

Meher Baba Australia

June – August 2015



*We wait for the Wave of His Word to rise on His Ocean of Silence
and beat on the doors of our hearts, and cry: Who? Who is your God? —
And we will answer in tremendous gladness You, you Beloved, are our God.
You are the Ocean of us and we are the drops of You.*

The Silence

Francis Brabazon

On 10th July, 1925, Baba ceased speaking. He told His disciples that He would be silent for one year, but the year stretched to the rest of His earth time with us — forty-four years.

In the beginning He wrote His instructions to the mandali on slates; later, He spelt out words by pointing to the letters of the English alphabet painted on a board, and as some of the disciples became adept at reading His fingers, this became His way of conversing and dictating His discourses and messages. Much later again, in 1954, He discarded the letter-board and communicated by signs, gestures and expression; and to the disciples who lived with Him, and to those with whom He lived in their homes and daily work, and on occasion were permitted to come to Him, this was the most eloquent way of all — for He was the master of expression and the perfection of mime.

Although Baba was silent, there was no 'sitting silently at the feet of the master' with Him; indeed some who came to the ashram for that purpose were looked upon as oddities, unripe yet to enjoy the Master's company. Conversation was winged; and when the jokes were rich and the stories absurdly tall Baba was hard put to prevent His merriment breaking into

sounding laughter. This was truly God-the-Man — God enjoying His Lovers' efforts to entertain Him. And the greatest entertainer of them all was the silent Gustadji. But always behind the lightest moment was a numbed sense of the terrible weight of the world burden He bore and the crucifixion He suffered because of our ignorance; and a horizonless rejoicing that one day He would speak and deliver Himself of His burden, and us into a New Humanity.

God-Man's Silence was our waiting. And still we wait. And we can wait cheerfully because there is nothing else to do, for He does everything. We wait while He peels off the skins of our ignorance and we stand naked in the truth that each himself is the beloved Who-Alone-exists.

In reality God said everything that was to be said when He uttered the Word of creation. In that one word He said the stars and suns and Earth and all its forms and people. It took six periods of vast duration for God's speaking to be completed. Then He stopped speaking, for everything actual or potential had been said. And the seventh day was of the Original Silence.

Even when He was speaking that one Word which brought the world into

existence, and made all words — even when He was shut in the darkness of Nothing which His Word had caused; when He was locked in the hardness of stone; when as a leaf He longed for movement, as a worm for travel, as a fish for wide ocean-acreage, as a bird for rarer atmospheres, as an animal for beautiful man-form, He was silent. All these things were by His imagination, not of His Truth which is indivisible, and of the very Silence itself. His communication with all the things and beings of His Word has always been in silence, because *in silence are all the best things given and received* — and all love-talk ends in the silence of a sigh.

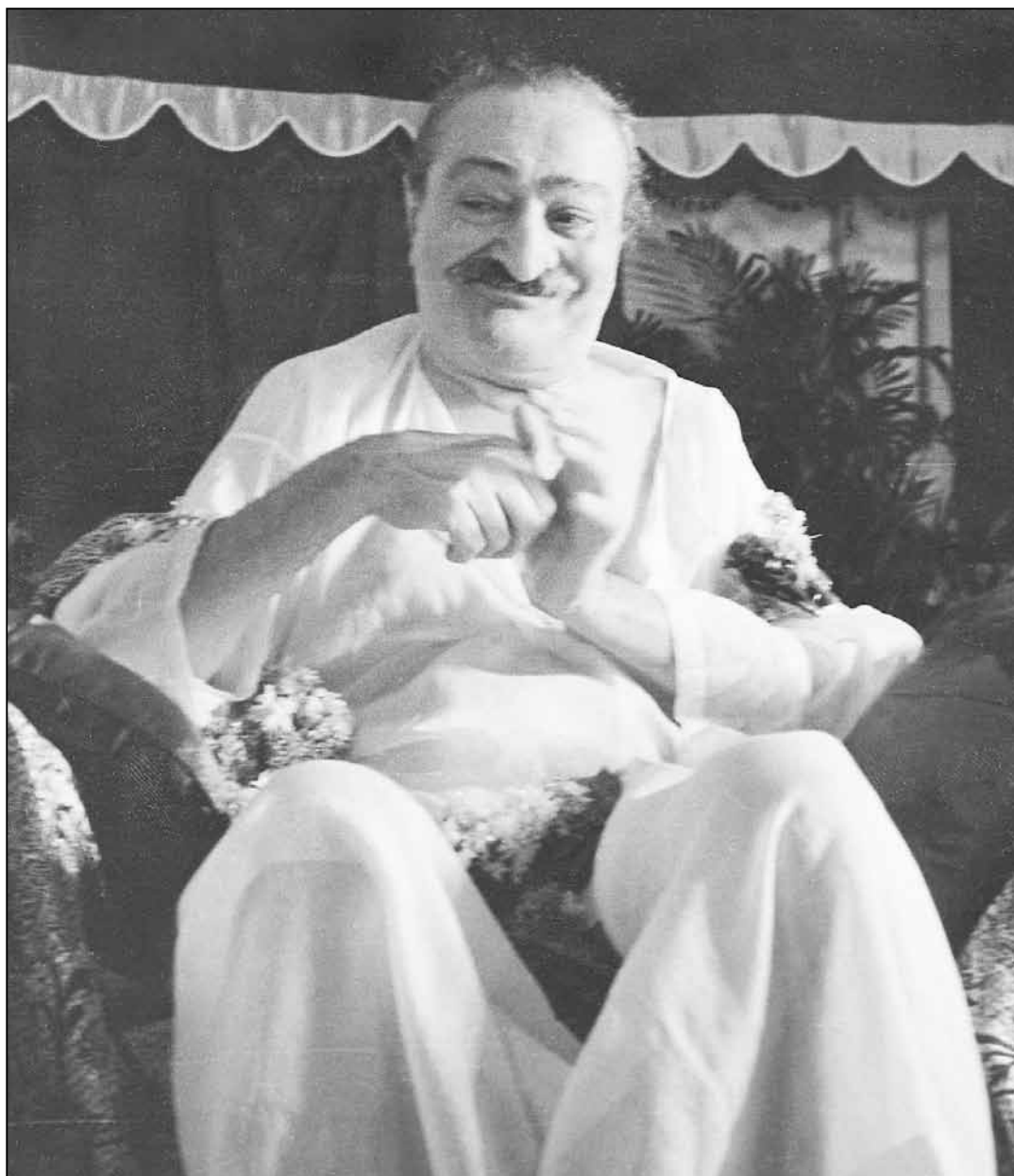
If only we could have become silent when He was with us, enjoying nothing but the sweet word of His presence, we might have lost ourselves entirely *in His song* and seen Him as the real Self of ourselves.

We wait for the Wave of His Word to rise on His Ocean of Silence and beat on the doors of our hearts, and cry: Who? Who is your God? — And we will answer in tremendous gladness You, you Beloved, are our God. You are the Ocean of us and we are the drops of You.

<http://www.theawakenermagazine.org/avo117/av17n02/av17n02p04.htm>

Because man has been deaf to the principles and precepts laid down by God in the past, in this present Avataric Form I observe Silence. You have asked for and been given enough words -- it is now time to live them. To get nearer and nearer to God you have to get further and further away from "I", "my", "me" and "mine". You have not to renounce anything but your own self. It is as simple as that, though found to be almost impossible. It is possible for you to renounce your limited self by my Grace. I have come to release that Grace.

Extract from Meher Baba's Universal Message in THE GOD-MAN, pp. 343-344, by C. B. Purdom. Copyright 1971 © Meher Spiritual Center, Inc., Myrtle Beach, South Carolina



Avatar Meher Baba, Easterners Darshan, Guruprasad, 2-5th May 1965. Photo by Peter Rowan ©.

In January 1925 Baba settled in permanently — as far as “permanently”
 Can mean to a man to whom the too-solid earth itself
 Is but a moving shadow across the margin of Existence-Bliss.
 In July same year he began that SILENCE which he will not break
 Till he speaks that Word which will release another Noah-flood
 Of destruction of falseness, and of His-Ark (Refuge and Sustaining and
 Bliss-transforming place of all that is true and useful to good) upbearing.

That same silence he returned to as was
 Before he spoke the word which was his question, “Who
 Am I?” and birthed a world of universes and a universe
 Of three worlds; spun them upon the axis of his own Name
 And groped his way through all the forms to man,
 To Perfect Manhood. The same silence, but now
 Of Knowledge-Bliss — pregnant equipoise of action.

STAY WITH GOD, Francis Brabazon, p 31
Book I — Meher Baba the occurrence of Reality in illusion

The *Stay with God* Seminar

May 8, 9, 10 at Meher Baba House, Avatar's Abode

Poetry these days is less central to the lives of most than it was even back in the 1950's when Francis Brabazon wrote *Stay with God*. To spend three days reading and commenting on a

poem was an unusual and challenging task. It was in no way an academic exercise but an experiencing of the living power of word-art to convey divine, personal and social truths.

As Ward Parks pointed out in his introductory talk, an Avataric Advent is momentous and transforming on a global scale. *Stay with God* was endorsed by Meher Baba as having an important role in this process which is only now becoming evident. Baba's message is related in the poem to the great sacred traditions of the world as well as to the predicament of a contemporary global culture that has lost sight of the perennial truth that being human is essentially an opportunity to realise our own divine nature.

Friday was given to a reading of almost the complete poem in the Baba House. Many people read aloud from a rostrum, three pages or so. The power of the spoken word to create a cohesive group experience surprised many of us.

The weekend was mainly a series of speakers and performers sharing the nourishment and inspiration that Francis' major work had given them.



Stay with God seminar at Avatar's Abode

To put it simply the message was that to encounter living reality is to love God.

In his opening talk on Saturday, Ward pointed out Baba's extraordinary support and endorsement of the poem, repeatedly listening to all of it, adding His own pivotal sections and even claiming that He had written it through Francis. He saw it as providing a companion piece to *God Speaks*. *Stay with God* was commissioned by Baba as a tool for His work.

Ross Keating's talk "Situating *Stay with God*" conveyed his own warm response to the work as well as his appreciation of the courage Francis showed in writing a work that went against all the canons of literary appreciation of the time, a work that assumed an authority based on an encounter with the divine and which claimed the penetration of the world by a new merciful and loving Advent. Francis was also challenging the belief in progress since the renaissance and the type of modern art that was little more than personal assertion. He faced a culture that dismissed his efforts with indifference.

