the moment" deep listening need not

occur in any official or formal capacity. It can happen in a casual conversation among friends, or on a walk or in a prayer, which is why I prefer to think of listening as an art form, something that is continuously being explored & developed & defined.

Art, in any form, has the potential to change us. According to Mark Nepo, the Art of Listening requires a willingness to be changed. That willingness, to me, is an opening in my mind and heart for something new to come in. That willingness is choosing curiosity over judgment, compassion over indifference.

Don't you find that the best listeners you know are ones who are genuinely curious? Who are available for the unique perspective that you are offering? Who have no agenda? Who seek to understand rather than make assumptions about your experience? Who aren't quick to interrupt? Who are mysteriously able to 'hold the space' for you to speak freely? Who aren't uncomfortable sharing silences with you?

When I'm in the presence of an exceptional listener, when sharing something from the heart with this person, I'm somehow able to listen to myself in a way that can be profound and surprising. I've actually had some juicy epiphanies while being deeply listened to. It's as though that exceptional listener is giving me permission to unearth a truth that's lingering below the surface. That listener's willingness to be changed, in turn, changes me.

A good listener gives the gift of his/her/their undivided attention. In this busy, noisy world of ours, the gift of undivided attention becomes all the more meaningful. Because giving someone undivided attention isn't as simple as shutting up and turning off a cell phone. The good listener quiets his/her/their busy, noisy inner world, too.

That inner world is a great place for us listening artists to go to practice, to rehearse, our precious art form. After all, how can I truly listen to another if I'm unable to listen to myself? How can I learn to quiet my mind if I don't first identify my mind's chatter? How can I understand someone else's truth if I've never attempted to understand my own? The trifecta of silence & stillness & solitude makes for a mighty dynamic classroom.

Listening to that 'still small voice within,' that voice (from the soul? from Spirit?) of guidance & truth, is no

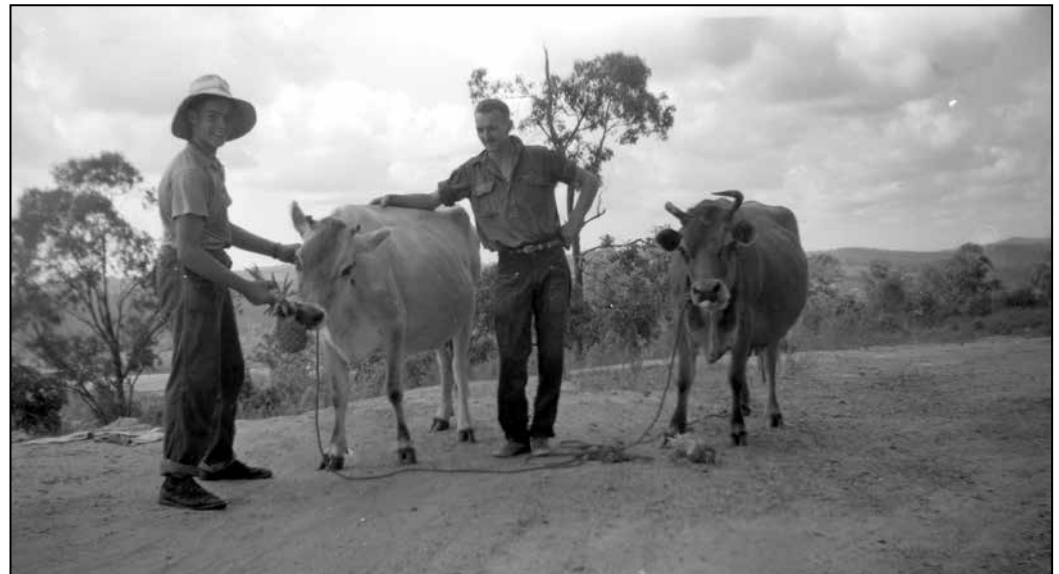
Continued on next page

small thing: because it requires that willingness to be changed. For isn't it the 'still small voice within' that says, "I'm in love," "I'm gay," "my church is no longer nourishing me," "I am too hard on myself," "I don't feel safe here," "it's time to divorce," "it's time to start that new career," "my anger is destructive," "my drinking is a problem." Each of those examples – when really heard – demand change in the listener.