Geoff Gunther discussed some of the main themes of the poem,

1. Cultural - how it brought into apposition East and West, and the spiritual and secular.

2. Individual – the need for surrendering self, and the way of love as the path of salvation.

3. Philosophical – life as illusory dream, no real separation from God, just the blocking rubbish of sanskaras.
4. Its musical structure, working though leitmotifs and variations and repetitions and clusters of images.

Then Lorraine Brown, Suzie Iimura and Steve Hein and the Wine Shop Singers provided a musically enhanced performance poetry interlude. An explicit focus on *Stay with God*, a great way of conveying the celebratory nature of the poem.

After lunch, speakers dealt with the Books of the poem individually, bringing out how carefully plotted and planned each section is.

1. Book I : Baba's advent placing Him in the long line of saviours and heroes.
2. Book II : The expression of the lover of Baba which is both lament and praise.
3. Book III : The five-fold telling of the Divine Theme narrative from *God Speaks*.



Ross Keating



John Isaacs-Young and Jacob Horsey

4. Book IV : The journey to Him which is the finding of His Perfect Mastery.

Followed on by another stirring musical item, wholly focused on *Stay with God*. A rendering of five stanzas from “Book IV - The Steps To His Feet.” Tuned by Sam Saunders and performed by Lorraine Brown, Peter Davies, Kris Hines, Wilma Pearson, Eve Chant, Jeanette Isaacs-Young and Ward Parks.

Finally Peter Rowan gave a lucid and illuminating treatment of Francis

Brabazon’s use of the Vedic and Greek Goddesses and their role as the Shakti principle.

Tian Gunther opened Sunday with an introduction to the unique spiritual legacy of China through Taoism, Confucianism and Buddhism and its relation to Francis’ epic.

This was followed by John Parry talking of his illustrations to *Stay with God* and his use of art to transmute Baba into powerful images. After this, more music and poetry, this time from the sage, John I-Y, and ‘Swami’ Jake Horsey.

Then a short talk on Perennial Philosophy which stressed the influence of early twentieth century Perennialists Ananda Coomaraswamy, René Guénon and others on Francis’ approach, both to sacred art and to the ills of modern civilisation.

Next Michael Le Page presented some fascinating material, including an actual recording of Swami Vivekananda addressing the World Parliament of Religions back in 1894!

After lunch Geoff Gunther tried to deal with *Stay with God* as poetry, conveying its carefully crafted rhythms, its artful repetitions and its development of themes to the culminating triumph of Book IV which was dealt with by Ross Keating.

Ross saw art as an uncovering of our real sacred nature, a holistic vehicle which far transcends the didactic and admonitory. He recalled how Francis had said “When I wrote of love I wrote well” and showed how the line was the real measure for Francis in his poetry.

Finally a masterful summing up from Ward which stressed the need to engage with the poem, to make it part of our group culture and devotional practice. It emerges from the poem that Baba is the supreme poet and artist, carving stone into man and then whittling away all our sanskaric dross. All gathered after this to discuss possibilities for the future and ongoing readings and hermeneutical discussions are planned.

In beloved Baba’s love

Much of the close discussions from the weekend will be available in some form, either written, visual or auditory form on the Francis Brabazon website or the Avatar’s Abode Website. – Ed.

The Perennial Philosophy and *Stay with God*

Geoff Gunther

Francis had a number of Coomaraswamy's books and even went to the extent of buying a copy of his book of essays *The Dance Of Shiva* for Bill LePage's library! Robert Rouse said to me that Francis was impressed with Guenon's work. Pallis' book *Peaks and Lamas* was in his library with underlinings. Coomaraswamy is mentioned on pages 104, 109, 129, and a list of some of his books is given on page 166.

However quite apart from this evidence, the attitude displayed in *Stay with God* towards modern civilisation chimes with the outlook of this group. In addition to this there is the intrinsic magnificent worth of their approach.

Why is it important?

1. Its recognition that humans are essentially spiritual creatures. To define humanity is to say "open to the Absolute." It too recognises the First without a Second.
2. It sees all traditions of true wisdom coming from the revelations of Masters, everything from the Vedic tradition to modern indigenous cultures like the Plains Indians of America. All true culture relates people to the sacred. All real religion comes from a core of universal truths.
3. Reason is seen as not defining man but as being secondary to an Illuminated Intellect. It emphasises the role of the creative imagination.
4. It recognises that truth is embodied in each unique spiritual path, handed down by tradition.
5. For it Art reminds and reveals to us our true nature through beauty and symbolism.
6. Like Francis it sees humans as swerving away from truth with the self-assertiveness of the post-Renaissance world.

From our point of view as Baba followers, in spite of its great strengths and virtues, it has a certain incompleteness.

1. It has not integrated with modern science whereas Baba said religion and science must go hand in hand.
2. It has not produced a view of evolution which sees it in terms of the divine plan and lila.



Geoff Gunther (right) with Ward Parks

3. It makes certain assumptions from the convictions of its founders which make it rule out on principle the possibility of a new divine revelation in this cycle.
4. Because it does not see the abundant plenitude of Grace released by Meher Baba it tends to see recognition of Truth as only for the few highly endowed.

This does not mean that we do not have a great deal to learn from their wisdom and their revivifying of the traditions.

The above points are not an adequate summary of the issues involved.

PROMINENT PERENNIALISTS

Frithjof Schuon, Rene Guenon, A.K.Coomaraswamy, Titus Burckhardt, Marco Pallis, Seyyed Hossein Nasr, Martin Lings, Harry Oldmeadow (not so prominent but a contemporary Australian), Harold Stewart (another flaming Australian but what a goldmine *By the Old Walls of Kyoto* is!).

For further information see www.worldwisdom.com

Celebrating *Stay with God*

The Program

**Friday through Sunday, May 8th through 10th, 2015
Baba's House at Avatar's Abode**

Friday, May 8

9:30 – 12:15 **Live reading** of *Stay with God*, Books I–II–III–IV–V

Saturday, May 9

Ward Parks. “General Introduction: *Stay with God* as a Tool in Meher Baba's Work for Humanity.” *SWG* provides guidance in the creation of a new world culture based on the foundation of the God-Man's message of love and truth.

Ross Keating. “Situating *Stay With God*.” A review of the biographical and historical background to *SWG*, with some comments on the poetic-artistic-cultural environment out of which Francis arose.

Geoff Gunther. “Epic Structure and Themes.” An introduction to the central theme of *SWG* and the structure of Francis's “argument,” with the division into five “books.”

Lorraine Brown, Suzie Imura, Steve Hein. “Singing in His Silence.” A piece of performance poetry incorporating selections from *SWG* with musical interludes tuned (and some written) by Sam Saunders, Chris Gray, and Lorraine Brown.

Ward Parks. On “Book I. Meher Baba.” An introduction to the opening biographic movement with which Francis launches his epic undertaking.

Ross Keating. On “Book II. The Love Song of John Kerry.” An introduction to Francis's very personal love expression which serves as the poem's second movement.



Left: Elischa Swan and Kendra Keller.
Right: Steven Hein, Michael Le Page, Jim Frisino

Ward Parks. On “Book III. “God's Speaking.” An introduction to Francis's poetic retelling of the Divine Theme narrative from *God Speaks*.

Geoff Gunther. On “Book IV. “The Steps to His Feet.” An introduction to the poem's fourth movement on the seeker's search and approach to the Perfect Master.

Lorraine Brown, Peter Davies, Kris Hines, Wilma Pearson, Jeannette Isaacs-Young, and Ward Parks render musically five stanzas from “The Steps to His Feet” as put to tune by Sam Saunders.

Peter Rowan. “The Archetypal Feminine in *Stay with God*.” An exposition of Francis's use of the Greek in conjunction with the Hindu-Vedic cosmology of the feminine.

Sunday, May 10

Tian Gunther. “Chinese Cultural References and Backgrounds in *Stay with God*.” An unpacking of several of Francis's Chinese references, with their roots in Buddhist, Taoist, and Confucian spiritual cosmology.

John Parry. “*Stay with God* rendered through the Visual Arts.” A talk and slide show.

John Isaacs-Young and Jacob Horsey. Dramatic recitations from “God's Speaking” and “The Steps to His Feet” with accompaniment on guitar.

Geoff Gunther. “The Perennial Philosophy in *Stay with God*.” Perennial philosophy provides a vision of traditional culture (grounded in sacred art) and modernity that is much in evidence in *SWG*.

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Sam Saunders

Remembrance and Farewell

Sam Saunders suddenly passed away in his sleep on 22nd of February. He looked to be at peace, it didn't look like a painful departure. This sudden death at the young age of 65 was a huge shock to all, his immediate and extended loving family, his music students, the Wine Shop Singers... in fact, all who knew him.

Just how many lives and hearts Sam's life and music has touched, was evidenced by how many people came to bid him farewell at the remembrance gathering at Avatar's Abode.

People came, quite a lot of people came, and they kept coming. No one did an exact count but the consensus was that it was over 200 persons.

One after another they wanted to acknowledge Sam and they stood up and told stories... Several generations of family, past (then children and now adults) guitar and music students whom he inspired as their teacher. His own children, and even his grandchildren, speaking of their love for him and of good times. And the ongoing singing group that began in 1971 and worked with him for decades, and of course his audience, so many who were nourished by his music and were inspired by his compositions and the Ghazal poems of Francis Brabazon that he set to music...the shared stories just kept



18th September 1949 – 22nd February 2015

flowing. I recall Sam as a guy who seemed to be inwardly called to do what he did – someone who did his work enthusiastically and with an open heart. Someone who believed that “The impossible is easier to achieve than the difficult”.

Vale Sam, farewell, you will be missed..

Due to a shortage of space in this newsletter we can't bring you all of the many stories and anecdotes in this newsletter. What follows are a few typical snippets that indicate how most speakers felt. – ED.

Sam Saunders Music website

<http://www.samsaundersmusic.com/index.html>

<http://www.samsaundersmusic.com/html/newmp3menu.html>

“Welcome all. Each and every one of you whose life and heart has been touched by Sam during his many roles – as husband, father and grandfather. As teacher, as fellow musician, or as neighbour, as a colleague and as a friend. Thank you for coming. Let's share this moment all join together in bidding Sam farewell...” P.D



“There is hardly a day goes by when I do not find myself singing one of the many Francis Brabazon ghazals or Sam songs that Sam devoted his time and creative energy into teaching the Wine Shop Singers. Upon waking and throughout the day, round and round these words and tunes go. For this, I am forever grateful. Year after year, the Wine Shop Singers gathered to learn another and yet another of Sam's exquisite tunes to Francis' ghazals. And, it is in singing and singing and singing them that Francis' words would come alive, and take life, in my heart. Thank you Sam for giving me Francis in a way that cannot be measured in words.” S.I



“Yesterday, one of Sam's dear daughters, Mehera, told me something that her father had told her.

Sam had explained to her the difference between a composer writing for a professional choir and

a composer writing for non-professional, or amateur, singers. He said that with a professional choir, the composer can use the choir as an instrument & expect that the choir would just sing as he felt inspired to write. The composer need not even think about the individuals who would be singing the piece.

But the composer writing for non-professional singers, has to know each individual singer – their strengths and their weaknesses, their nature, how they work together, how committed they will be to practice – and his challenge is to compose in such a way that it will be within the individual capacities of his singers – while still seeking to express as beautifully & powerfully as possible, the music and words.

Sam had to pay so much attention to each person & then write the individual parts to suit those voices.

This was also Sam’s approach to his students when teaching them guitar. He would compose individual pieces for each student – just for them. He had to study each student very closely and then compose the music that would help them ‘grow’ and improve their guitar playing.” L.B



“My ‘god-father’ Sam Saunders, a curly haired leprechaun with blue eyes. Sometimes sparkling, sometimes misted with visions of ocean waves. So much can be said about this man, God’s-pop-star, a really kind friend. This man, this composer is one of the people most likely to be immortalised for generations, through his astoundingly ‘next level’ music. He was an integral part of our daily lives - a personality very rare, humble, helpful and generous. A great cook, with a very original sense of style, a no-nonsense attitude, a fabulous sense of humour, a sweetness, a wistfulness, a cheerfulness and enthusiasm. Men like him aren’t often made - and it’s a fact, he leaves a gaping hole.” E.S



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Sam Saunders, Eruch Jessawala and Gärd Saunders at Meherazad, India



Sam Saunders and Raine Eastman-Gannett singing at Avatar’s Abode



Sam Saunders at Avatar’s Abode

“One of Sam’s many qualities as a musician which constantly amazed me, was that every single time he sang any song, whatever it was, he would do it with vitality and vibrancy. He would put his whole heart and soul into every word and every note. I cannot help but feel that Beloved Meher Baba enjoyed Sam’s oomph, and was pleased by Sam’s tireless efforts to do that which Francis speaks of time and time again in his ghazals.... sing the Beloved’s beauty.” S.I



“With Sam’s passing, one line from a song that Sam tuned and re-tuned for over 40 years (yes, he was a perfectionist) suddenly struck home to me. The song is based on the words of the poet, Francis Brabazon, and is called ‘People’ . This is the line:- ‘And when each one dies, a whole world dies with him’. Sam has departed and a whole world that included the loving & irascible Sam, has died with him. Now we have to come to grips with a world without Sam being present in his familiar form. This farewell gathering is a first step in ‘coming to grips’ with no longer having his physical company in our own worlds.” L.B



“I will forever be grateful for your encouragement and generosity and help with my recordings of Francis’ works. Your own compositions have momentum and will go on and remain alive and the legacy of your tunings of the new form, the English Language Ghazals, will certainly endure and go on inspiring. I am also grateful for having had the opportunity to work in the sphere of your musical genius. Jai Meher Baba Sam, safe passage.” R.E-G



“Sam’s heart-print is in his music. It is the music of Avatar’s Abode. It will always be there. It has lodged itself in the roof of Baba House, in the timbers of Baba’s room. It will always be heard echoing in the tall pines around Francis’s grave. And the surrounding trees and long grassy stretches have already locked his harmonies in their memory.” R.K



“In the 1970s, a group of us, along with Francis Brabazon, went to India on pilgrimage to Beloved Meher Baba’s tomb-shrine. We were singing ‘ghazals’ in Mandali Hall. I remember Eruch turning to Francis and saying “See Francis, Beloved Baba said that you would hear your ghazals sung well in your lifetime” and Francis nodding quietly in agreement. I gather Francis had complained to Baba that he wrote ghazals for Him but that no one was putting them to music and singing them (ghazals are meant to be sung). So on this occasion Eruch was reminding Francis of what Baba had said and Francis was acknowledging Baba’s words as having come true... No doubt, Sam was Baba’s composer called in to do this job.” R.K



“One day while we both were enjoying a glass of red and Sam was rolling a cigarette, he told me a joke about work: “A cigarette may shorten your life by five minutes, a glass of wine may shorten your life by four minutes, but a day working in a job that you don’t love... shortens your life by eight hours.” S.H



“Recently Sam’s daughter Mehera told me: “Sam loved the challenge of working with his ‘non-professional, variously talented singers in The Wine Shop Singers. This also applied to his teaching. People wonder why such an incredibly gifted and skilled teacher is teaching in a little room under his house in Nambour and not in a conservatorium of music.“ Mehera thought he would have been very bored working with only professionals and provided this answer – “This was Sam’s labour of love. – He loved it and he loved the singers and the students he worked with.” L.B quoting M.S



“Sam put his whole heart into his music and his teaching. He inspired each one of us to put our whole hearts into whatever creative endeavour calls to us in this life. The Wine Shop Singers will endeavour to honour his lifelong labour of love – we will find a way to keep singing and keep his songs alive, without his physical presence.” L.B



“Sam and I had the most wonderful upbeat relationship. It included a lot of good natured banter whenever we were together, which was mostly at fundraisers, where there was a bit of time for a chat before he took up his responsibility of entertaining us all.” A.F



Why 40?

Peter Rowan

In all the ancient Semitic religions, including Christianity, the number 40 is considered to be a holy one.

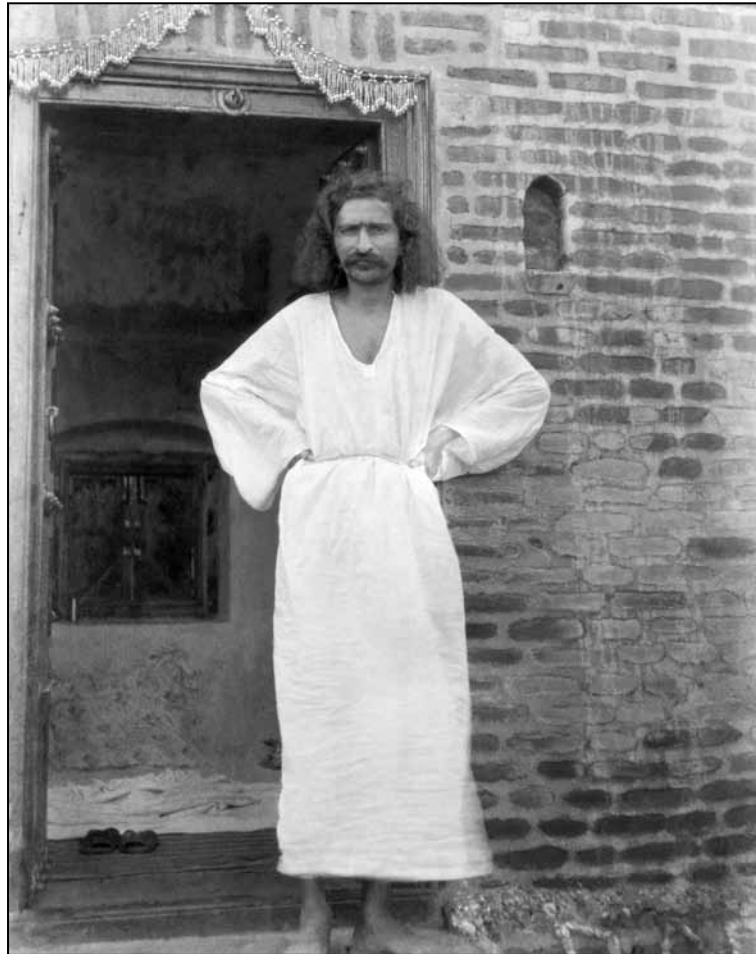
The references from antiquity that we are aware of naturally includes the story of Moses who wandered in the desert for 40 years and spent three consecutive periods of 40 days and 40 nights on Mt. Sinai, one of which was to receive the so called ten commandments.

What do we make of such a story, which the Jewish faith calculates at about three thousand years ago, and what also do we make of the story of Jonah being in a whale's belly for 40 days, Jonah not unlike

Moses, was considered to be a prophet; but perhaps the most prevalent well established 40 day story in all Semitic tradition is of the deluge of 40 days and nights encountered by Noah.

All these fantastic stories may justifiably be called unsound unless we mythologise them and see them in a completely new light, i.e. could our intellective intuition persuade us that there is such a thing as ontological time, that is to say a time of immeasurable distance where in fact time does not exist as we in our gross state of understanding experience it.

Our Beloved Avatar Meher Baba has told us clearly that time only exists



Baba at Toka 1928, during a fast. Photo © MSI Collection

in the gross world,¹ and that time in other spheres is of a naturally different order.

When we further develop our thesis that the time measuring 40 is of a primal universal order, we can then make more comprehensible the relationship between Jesus fasting for 40 days and his so called temptation by Satan during those 40 days; very fortunately Avatar Meher Baba has given us a much broader universal overview to consider when He tells us Jesus 'allowed himself to be tempted';² in this light we can also assess the 40 day period between the supposed resurrection of Jesus and his ascension

with greater clarity, as this Bible story has been severely curtailed by our knowledge through Baba that Jesus did not die on the cross but in Kashmir.³

Nevertheless, it is clear that the number 40 is of fundamental importance in historic Christian thought, as well as in Islamic thinking which I will now show.

Prophet Muhammad was 40 years old when he received the first revelation of Quran from Archangel Gabriel after having prayed and fasted for 40 days.⁴

Many Sufi traditions also pave the way for the mysterious 40, such as when Mu'innudin Chisti of Ajmer saw the Prophet

in his dreams for 40 nights⁵ before Realization. Avatar Meher Baba has advised us that Mu'innudin Chisti was Qutub of his time and head of the spiritual hierarchy.⁶

Jellal-ed-din Rumi, on the 40th day after the passing of his master Shamsi Tabriz put on a mourning robe in honour of Shamsi, and it was on this 40th day he began and established the mystic dance of the dervish.⁷ Jellal-ed-din has been acknowledged also by our Beloved as perfect.