We can also practice the Art of Listening by paying attention to the world around us. The act of noticing brings us deeper into the present moment. Stand still in a busy, noisy place ... take it in ... what all do you notice? In this moment, as you are reading this, what do you hear, see, feel, taste, and smell? What sensations are you aware of in your emotional and energetic bodies?

Cultivating greater and greater awareness (both inner and outer, both spiritual and worldly) is the devotion of the listening artist. It's what builds our stamina to be wholly present. It's what broadens our capacity for compassion. It's what helps us consciously participate. Let's face it; deeply listening to the world right now, when distractions are aplenty, is a radical act.

<https://www.beadsononestring.org/the-art-of-listening-the-art-of-listening/>



These photos were amongst those shown by Bernard during his presentation at the June 2021 Anniversary.

1: Bernard Bruford and Robert Rouse with their two cows eating pineapples in 1959 at Avatar's Abode. Photo probably taken by John Bruford.

2: This photo of the original farmhouse at Avatar's Abode was taken by Colin Adams during Meher Baba's visit in June 1958.

3: From left are Bernard, Joan and Joanna Bruford on the back steps of the Farm House where they stayed in 1959 with the Rouses while their house was built. Photo taken by John Bruford.



Avatar's Abode 63rd Anniversary

June 11th - 14th 2021

Sue Fowler Jamison

Although I am ever with my lovers individually, I am always happy when they gather in My love, so celebrate this anniversary at My Abode with a bang and let My message fill every corner of your hearts. Love to you all.”

- Meher Baba

Telegram to Avatar's Abode 1967.

In 1958 Meher Baba, accompanied by Eruch Jessawala, Nariman Dadachanji, Dr. William Donkin and Adi K. Irani stayed at Avatar's Abode from the 3rd to the 6th June. This was Meher Baba's last Sahavas outside India.

It was during this time that He named the property 'Avatar's Abode' and said that it will become one of the great places of pilgrimage in the world.

The Anniversary of Meher Baba's visit to Avatar's Abode is a special time for all Australian Baba lovers and this is enhanced when the time is shared with Baba lovers from the international community.

After the “annus horribilis” Pandemic year 2020, the planning committee was beset with many questions:

1. Do we consider the daunting prospect of another virtual Anniversary as offered last year, or do we take a chance and offer a 'live' Anniversary? If so, what does that look like with no international visitors and probably no interstate friends due to potential Covid border closures?
2. Do we plan for three meals a day only to cancel if we also get locked down?
3. Are we stupid to even plan for an Anniversary in these uncertain times? etc. etc. etc. etc.

After much deliberation, we knew we had to find a way and that Baba would help us. Francis Brabazon's wish was always to celebrate the visit of God Man to this property and he encouraged us all to entertain the Beloved with plays, songs, poetry and other creative pursuits.

We decided this would be an old fashioned Anniversary where there would be time to connect with friends with no pressure, filling the heart with the Beloved's Wine, enjoying the fragrance of His Love.

Many who had wanted to come had to cancel at the last moment due to COVID restrictions, so there were some anxious moments to fill the program hours.

The weekend was beautiful; sunny, classic, crisp Queensland winter weather, and remarkably it stayed that way all weekend.

The sunrises each day were spectacular as if the new day were heralding the remembrance His visit.

Bernard Bruford raised the flag at 11:30 which was the time Meher Baba arrived on the property in 1958. Bernard was just 15 years old at the time of Baba's visit and has some lovely stories of this period. Jim Frisino was able to set up a live Zoom so that people around the world could participate in this opening of the weekend.

A BYO picnic lunch followed with companionship and anticipation of the weekend.

Michael Le Page showed a video of John Parry titled 'Painting Baba's Face'. Francis was very encouraging to John and in a letter to him said “You have painted the first real contemporary painting of Baba”. And in another instance said “you have captured the eyes of God” <https://youtu.be/txk7wgBW728>

In this video, recorded in India, John tells his Baba story and his evolution to painting Baba. John was also in attendance and was able to answer questions about particular paintings and regaled us with delightful stories. Available to watch on the Avatar's Abode website (Vimeo) and YouTube.

Our only International “visitor” this year – via video – was Ward Parks, who gave a fantastic talk on Francis' use of supporting notes and sources in *Stay with God*. Please check the Avatar's Abode website for the various platform viewing details. https://avatarsabode.com.au/anniversary_at_avatars_abode.html

The next two and a half days were focused entirely on Him.