And again, what of the famous story of Hafiz and our Beloved Avatar Meher Baba's wonderful dissertation;

Continued over page

when barely out of his teens Hafiz resorted to the tremendously arduous and virtually impossible 40 day 'chilla-nashini' to appropriate a beautiful girl he loved and wished to marry. He completed his 40 day ordeal and on the 40th day archangel Gabriel appeared to him and so astounded was Hafiz by his beauty that he completely forgot the girl and was then directed to the Perfect Master Attar through whom he became God realized⁸ after 40 years of service.

These are only a few of the many amazing stories relating to 40 which in all these past traditions has been qualified by saints of the Christian faith also, i.e. St. Francis of Assisi when quite young took the 40 day fast of lent on an uninhabited island and ate only half a loaf of bread in those 40 days, and then again some years later entered the 40 day fast of Archangel Michael,⁹ and at this point not only received stigmata, but Realization.¹⁰

Another Christian tradition that is wholly astounding is that St. Patrick of Ireland fasted the 40 days of lent on Mt. Croagh before expelling all the snakes from Ireland;¹¹ also found in the apocryphal gospel, The Protovangelium of James is that Joachim, father of Mary, Jesus' mother, fasted for 40 days and nights before her birth.¹²

Much earlier than the above wondrous events, about four thousand years ago in ancient Sumeria, the supreme God, deity of creation and intelligence, was known and worshiped by the numeric ideogram for 40,¹³ and equally as ancient, the early Zoroastrians of Persia had a 40 day worship period for an angelic being known as Mithra,¹⁴ who interestingly is identical to Mitra in the ancient Vedanta of India.

There are numerous other instances of the number 40 in ancient tales and traditions but I think if I cite anymore you may want to take 40 winks!

The great Ibn'Arabi was no doubt a perfect master and perhaps the Qutub of his time, and has been quoted as saying that a man does not attain spiritual maturity till the age of 40,¹⁵ which is the age attained by Pir-O-Murshid Al-Hujwiri when he wrote the oldest extant manuscript on Sufism in existence, about 1000 years ago. In this sublime esoteric work he writes, 'When the saints desire to hear the word of God spiritually they remain fasting for 40 days...and God speaks to their hearts, because whatever the Prophets enjoy openly the saints may enjoy secretly...therefore the four humours must be deprived of food and drink for 40 days in order that they may be utterly subdued, and that the purity of love and the subtlety of the spirit may hold absolute sway'.¹⁶

Coming now to the crux of the matter; of the many seclusions and fasts which Avatar Meher Baba undertook for us throughout His Advent we know through the detailed accounts that He spent eight periods of 40 day fasts and seclusions in an almost 40 year span beginning in 1920 and ending at the end of the thirty ninth year 1959.

I will now summarise these momentous events in chronological order.

1. At the age of 26 in 1920, Merwan Irani spent 40 days of seclusion and fasting in a cave on a hill near Nasik which previously His beloved master Upasni Maharaj had fasted in for a year. It was immediately after this 40 day fast and seclusion that Merwan became known as Meher Baba.¹⁷

2. It was during the Prem Ashram days in 1927, after 40 days of fasting, that Meher Baba retired into a crypt beneath a cabin at Meherabad, which eventually was to become His Samadhi.¹⁸
3. At the Nasik Ashram on January 8th 1937 our Beloved began another 40 day fast in which all the western disciples staying there and the mandali participated in. After the 40 days Baba gave mass Darshan in Nasik to celebrate His birthday.¹⁹
4. On January 17th 1948 Baba began another 40 day fast, and on the 30th January remarked, "a very significant event will occur today", it was the day Mahatma Gandhi was assassinated. A few days later, still on His 40 day fast, Baba went to the Ardha Khumba Mela in Allahabad and laid His head on the feet of 4000 sadhus.²⁰
5. The Great Seclusion of June 1949 was to be a 40 day fast and seclusion of vast importance to humanity; out of it came 'The New Life'. Avatar Meher Baba said of these 40 days, "The work I have done in Meherazad during this seclusion I have not done anywhere else in the world". It has been recorded, that when stepping out this 40 day seclusion and fast, Baba looked utterly radiant as if He had just returned from a holiday!²¹
6. Concluding 'The New Life' phase our Beloved then went into seclusion, in stages of 40 days, on Seclusion Hill in which His Manonash took place. He

said to Mehera and Mani, in November 1951 during this seclusion, “My 40 days work has been completely successful” and in December 1951, Baba said, “The remaining 40 days work in seclusion will be very important”.²²

7. Following the momentous ‘Final Declaration’ of September 23rd 1954, and giving up the use of His alphabet board on October 8th, Baba declared ‘all which I have said in my Final Declaration will come to pass from the 1st December’, and on that day He began a 40 day fast.²³
8. On July 10th 1958, our Beloved Avatar Meher Baba gave to humanity His ‘Universal Message’, four days later He went into a 40 day seclusion in which Baba allowed all those at the Meherabad meeting of July 10th to share with Him, by repeating five hundred times daily for the 40 days, ‘Beloved God Thy will has come to pass. Whatever Baba has declared will come to pass this year’. Perhaps as important at this time was that Baba put Eruch Jessawala in India on a fast of 40 days, Francis Brabazon in Australia on a fast of 40 days and in America Sam Cohen on a fast of 40 days.²⁴

I should now mention, that in November 1959, Baba entered another 40 day seclusion at Meherazad, which was to be of ‘utmost importance’ but was never completed, as Baba after three days indicated that ‘maya’ had prevented Him from beginning his work of 40 days; He added a short time later, the result of this

work in seclusion will manifest in two stages, ‘my humiliation and my glorification’.²⁵

Had our Beloved completed this 40 day fast it would have taken Him into 1960, 40 years precisely from the first fast and seclusion of 1920. Is there then a correlation between this last seclusion of Beloved Baba and the 40 day ‘chilla-nashini’ his heroic father Sheriar attempted in 1884, but was unable to complete after thirty days?²⁶

We will now attempt to answer my question ‘why 40?’, but before I do perhaps a word of warning could be in order, as what I say could be not unlike when our Beloved put Norina Matchabelli on silence for 40 days in July 1947,²⁷ or when in 1937 in His infinite jest He asked Ghani Munsiff to beg 40 rupees for his funeral before putting him on a fast which Baba knew he could not keep!;²⁸ and in this same year Nonny Gayley was put on a liquid fast for 40 days by her Beloved’s benevolence!²⁹

There are certain inherent universal factors which cannot and will not change, or in other words universal principles, which our Beloved Avatar Meher Baba as supreme head of the Spiritual Hierarchy, uses in the time factor of the gross world for the benefit of humanity at large.

Perhaps the following revealing anecdote will clarify this assertion a little more.

Whilst Mahatma Gandhi was in prison in September 1932, Meher Baba sent word to him that if he agreed to go on a fast for 40 days, and if possible spend the 40th day in His presence, He would give him ‘Sight of God’, which Ghandi genuinely longed for. In October 1932 Ghandi replied that he didn’t believe that fasting for 40 days would help him see God as

Baba told him. Our Beloved Avatar Meher Baba in the course of various letters back and forth stated quite unequivocally, ‘What’s in a 40 day fast! The desired result of Ishwar Darshan (sight of God) can be acquired through the strict observance of certain principles under the instructions of perfect ones who have gained the divine experience of God Realization and can give the same to others.’³⁰

‘Certain principles’ is the very key to our understanding of the whys and wherefores of the 40 enigma. If we consider most of our time is spent in not attempting to understand these universal principles at all, we can at least agree that 40 as a principle of universal importance, has through the millennia been acknowledged and used by the perfect ones, and certainly to a great degree, as I have demonstrated, by our Divine Beloved Avatar Meher Baba during His advent.

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Continued on page 26

Baba in the Glass House Mountains and Beerburrum

Ray Kerkhove

Nearly twenty years ago, Robert Rouse drove me to the only place between Brisbane and Avatar's Abode that Baba stopped. Baba was there twice - en route and on His return to Brisbane.

Robert took me to the exact spot where Baba's car had parked - by a fence a little right of a building (see photo).

The stop was the little town of Beerburrum. Here, Robert explained, at what was (in 1958) a combination general store and petrol station, the travelling party refuelled. The men bought soft drinks for Baba (who stayed in the car) and for themselves. On the trip up, they also phoned to tell those at Avatar's Abode that they were on their way and in fact coming earlier than planned!

A little later, still on what is now called the Steve Irwin Way, the cars passed the Glass House Mountains - iconic volcanic plugs (see <http://www.nprsr.qld.gov.au/parks/glass-house-mountains/>). These were pointed out to Baba, who looked at them.

In 2015 Australia is marking the centenary of World War I - especially the story of its soldiers (ANZACs).

Their tragic sacrifice, particularly at the battle of Gallipoli, played a huge role in shaping Australia's cultural identity (see <http://www.anzacsite.gov.au/>). Thus it is topical to discuss the Avatar's brief stop at Beerburrum, as Beerburrum was mostly built by ANZAC soldiers. In fact, it was Australia's *first and largest returned soldier settlement* - once housing over 1,000 (twice as many people as live there now).

Amazingly, the building where Baba stopped still survives. Until only ten years ago it still boasted its antique petrol pumps. Today it is - appropriately - a mechanics shop. Otherwise it seems unchanged.

I don't think the Avatar does anything at random. This was a very appropriate place to pause. Apart from touching base with Aussie military traditions, perhaps Baba was - as in so many places - acknowledging human suffering and longing?

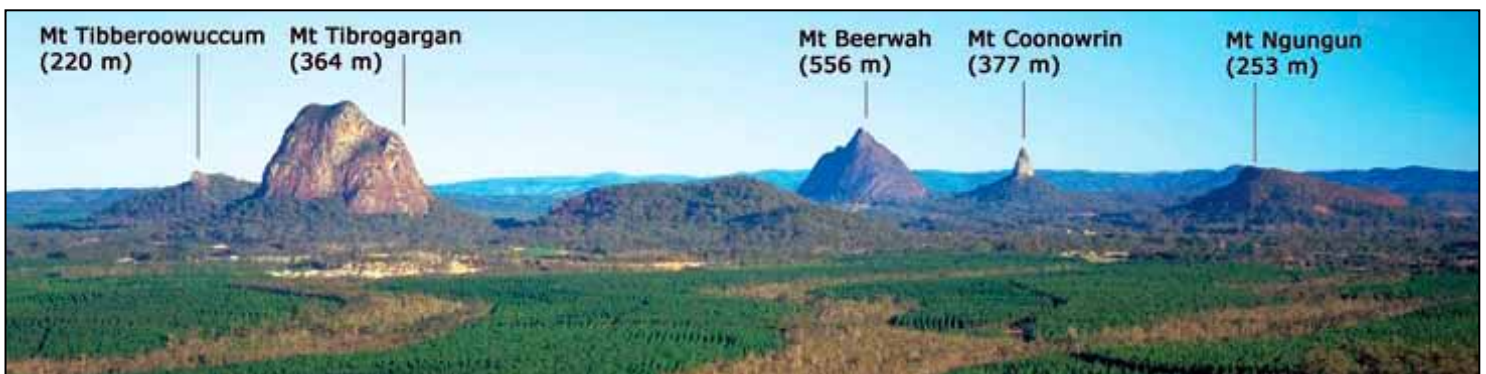
In 1916, Australia preferred to keep her war-wounded "out of sight." If they lived in Brisbane, it was feared their afflictions (physical and mental) would dissuade young Australians from

volunteering. World War I had only just begun. The issue of conscription had recently divided the nation. Beerburrum was a suitably long distance from centres of population.

So Beerburrum was where returned soldiers eked out a lonely new life - and suffered... Most had disabilities or ailments (prompting the region's first hospital to be built there). Most were city boys with no idea of how to farm - not that they had a chance. The soil here was very poor and sandy; their plots were tiny; their produce sold ridiculously low as there was simply too much.

The result? Beerburrum's war heroes were ironically stuck in a poverty trap. Most worked very hard but ended up abandoning their holdings. Quite a lot died sad, drunk and forgotten as they struggled to survive (and incidentally pioneered Queensland's pineapple industry). A tiny primitive cemetery houses some of their bones at Beerburrum.

Their bones were followed by more bones... Straight after World War II came another batch of hard-working, impoverished men: war refugees -



The Glass House Mountains, photo courtesy of Dept of National Parks Queensland Government

mostly East Europeans - quite a lot secretly Muslims (Albanians and Yugoslavs). Living in austere work camps, these folk created what are still Australia's largest artificial forests: the vast, monotonous slash pine plantations that many a visitor to Avatar's Abode will drive past...

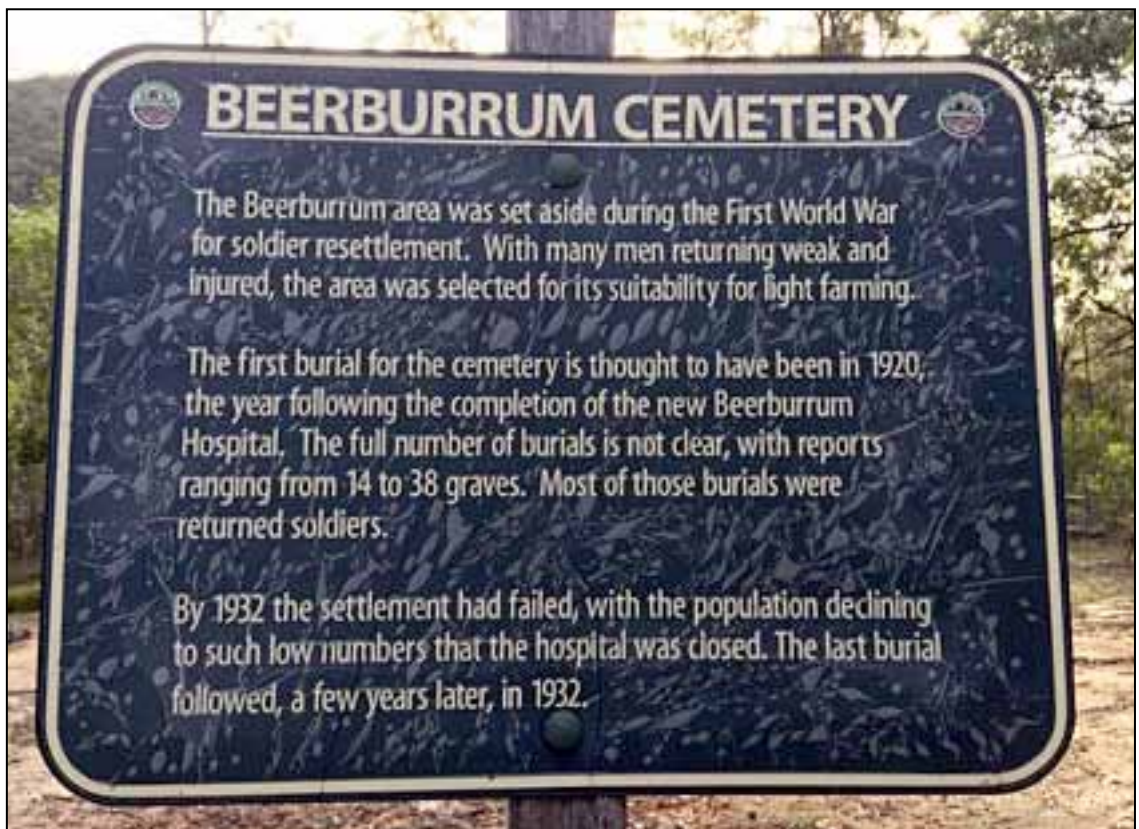
Unfortunately, the plantations became 'the killing fields' according to police. Over fifty years, many murder victims have been buried in their sombre, swampy wastelands - most famously, the boy Daniel Morcombe who was abducted from a bus stop near Kiel Mountain (the suburb where Avatar's Abode sits)....

Still more bones... Morcombe's remains (eventually found not far from Beerburrum) were pivotal in creating a nation-wide child safety program.

Baba paused amongst all this sadness and suffering... Yet this was also an area of spiritual and creative endeavour. The Glass House Mountains inspired many artists and poets. In Aboriginal times, an unusually large number of *boras* (ceremonial grounds) once dotted the vicinity – about 30. Today, *Nungeena*



The building where Baba stopped still survives. Until only ten years ago it still boasted its antique petrol pumps. Today it is – appropriately – a mechanics shop



– a major Aboriginal women's centre, is situated in Beerwah (a Glass House Mountains town). It is used for many of the region's NAIDOC (Aboriginal week) celebrations. Likewise, there is an historic home here (see <http://www.bankfoothouse.org/>) with long

connections to the timber industry and Cobb-and-Co (the early coach line). Bankfoot House has become the prime centre of heritage-related festivities in the area near Avatar's Abode. It offers a feast of 'Australiana.' Doubtless Beloved Baba knew what He was doing.

Impressions Produce Thoughts

Meher Baba

The best way to cleanse the heart and prepare for the stilling of the mind is to lead a normal, worldly life. Living in the midst of your day-to-day duties, responsibilities, likes, dislikes, etc., will help you. All these become the very means for the purification of your heart. The natural, normal method depends for its success upon a clear idea of the force behind your thoughts, and the facts underlying your actions.

The force behind your thoughts is the force of the impressions in your mind. The impressions are there due to your own previous actions. Actions are the cause of impressions and thoughts are but the expression of the impressions. This being true, the more you try to check your thoughts, the more you interfere with the natural process of their expression. Sooner or later, with the added force produced by suppression, the impressions are bound to express themselves completely.

The truth of action is that every action, significant or insignificant, voluntary or involuntary, is at once impressed in turn upon your mind. Like a non-greasy stain, a light impression can be easily wiped out, but impressions caused by actions conceived in anger, lust or greed are hard to remove. In short, actions produce impressions, and impressions produce thoughts. Thoughts in turn tend to precipitate further action.

For the purification of your heart, leave your thoughts alone, but maintain a constant vigil over your actions. When you have thoughts of anger, lust or greed, do not worry about them, and do not try to check them. Let all such thoughts come and

go without putting them into action. Try to think counter-thoughts in order to discern, to discriminate, to learn, and above all to unlearn the actions which are prompted by your own impressions.

It is better to feel angry sometimes than merely to suppress anger. You then have an opportunity to think about anger, its causes and its consequences. Although your mind may be angry, do not let your heart know it. Remain unaffected.

If you never feel angry you will be like stone, in which form the mind is least developed. Similarly, if you never have lusty thoughts you cannot achieve the merit of having avoided lustful actions.

Let the thoughts of anger, lust and greed come and go freely and unasked without putting them into words and deeds. Then the related impressions in your mind begin to wear out and become less and less harmful. But when you put such thoughts into action — whether overtly or secretly — you develop new impressions worse than those which are spent in the act. These new impressions root even more firmly in your mind.

The fire of divine love alone can destroy all impressions once and for all. However, remembering me can keep down the impurities in the impressions in your mind, as alum catches hold of (floculates) dirt in a vessel of turbid water. Therefore, when you feel angry or have lustful thoughts, remember Baba at once. Let my name serve as a net around you so that your thoughts, like mosquitoes, may keep buzzing around you and yet not sting

you. In that manner you can prevent unwanted thoughts from turning into unwanted actions, and thus eventually bring your heart to the purification required for me to manifest therein.

But it is not child's play to remember me constantly during your moments of excitement. If, in spite of being very angry, you refrain from expressing anger, it is indeed a great achievement. It means that when your mind becomes angry your heart does not know it, just as when your heart loves me your mind need not know it. In fact, your mind does not know that your heart loves when, prepared to give up life itself, you lead a life of day-to-day obedience and duty.

You can also entrust your mind to me by remembering me or repeating my name in your heart as often as you can. Remember me so often that your mind is at a loss to find other thoughts to feed on.

Although I am "taking" my own name continuously, I have come to hear it repeated by my lovers, and even though I were deaf, I would hear it if you repeated it only once with all your heart in it. If you cannot remember me constantly, then always take (repeat, think of) my name before going to sleep and on waking up.

At least remember to remember me when you breathe your last, and you will still come to me. But how will you remember at the last moment, unless you start to remember me right now?