Arti was held every morning and evening with

Continued on next page



opportunity for love offerings and sharing: a very special time in Baba's House.

In order to create a semi-virtual experience for those who could not attend the Anniversary, as much as possible, the videos shown on each day were made available to view simultaneously on the Abode website. Thanks to Liz Gaskin and Jim Frisino.

Bernard's perspective of life at Avatar's Abode while Francis was in India was a visit back in time to when the Abode was a neglected pineapple farm. Following Baba's orders, the Bruford and Rouse families moved from the sophisticated cities of Melbourne and Sydney to subtropical Queensland and shared a house together with no electricity or running water.

Bernard showed us some wonderful, never seen before, photographs of that unique time in history and shared some amusing anecdotes.

Also by Jim, a video slideshow 'The Beloved's Wine' shared photos from past Anniversaries with sublime music by the Wineshop Singers. Beautiful!

The open concert held in The Shed (with the always effervescent Mr. Josh Wolterding as MC) was bookended by 7 year old Lilia Krupke-Rowan performing a silk aerial dance and the children's play 'Monkey Madness'.

The adult performers, including Merwan Stevens and Janice Rice-Stevens duo (mother and son), Lorraine Brown, Kris Hines, Phillipa Howells, Behram Zandbaf, Ross and Jenny Keating, Jenny Thompson and Eve Plant, did a beautiful job of entertaining us, but we will remember with particular delight Lilia performing a silk



Top L to R: Josh Wolterding MC.
Lilia Krupke-Rowan Silk Aerial Dance.
Kris Hines.

Eve Plant.

Jenny and Ross Keating.

Photos by George Fricker.



Top L to R: Ravana — Jethro Hitchens.
Sita — Amelie Newcomb.
Rama — Ollie Hitchens.

Monkeys and King Hanuman — Meherwan Isaacs-Young —
with Rama and Lakshman — Giorgio Alzetta (at back).

Monkeys and Butterflies.

Monkey Madness photos by George Fricker.

aerial dance as the beginning item and ‘Monkey Madness’ to finish the program.

Jim Frisino’s loose adaption of a piece of the *Ramayana* had us all enthralled as the monkeys, led by the magnificent King Hanuman aka Meherwan Isaacs-Young, entered The Shed with their screaming and monkey moves! Rama was played magnificently by Ollie Hitchens and the beautiful strong, confident Sita was Amelie Newcomb. The wicked Ravana was played by the imposing figure of Jethro Hitchens while Giorgio Alzetta played the ever faithful brother to Rama, Lakshman. The monkeys clearly all enjoyed being part of the monkey army and were very much invested in their roles! All the children present who chose to were able to be involved, some as butterflies, and even a black panther! It was such good fun for the audience as well.

Ray Kerkove’s talk ‘The pre-Baba spiritual heritage of Australia, reconsidering places Baba visited’ was fascinating. History really comes alive when Ray weaves the present with the past.

The early years and evolution of the Meher Baba awakening in Melbourne was a very informative presentation by Leigh Rowan. Due to COVID restrictions Jasmine Fricker could not attend but collaborated and communicated with Leigh and she was able to present Jasmine’s anecdotal history of the Melbourne Baba group from the 1960s to the present day. Jasmine had stories of the many Baba lovers, meetings, activities and Mandali visits to share; Michael Le Page showed an edited

Continued on next page

montage from video interviews of those who met Baba in Melbourne during His 1956 visit; (Francis Thompson's superb videotaping work); George Fricker presented a video of Katie Irani's and Roshan Kerawalla's visits and Charmaine Foley shared a power-point presentation on the influence of Adrian Rawlins on the Melbourne Baba scene in the late 60s and early 70s.

Kris Hines and her Gospel group belted out a rousing song in the gospel tradition and led some songs where audience participation was encouraged and the audience did not disappoint.

Jim Frisino put together a 'never seen before' video presentation of some entertainment highlights of past anniversaries. Lots of laughter, some tears seeing the images of our much loved departed friends, and some surprise at how diversely wonderfully the Beloved has been entertained over the years – songs, plays, skits, poems, dancing, miming, and comedy – by all ages. Something we might all be proud of.