LISTEN, HUMANITY,
pp. 43-45, ed. Don E. Stevens

In One Sense All Are Mad

Kitty Davy

Baba also talked about illusion and delusion: “Now what is self-delusion? We say that so and so is self-deluded. What is meant by this?”

Someone answered, “A person who imagines himself to be what he is not.”

Baba replied: “But this imagination is so strong that the self-deluded man does not doubt he is what he thinks himself to be. He feels he really is this or that person. This delusion is very positive, but it is, after all, delusion, and although these persons are not hypocritical, they are dangerous — but not seriously so. In one sense all are mad; deluded persons are mad. For instance, you think you are the body — you are body-mad. Are you not mad?”

[addressing one of the group] “You are mad, but God-mad. There are many on the path who become self-deluded and think they have reached the Goal and they say, ‘I am God.’ They are not charlatans but self-deluded. They believe it genuinely. This is called *Mukameafasan* or the Abode of Delusion.”

*LOVE ALONE PREVAILS,
p. 159 1981 © Avatar Meher Baba
Perpetual Public Charitable Trust*

“In Sufi this particular part of the Path is known as *Mukameafasan* or the Abode of Delusion; it is in such difficult phases of the Path that the Master gives a push to the aspirant, so that he passes on instead of getting caught up on the way.”

*GOD TO MAN AND MAN TO GOD, THE
DISCOURSES OF MEHER BABA, First Edition (1955)
Edited by C. B. Purdom. An Avatar Meher
Baba Trust eBook, June 2011 p 59,*

http://www.ambppct.org/Book_Files/GtoM_part_one.pdf

On His Way to Church

Meister Eckhart

On his way to church, a scholar was surprised to see a man in tattered clothes and barefoot. Nevertheless, as a good Christian, he greeted the poor man: “May God give you a good morning!”

The poor man replied cheerfully, “I have never yet had a bad morning.”

“Then may God give you good luck!”

“I have never yet had bad luck.”

“Well, may God give you happiness!”

“I have never yet been unhappy.”

The scholar then asked the man, “Could you please explain yourself to me? I do not understand.”

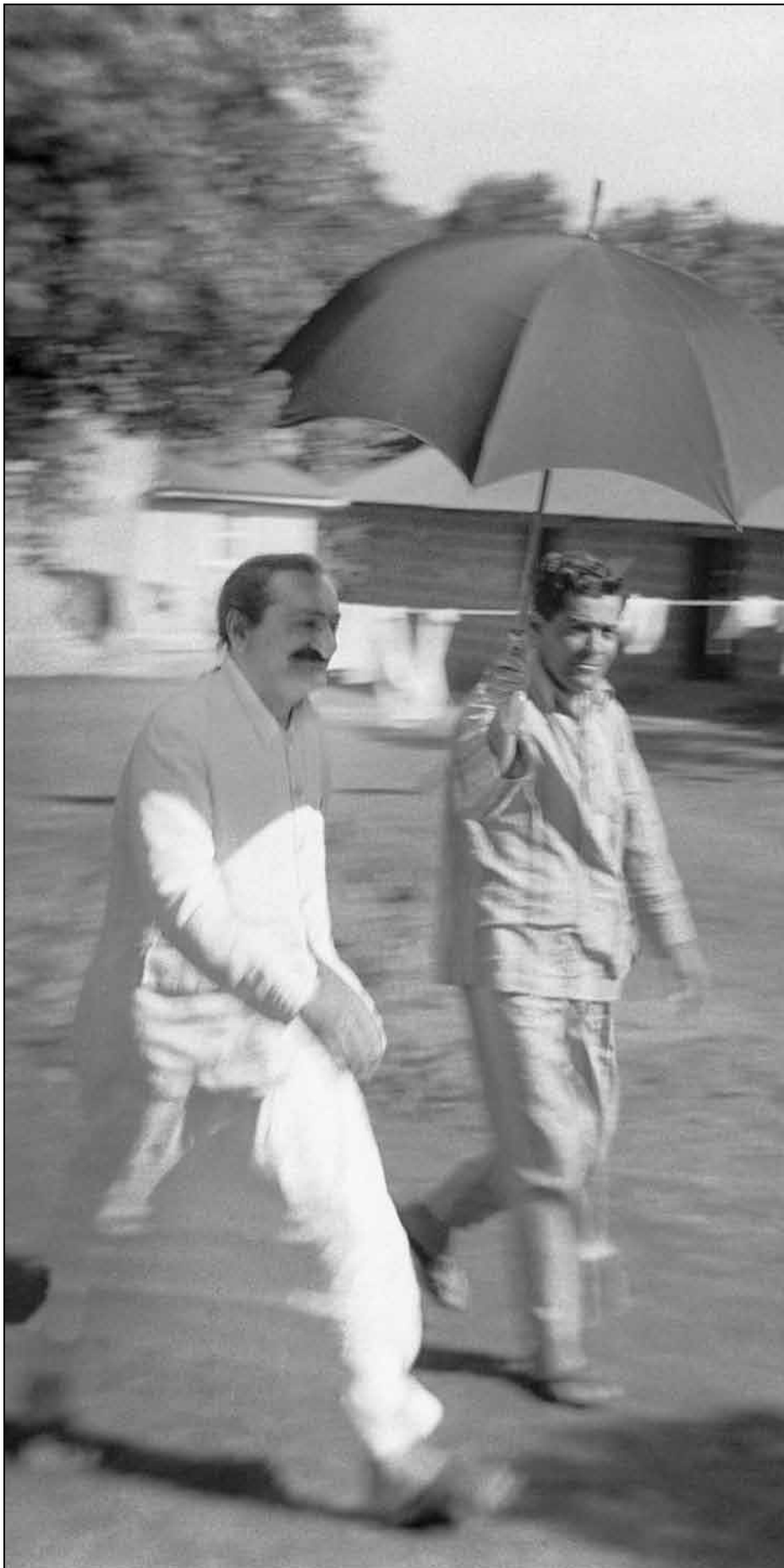
And the poor man replied, “With pleasure! You wish me a good morning, yet I have never had a bad morning. For when I am hungry, I praise God; when I feel cold, or when it is raining or snowing, I praise God; and that is why I have never had a bad morning.

You wish that God may give me luck. However, I have never had bad luck. This is because I live with God and always feel what he does for me is the best. Whatever God sends me, be it pleasant or unpleasant, I accept with a grateful heart. That is why I have never had bad luck.

Finally, you wish that God should make me happy. But I have never been unhappy. For all I desire is to follow God’s will; I have surrendered my will so totally to God’s will that, whatever God wants, that is what I want also.

That is why I have never been unhappy.”

*Two Suns Rising: A Collection of Sacred Writings
Compiled and translated by Jonathan Star*



Jal is walking next to Baba holding an umbrella. It is possible this photo was taken during either the Three Incredible Weeks program or the November 1955 Sabavas program. It may be at Lower Meherabad. © MSI Collection.

Hold Fast to My Daaman

Meher Baba

At Satara in 1955:

Now I will explain about holding fast to my daaman. Hold me, or leave me! Don't try to compromise. One thing is definite and fixed: if I am the Highest of the High or if I am the lowest of the low, and you hold fast to my daaman, you will be where I will be. This depends on how fast is your grip on my daaman. It matters not if you are saints or sinners.

I will give you one example. In my boyhood, I liked very much to fly kites. You know that kites have long tails and as they soar high in the skies, the tails flutter vigorously. If they hold fast to the kite, they go where the kite flies. It matters little whether the tails are stuck with fine gum or some dirty thing. What is needed is that the grip should not loosen. In the same way, whether you are sinners or saints, if you hold fast to my daaman, you will be wherever I will be.

Now, by holding fast means what? It means to keep Baba pleased always. And how to please Him? By your obeying Him wholeheartedly!

All these years, it was I who held fast to your garment. Now the time has come that you should hold firm to mine.

*Daaman = in this context,
the hem of a garment.*

LORD MEHER ONLINE – Page 3698

<http://www.lordmeher.org/rev/index.jsp?pageBase=page.jsp&nextPage=3698>

On the Topic of Suffering

Mani S. Irani

From the time I was little I knew that suffering, like everything else in creation, comes from God. I noticed how much suffering my loved ones had to go through in one way or another, especially my close family. Later I would wonder why the good people I knew received more suffering, while the not-good people I knew got away with whatever they did.

The answer came from within me that suffering must surely be a very good thing, such a good thing that God would want to share it with His special ones. I asked Father about it, and he said, “Never question God’s Love and wisdom, my child; suffering is a passing thing given to you for your lasting benefit.”

When you belong to the Lord, He takes over all that is yours — your failures, your victories, your joys, your sorrows, to work with as He wishes. With all the Baba-lovers that we know of going through all the suffering that we hear of, it is not easy to see all the compassion that we are assured of. This unseen compassion is spoken of by His great lovers in the past, and illustrated by a Perfect Master in a simple analogy of a village potter.

You may have been among one of the groups accompanying Eruch on a tour of Pimpalgaon Village in the old days when he took Baba-lovers around the village. One of the favourite sights was the village potter making a pot on a primitive wheel turned by hand. While the clay is whirling around on the wheel, the potter is shaping the pot by whacking it with a wooden mallet. As his right hand is visibly raining these blows on the outside of the pot, his left hand is inside the pot, unseen, silently supporting and upholding it so that it does not break.

Thus a Perfect Master illustrates God’s unseen compassion.

Avatar Meher Baba ki Jai!!!

LETTERS OF LOVE FOR MEHER BABA, pp. 592-593,
Ed. Jane B. Haynes 1997 © EliNor Publications, Inc.

What is Love?

Meher Baba

What is love? To give and never to ask. What leads to this love? Grace. What leads to this grace? Grace is not cheaply bought. It is gained by being always ready to serve and reluctant to be served.

There are many points which lead to this grace:

Wishing well for others at the cost of one’s self;

Never backbiting;

Tolerance supreme;

Trying not to worry (which is almost impossible, but try anyway);

Thinking more of the good points in others and less of their bad points.

When Christ said, “Love your neighbor,” he did not mean fall in love with your neighbour. If you do one of the above perfectly the rest must follow. Then grace descends. Have love; and when you have love, union with the Beloved is certain. When you love, you give. When you fall in love, you want. Love me in any way you like, but love me. It is all the same.

Love me. I am pure, the source of purity, so I consume all weaknesses in my fire of love.

Give your sins, weaknesses, virtues all to me — but give. I would not mind even one falling in love with me; I can purify. But when you fall in love with anybody else you cannot call it love.