As a special offering, we were able to screen the recently produced U.S. Heartland Centre's film 'The Greatest of My Sufferings', an exquisite poignant chronicle of events leading up to Baba's 1952 car accident in Prague, Oklahoma and the aftermath.

Not to be missed this year, the Archive group was excited to show the recent additions to the Baba's House Archive room and temporary Archive work area in the Reception building. New track lighting for the Archive room to showcase Baba's precious relics was a highlight. Displayed in the reception building, chosen from the Cynthia Borg (nee Adams) collection just gifted to Avatar's Abode, were some delightful letters written to Cynthia from Mani in India. Written from when Cynthia was just little girl of 10 years of age through to 1984, these letters show how playful Mani was in her relationship with Cynthia. The love and care shown through these letters can only give a glimpse of how it must have been with Baba. A delight to read: Each a work of art and love. You can browse various parts of the collection anytime online https://avatarsabode.com.au/avatars_abode_trust_archives.html or set up an onsite Archive tour by contacting Jeanette Young (0438 562 118 or 0437 511 362) or David Bowling (0414 739 640).

Farewell group singing in Baba Square heralded the flag lowering by Bill Le Page to end this 63rd Anniversary weekend for the Beloved. Our friends around the world were able to 'zoom' in again and be part of this tradition.

Our hearts were very full, but we were satiated in other ways too, thanks to the delicious food over the weekend. Lunches on Saturday, Sunday and Monday – a big thank you to Meher Prasad and Lakshmi, Rob Blair and Alice Mellowship, Katie Pye, Anika Leib, and the many willing hands in the kitchen who helped prep, clean, and do whatever was asked of them, including Behram, Nosh, Sarosh, Jalquin Waidelich, Max Ives, Josh Wolterding, Norith Ladner, Sue Douglas, and others who came and helped. Di Holmes continued her most important role each Anniversary as "gatekeeper" for accepting the lunch fees.

There is always afternoon tea and yummy cake at an Anniversary, and this year was no different, thanks to the coordinating efforts of Glenda Hobson. Thanks to Jeannie Baker and Bernard Bruford for maintaining the tea station and Jethro Hitchens and team for the barista coffee during the entire Anniversary weekend.

Baba's House is a special place and was kept clean and welcoming over the weekend by the loving hands of Jeanette Young and Suzie Imura and team.

Thanks to Rodney Tyson, the unseen worker who took care of the one thing no one wants to see – the garbage!

Please forgive me if I have not included you to thank. No matter how small or large your contribution was, it grows into something bigger and becomes a moving force of Love towards Him.

Already we are discussing next year's celebration and how to make it better – (not necessarily bigger) – and welcome any feedback. If you would like to be involved in the planning, please contact any of the people below.

Please also note that the Avatar's Abode website has all the videos shown during the anniversary under the menu heading 'Anniversaries' and its own Vimeo channel linked to Anniversary 2020 where you can find 100s of videos to view, including the collection from all of the Spring Sahavases, some Anniversary videos, along with recent Zoom videos and links to YouTube videos.

<https://vimeo.com/showcase/7165717> and https://avatarsabode.com.au/anniversary_at_avatars_abode.html Worth a look!

*Sue Fowler Jamison for the Anniversary Committee
— Tony Foley, Leigh Rowan, David and Glenda
Hobson, Jim Frisino, Sim Symons.*

Meher Baba

The life Giver?
 Your very Self
 The first Adam
 The Guru of Gurus
 The howl of the wind
 The Ocean
 Your before and after
 The unfathomable
 The One
 God Personified
 A Stealer of hearts
 The Awake One
 Awoken One
 The most kind
 The Eternal
 The All-Knowing
 The Truth
 The Unknown
 The Avatar
 Master
 The One many look for but so few find
 Meher Baba.
 A most Original Soul
 A 7th plane Master
 Beyond & beyond beyond
 Closer than your own breath
 A Saintly
 Krishna, Muhammed,
 Buddha, Baba.
 Jesus,
 The Never Ending
 Infinite
 The forward
The step
His very Being
Pushes you to take
 A sought Pearl
 An abyss within an abyss
 Your laughter
 Your tears
 The One who goes to every Facebook event in the world.

Giorgio Alzetta.

Acceptance

On this tree of Existence Eternal
 We hang –
 Leaves of consciousness
 Created, sustained and released
 From star-birth-burst to dust-at-His-Feet.