Love is pure as God. It gives and never asks; that needs grace.

...

What is God? Love. Infinite love.

REVISED LORD MEHER, pg. 1843
♣ 1844, 28th May 1937.

<http://www.lordmeher.org/rev/index.jsp?pageBase=page.jsp&nextPage=1843>

I'd run and I'd run and I'd run

If I knew my true friend was near
I'd run and I'd run and I'd run.
I'd leave my shanghai and penknife
and skid along the polished floors,
I'd scamper down the stairs
past my Dad on the phone in the hall.

I'd run past my Mum in the kitchen,
checking the shelves for what to buy,
I'd run past my Nan in the spare room
knitting in the strong morning sun,
'Don't forget your hat,' she'd say
'And why do you have to run?'

I'd run past my bright red bicycle
up against the garden fence,
I'd open the gate and I'd be out
as quick as a flea can wink.
I'd run past my brother in his FJ ute
I'd run past my dogs Snip and Binks.

I'd run past Roany my favourite calf,
I'd run past Bellboy my angel-eyed horse,
I'd run through the paddocks of lucerne,
past the milk cans shining in the sun,
past the Aboriginal bora ring
I'd run and I'd run and I'd run.

I'd run all the way to the city
and over the Story Bridge
I'd run to the end of George Street
to the grand Bellevue on the left,
I'd stop just once in the lobby
just once to catch my breath.

I'd run past my true friend's companions
waiting with travel bags and
I'd run into his wide open arms
unable to hide my surprise;
and everything that I ever loved
I'd see again in his welcoming eyes.

And we'd hug like long-lost friends
and just as our faces would touch,
I'd feel the softness of his skin
and my heart would rise and leap,
and in the fragrant joy of his presence
I'd weep and I'd weep and I'd weep.

*Ross Keating
Poem 67
'A First Act by Ross Keating'*

The Poet's First Lesson

She sat in Mandali Hall
where Eruch
could not see her.

Then someone moved,
and their eyes met.

Who are you sister?
Eruch enquired.

I'm a poet
who doesn't speak.

Doesn't speak – but
you're speaking now?

This is not speaking,
this is talking.

Then speak,
Eruch implored.

But I can't speak
when everyone
just wants to talk.

Then let's
stop talking and
start speaking
Eruch replied.

But Eruch
what I speak
is personal –
between myself
and my Beloved.

Eruch paused
then spoke:

What do you mean
it's personal?

If it's poetry,
it's not you
who speaks,
it is the Beloved
who speaks in you.

Only He speaks and
only He listens in us!

So who are you
to block
His speaking
and deprive us?

Ross Keating

Driving From Hell To Heaven

1.
Stuck in traffic again.
The winding country road
deserted until suddenly
I see ahead the great,
almost-stilled procession,
and soon am one of

the slow travelers,
rolling a few feet
then stopping again.

The prospect of
eight miles of this
crushes my heart,
grinds my mind.
I'm a million miles
from Home.

2.
Some time
in limbo
considering options;
but at this point, no
other way to go.

Finally, resigned
to "never get there"
(which is how it feels),
I decide to sing:

"Nowhere to go,
Nothing to do,
All travel is Illusory,
Meher, there's only You."

I play harmonica riffs,
let my heart
pick the songs
or make them up.

"Oh, Mary, don't you
weep, don't you moan..."

Next time I look
it's Spring
inside and out!
Bright buds on the live oaks
are what I see now,
not the endless grey road.

In fact, there Is no grey road
only this Shining Road
on which I've driven
out of Time,
back into Love.

Max Reif

The Last Judgment

We have it all wrong,
 God is not our judge—
 The ego is.
 God is our defense counsel
 And on that last day
 When our ego plays its usual role
 Of prosecuting attorney, judge and jury
 Trying to implicate us in every conceivable evil,
 God will proclaim our unassailable defense
 With three little words:

“I AM YOU,”

Which will burst upon us
 In tidal waves of transformative power
 Subduing all illusion of separation
 Freeing us forever.

This is truly “The Last Judgment”
 When the ego, as an affirmation of separateness
 Dies and we are reborn into Unity;
 A realm of non-separation previously unknown
 to us.

This is the “End of the World,”
 When we know ourselves to be inseparable
 from the whole universe
 And the world will no longer appear to be
 something outside us.

For “The Last Judgment” and “The End of the
 World”
 Are psychological/spiritual events of realization
 Which take place within us
 As gateways to the ultimate freedom.

“No one will treat you worse than your own mind,
 not even your worst enemy.”
 -- a quote by Eruch Jessawala, one of Meher Baba’s closest
 male disciples.

John Prisco

Baba Song

I love you,
 Lord, I need you
 Everything I had
 You took away from me
 And You could pay me back
 So very easily—

just call me up,
 just to say hello,
 just to say hello
 and let me know
 You care,
 and that you’re there for me

Oh Baba hear my prayer
 I know you’re everywhere.
 I know you’re everywhere
 including here inside of me

So let me see
 Your beautiful and shining face,
 which will erase the other images
 that crowd this place

And now I’d better go—
 what more is there to say?
 Especially to Someone
 who knows it all?
 Especially to You, my love,
 Who knows it all.

Alice Klein

A Philosophy Of Poems

A poem is a Temple.
 OK, all structures are Temples,
 the human form included.

In each of us,
 God leaves his house
 every morning to go
 and meet God—

in Temples,
 and in Temples
 we call shops, cafes,
 schools, factories.

There are Temples we call poems,
 set on a plot of land we call a page,
 on a street we call a book.

For a poet, this is important.
 Here’s a definition:
 a poem is an empty structure
 a poet fills with God
 so that a reader
 may come and receive.

Max Reif

Good social tips from Meher Baba’s mandali

The smartest thing to do with negative behaviour directed at you from a self absorbed troublemaker is to ignore them. Adi K Irani used to say “Be careful about engaging with shameless people... It’s like wrestling with a pig in a slop pen filled with shit. Remember... the pig doesn’t mind being there.”

Once Eruch was asked what we should do about friends who behave badly. He said it was simple – ... “don’t have anything to do with them”.

I gather that Eruch also explained how to make the right choice when making a decision, choose that which will bring one closer to Him. – Ed.

Societal Pathologies and Spiritual Values

A comment on Ghazal no 37 from

In Dust I Sing

John Isaacs-Young

Among Meher Baba's disciples, Francis Brabazon seems to be the one to have made a detailed connection between societal pathologies and spiritual values. He moves from insights that relate to the individual to those that penetrate the dark nature of human collectives – how they operate, with and without true spiritual values in place. His capacity to look with sharp clarity into the nature of human societies will I suspect be increasingly recognised and valued in times ahead.

Ghazal No 37 by Francis Brabazon

Iron plains, and then sea-stretch to new desert lands — grief's growth.
This is the mercy of the Beloved to heal our wrath.

If we had not opened a bank-account in the name of Anger
We would not need traveller's cheques — for where would we be stranger?

It is senseless to talk of brotherhood while Lust rules us;
First we must suffer otherhood while love schools us.

***And peace-talk is verbal diarrhoea so long as Greed
Deprives half of the world daily of a decent feed.***

***Nothing can happen till we renounce our triple prosperity
And learn to establish ourselves in perfect poverty.***

We can make a start now, or grind on for millions of births;
No need to worry about the bitch Science — there'll be plenty more Earths.

Hammers of hunger on anvils of grief forge the golden chains
By which we are dragged to the feet of God across the iron plains.

*IN DUST I SING © 1974 by Francis
Brabazon, Avatar's Abode, Australia*

Versions

Steve Klein

One day, while preoccupied with myself, as usual, a poem, almost complete, popped into my head. Excited, I wrote it down and, with a little struggle, finished it, astonished and grateful at this opportunity to present you with something so beautiful.

But the next day, when I went to read it, I found it needed a little more work. A word changed here and there, a few other small revisions, nothing major really.

I was a little surprised, therefore, to discover the following day that it needed still more work. An awkward phrase eliminated, a transition tightened, a few words substituted for ones that had seemed powerful at first but now sounded out of place, or trite, or laboured.

Every day I saw that more changes were needed and I painstakingly made them, imagining myself a master jeweller, carefully creating in intricate detail the perfect setting for a gem that seemed to shine with an inner radiance.

And yet, when it was finally finished, perfect in all respects, I discovered that it still didn't capture the feeling that seemed so powerful when it first appeared, almost full blown in my head.

And so, each day brings new revisions. Sometimes entirely new images appear, startling verdant blooms that take the breath away, but which require further pruning to show them to their best effect.

The days turned into weeks, the weeks months, the months years and, by now, there have been so many changes, so many versions that I don't even remember how the original poem went.

This is how it is with You. We are all works in progress, as You slowly go about the process of composing Your love poem in us.

© Steve Klein, from his book *'FIRE
AND SMOKE'* – 2011

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Bobo's Prayer

Judith Garbett

Meher Baba's sister Mani said education in her time was much simpler. 'I don't mean easy,' she said, 'but simplified — nothing like the load of learning children have to bear nowadays. But even back then the teacher would give a good amount of work to be done at home, which Mother was keen that I should do.'

But Mani would rebel, telling her mother that school was where any schooling should be, and home-time was for playing with friends. However, when exam time came Mani had a lot of catching up to do. So having no time to pray for herself and needing instant help, she would run to 'Bobo' (her father) and implore him to pray for her.

Finally taking Bobo's advice that she also should pray for herself, Mani asked him to teach her a very short prayer, 'a one-minute prayer', as she didn't have time for a longer one. 'Child,' said Bobo, 'I can teach you a simple prayer that is shorter than a minute.' Little Mani couldn't imagine any time less than a minute, so she asked in astonishment what such a prayer could be.

Bobo replied, 'The prayer is never to think ill of anyone. This prayer takes no time at all and goes straight to God.'

LIVES OF LOVE, Part 3, p. 2 1998

© Avatar Meher Baba Perpetual
Public Charitable Trust

The Pearl Diver

Meher Baba

"When I became a lover I thought I had gained the Pearl of the Goal; foolish I did not know that this Pearl lies on the floor of an ocean which has innumerable waves to be encountered and great depths to be sounded" — Hafez (translated by Meher Baba).