The ground, sky, wind, earth,
 Flowing stream, fire-of-Life creating
 Existence Eternal Embodied Entering
 Time from time to time –

As Hu Man, God-Man, Avatar,
 Creator, Sustainer, Releaser
 Of each leaf in its time
 Of returning to Existence Eternal.

Suspended in and from Existence Eternal
 Each leaf learns to dance
 To the tune of the God-Man's breath

And now His breathing
 Is breathing the polka of pandemic
 Fast-moving voraciousness of virus
 Slowing humanity down, 'locking down',
 Into the slow waltz of waiting –

Learning to follow the God-Man's lead
 To let go of expectations
 To pause planning
 To allow a little stillness
 Of leaf acceptance of breath of wind.

Learning to dance to God-Man's tune
 To come into harmony with His Will,
 His Love, ever-flowing,
 Ever creating, sustaining, returning
 Cycle after cycle.

I watch the leaves of the Buddha tree
 Dancing in the wind.

Lorraine Brown 2.8.2021.

Francis Brabazon painter

Geoff Gunther

The material below is largely adapted from the information in *Francis Brabazon – Poet of the Silent Word* by Ross Keating and *The Water Carrier* by Robert Rouse and gleanings from chats with John Parry (J.P.) on Francis and painting.

Francis moved to Melbourne at the age of 21. His basic propensity for truth seeking was fostered by the culture of this large city and led him to ‘the religion of art’: playing the piano, writing and also drawing and painting. He was employed as an art model at the Melbourne National Gallery School and he also enrolled in the art classes.

He became a part-time attendant at the National Gallery and started mixing with other young art students and painters including Sidney Nolan, John Sinclair, Albert Tucker and John Perceval. His ideal at this time was the artist who like Beethoven was totally dedicated to his art.

In October 1939 *An Exhibition of Contemporary European Painting & Sculpture* arrived in Melbourne. It was so radical that the conservative art establishment at the National Gallery of Victoria would not exhibit the works. It was eventually hung in the top floor of a Department store. It was a revelation to the local artists and was the first time that most of them had seen this calibre of painting up close and “in the real”.

Francis said “it knocked their socks off” J.P.

The Exhibition included major works by Cezanne, Van Gogh, Seurat, Gauguin, Picasso, Matisse, Braque, Dali, Chagall and many others [200 works in all, 5 or 6 by each artist, some large]. The Revolution had arrived. Francis, too, was inspired into creativity, but he later said “I forgot Cliff’s [Bayliss] insistence that good painting



Portrait of a Self Realized Soul by Francis Brabazon.

rests on drawing, and plunged straightway into colour“.
[Keating 31]

The art of modernism of course opened vast vistas for expressing the artists’ subconscious realms and inner nature.

In 1941 he exhibited some of his paintings for the first time along with Nolan, Boyd, Dobell, Tucker and many other young artists who were destined to be major Australian artists

In the annual exhibition of the Contemporary Art Society four of Francis’ paintings were shown among the over 300 works on display:

“Annunciation”

“Worker ‘42”

“Oranges”

“Portrait” (He also called this work “Portrait of a Self Realized Soul”)

Even in the army and in hospital he kept up the painting. In the 1942 CAS Exhibition three of his paintings were hung:

“Cookhouse”

“Bonegilla Military Hospital Heidelberg”

“Mess Hut, Bonegilla”

His art was part of his efforts to integrate life and art: “... my view that physical discipline was necessary for the artist and that he should work from direct experience.” (Keating 47)

His works suggest an innocence of vision which a



Annunciation by Francis Brabazon.



Landscape by Francis Brabazon.

deliberate primitivism is attempting to convey. His discipline of meditative concentration was providing him with images.

It appears he did some paintings while living with Baron von Frankenberg, his Sufi teacher. There is one from 1946 depicting a person in a meditative pose.

Francis said “that he liked painting but he found he could not express himself with that medium and decided to switch to poetry and words” (J.P.).

Ross Keating’s book tells us that he fell into a period of deep depression. Although he kept painting for some time it would seem that the centre of gravity of his quest for self-knowledge was shifting towards sacred traditions of inner transformation like Buddhism and Sufism.

This separated him from the other artists who were affirming their individual and cultural identity through their art.

It was to be through following a devotional path that Francis would mature, and increasingly he found that words were his proper medium.

But he was no longer part of the new wave of Australian Art and had soon placed himself under the spiritual guidance of his Sufi Teacher.

Later on he was to meet and become a close disciple of the Avatar of the Age, Meher Baba, with whom he lived in India for 10 years.



Kettle and Landscape by Francis Brabazon.



Landscape with Flags by Francis Brabazon.

<https://francisbrabazon.org/francis-brabazon-painter/>

Meher Baba Australia

August 2021 - The Final Issue

Guest Editor: Jeanette Young advised by John Parry.

Design and Layout: Liz Gaskin.

Proof Reading: Jeanette Young ably assisted by Gård Saunders and John Isaacs-Young.

Email: meherbabaustralia@gmail.com for information.

Sydney Meher Baba Community

Sydney meetings are limited while COVID-19 is active:

Monday Night Meetings

continue at the home of Kristine Wyld. 6pm for 6:30 start; potluck meal from 7:30–8:30pm.

COVID-19 restrictions apply. Contact Kristine for address details: truestories@ozemail.com.au.

Meher House

is open by appointment for visits of 60 minutes.

COVID-19 restrictions apply.

Monthly Meetings resume Sunday 25th October.

For meeting details contact Jenny and Ross Keating:

jkeating@tpg.com.au

To arrange to visit Meher House contact Yvan Duerinckx:

yvand@westnet.com.au.

Email to subscribe to Meher Baba Sydney Noticeboard:

jkeating@tpg.com.au

Visit the new Meher Baba Sydney website:

<https://www.meherbabasydney.com>

Melbourne Meher Baba Community

All get togethers are on hold due to COVID-19.

Contact people for future meetings are Cynthia on 0409 880 005 or Jasmine on 0438 300 193.

WA Meher Baba Community

No current meetings are planned due to COVID-19.

For information call Paul Morris 0429 310 169 or Julie Lee-Morris on 0428 250 294.

New Zealand

Contact Jill Hobbs on (06) 347 2974, or email

jillhobbs1954@gmail.com

Late Night Chat with Jeff Wolverton, Focus on Francis Brabazon, Live on Zoom

Special guest Raine Eastman-Gannett sharing deeply about Francis Brabazon, July 4 2021.

<https://youtu.be/jM2yC4R9AAI>

Avatar's Abode Oral Histories Project

Video recording sessions are scheduled on Wednesday mornings 10 am – 12 noon in Baba's House (which remains open for visiting during recording sessions).

Precious oral histories of our Australian Baba community have been recorded over the years; especially through the Spring Sahavas programs at Avatar's Abode each year, and in the *Meher Baba Australia* newsletter.

The tradition continues to record, preserve and share the "coming to Baba" stories of people who either met Meher Baba or who have stories of time enjoyed in company of his mandali, and others who have been associated with Avatar's Abode during the past decades, and yet others who have been more recently called into His Embrace.

Recording the stories in Baba's House with the doors to Baba's Room wide open adds a precious dimension to the recording sessions.

Everyone is welcome to sit in on the sessions. Questions and comments are welcome if the presenter on the day welcomes them.

The videos will be uploaded to the YouTube channel "michaellepage1894" and later to the Avatar's Abode website. Each video can be listed as "private", "unlisted" or "public". Generally we recommend the "public" setting.

Websites to watch

There are so many places we can go to now for resources and contact with other Baba followers in Australia and also around the world: A very different situation from when the MBA newsletter began, and when providing a communication link was one of the stated purposes. There are recorded talks, readings, books online, written articles, audio and video recordings, musical presentations and there are also regular interactive zoom meetings, Artis, and online streaming of various sacred places.

Included, but not limited to these sample options are:

AMBPPCT <https://avatarmeherbabatrust.org/>

Avatar's Abode <https://avatarsabode.com.au/>

Babazoom <https://babazoom.net/>

Circle of friends <https://www.ambcircleoffriends.com/>

Meher Baba Travels <https://www.meherbabatravels.com/>

Mandali Hall Talks <https://www.mandalihall.org/>

Meher Archive Collective <https://www.meherarchive.org/>

Meher Center <https://www.mehercenter.org/online-programing/>

Michael Le Page [https://www.youtube.com/user/](https://www.youtube.com/user/michaellepage1894)

[michaellepage1894](https://www.youtube.com/user/michaellepage1894)

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