In the beginning the seeker of Truth is like a man who, having heard that a priceless pearl is to be got from the depths of the ocean, goes down to the sea-shore and first admires the vastness of the ocean and then paddles and splashes about in the shallows and, intoxicated with this new excitement, forgets about the pearl.

Out of many who do this, one after a while, remembers his quest and learns to swim and starts to swim out.

Out of many who do this, one masters swimming and reaches the open sea; the others perish in the waves.

Out of many who master swimming, one begins to dive; the others in their enjoyment of mastery, again forget about the pearl.

Out of many who practice diving, one reaches the ocean bed and grasps the pearl.

Out of many who get hold of the pearl, one swims back up to the surface with it, the others stay stuck on the floor gazing with wonder at the pearl.

Out of many who swim to the surface, one returns to the shore.

This one is the Perfect Master (Qutub) and He shows His pearl to the others--- the divers, the swimmers, the paddlers, and so encourage them in their efforts. But He can if He wishes cause another to become the possessor of the pearl without that one having to learn swimming and diving.

But God-Man or Avatar is the Master of Masters (Qutub-al-Aktab), and can give possession of the pearl to any number He likes. The Qutub is perfect Perfection, but is circumscribed by His office in regard to His help to men. The Avatar is beyond limits of function; His power and the effects of His power are boundless. The absolute Perfection of the Perfect Master is the same as God-Man's. The difference between them is in the scope of their functioning. One is limited, the other is limitless."

*"THE EVERYTHING AND THE NOTHING" by Meher Baba, pp20,
printed 2005. © 1989 Avatar Meher Baba Perpetual Public Charitable Trust*

Guernica is Reflection; Kailas is Statement

(Anselm Instalment 13)

Ross Keating

After Anselm poured us all a second cup of tea he sank down into his large comfy reading chair, lifted his legs into a lotus position, placed his hands in namaste, closed his eyes, and started to solemnly chant as if it were a sacred mantra: “Guernica is reflection; Kailas is statement.” Before long we were all joining in – we couldn’t resist – and the whole study was reverberating with hypnotic sound: “Guernica is reflection; Kailas is statement -- Guernica is reflection; Kailas is statement . . .”

We must have sounded like strange birds to the warbling magpies sitting in the Poinciana tree in the back yard. As our enthusiasm waned Anselm slowly opened his eyes and like a choir conductor motioned us to chant softer and softer and then more slowly until we all drifted into a sustained silence.

“Om,” whispered Thomas breaking the quiet after a long pause, “we should do this more often.” “Yes,” supported Philomena, “we could become the *Stay with God* chanters!” “It’s remarkable,” I added, “how Francis can get so much meaning into a few words. He’s a real distiller of language and this is how he gets a lot of power into his writing.”

“Let me read the full passage,” said Anselm, “where these words are lifted from, for it gives us a picture of what Francis is getting at:



Meher Baba standing in the Kailash temple, Ellora caves.
Photo © MSI Collection

Guernica is parochial; Siva-Bhairav at Kailas, universal

Guernica, the rage of a man against conditions imposed by others;

Kailas, the destruction of self-imposed obstacles to Self;

Guernica, an expression of barbarism destroying itself;

Kailas, the expression of civilization continually renewing itself;

Guernica is reflection; Kailas is statement.

(SWG p. 110)

“Guernica, of course, refers to the famous 1937 painting by Picasso. It expressed his horror at the senseless destruction and killing of people in a small Basque village, Guernica, by German and Italian warplanes under the direction of the fascist General Franco. So the ‘rage of a man’ Francis

is referring to is Picasso’s rage. In the Notes of *Stay with God* Francis refers to Picasso as “the greatest living European painter” (SWG p.164).

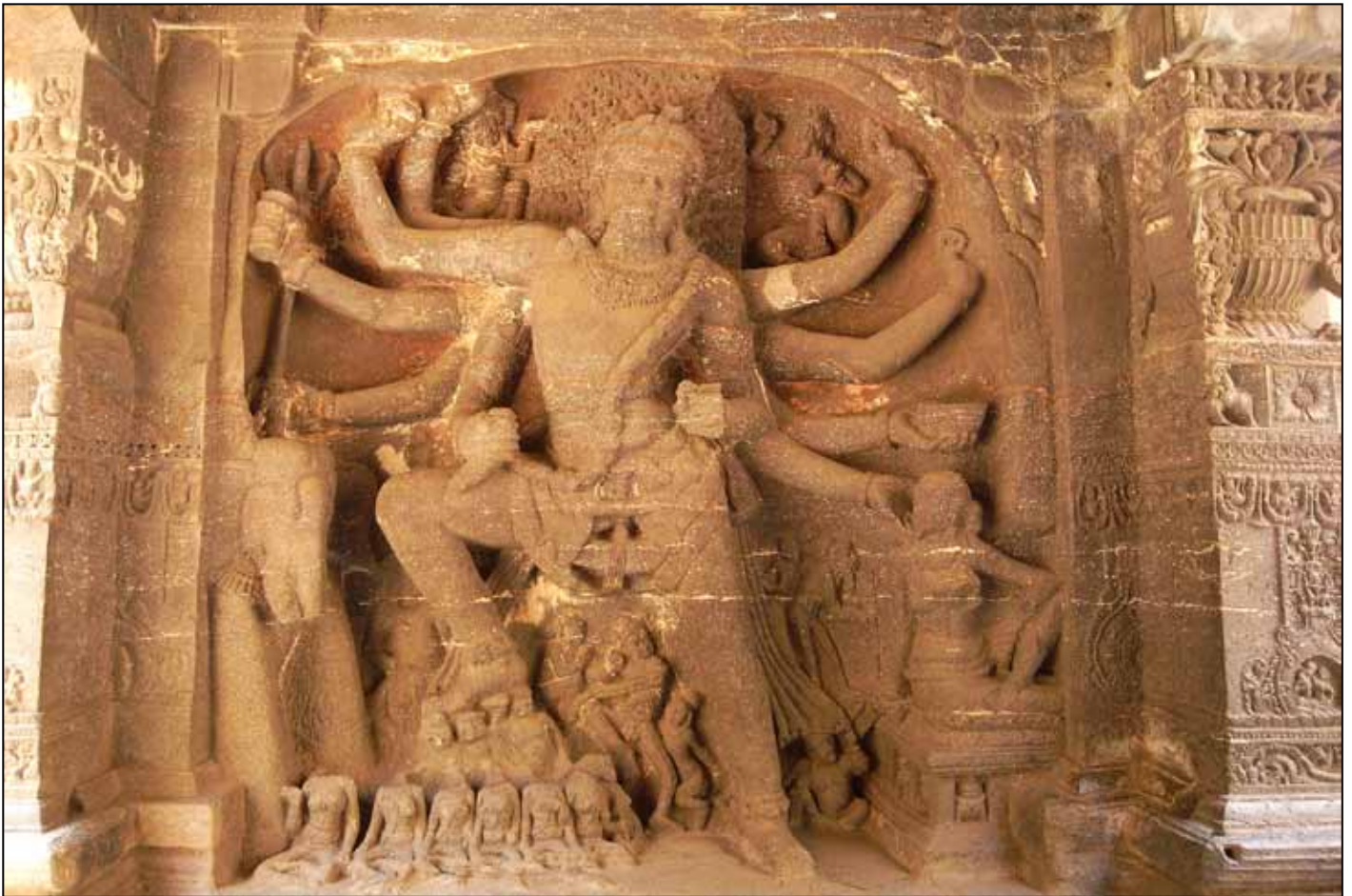
“And,” I continued, “the ‘Siva-Bhairav at Kailas’ is a reference to the manifestation of Siva as the destroyer (of all that is not God) that is depicted in one of the many stone carvings at the Kailas (or Kailash) temple at Ellora, India. This is the temple to which Meher Baba took many of His Western followers. The

temple was built around the middle of the sixth century and completed at the end of the tenth. It is carved from the top down out of a single rock and is therefore a monumental piece of sculpture that you can walk around in, and it is regarded as the greatest monolithic structure in the world. Just to quarry its one million cubic metres of rock must have taken at least a hundred years! It is a breath-taking piece of devotion.”

“So the contrast between these two works,” pondered Philomena, “could not be more striking.” “Yes, that’s right,” said Anselm, “and in the Notes, Francis makes this same point, ‘Apart from the contrast of these two works in isolation, the difference is even more marked in context – Guernica in the context of Picasso’s body of work, and the Bhairav in the context of the whole



Guernica by Pablo Picasso



A sculpture of Bhairava, a fierce form of Shiva, at Ellora Caves in Maharashtra, India

series of sculpture depicting the life-story of Siva” (SWG p. 165).

“So why are you so taken by this passage Anselm?” asked Thomas.

“What I like is the idea,” replied Anselm, “clearly implied in what

Francis has written, that it is only Truth that can be stated.

“All the rest – what we all do most of the time in our conversations and discussions is simply the exchange of flittering mental reflections: the endless

movement of our thoughts. These are like long-legged pond skaters (water bugs) that are always skimming back and forth, back and forth, ruffling the surface calm of the water.

“For the most part, I think we live in

Continued over page

Guernica is Reflection; Kailas is Statement
Continued from previous page

a culture devoid of statements. To enter into today's cultural discourse is to join the relentless skimming about of long-legged pond skaters, and happily deluding ourselves that all this skimming about is incredibly important and significant, and that somehow or other we are more fully alive because of it."

"It seems to me," added Philomena, "that what Francis is doing in this passage is what Ezra Pound saw as the role of the poet: to keep the language in good working order – to keep it 'charged with meaning to the utmost possible degree' – to keep our everyday speech real and useful."

"This all reminds me," said Thomas, "of a passage in Matthew's gospel: 'Which of you by taking thought can add one cubit unto his stature?'"

"It reminds me," I added, "of a small prayer that Baba gave to His *mandali*: 'I am not the body, I am not the mind; I am not this, I am not that. I am nothing but a living lie of that Truth that is me; and unless the lie is dead the Truth cannot be' (*Lord Meher* p. 2831). The idea that we are nothing but a 'living lie' of the Truth is such a powerful statement and for me it fits in with Francis's idea that all our mental reflecting or skimming about is the activity that perpetuates the 'living lie'."

"So in Francis's eyes," commented Philomena, "even Picasso's famous art work *Guernica* is nothing but a reflection – although, we must all agree, a powerful one?"

"Yes, I think so," said Thomas, "it is a reflection, as Francis says,

of 'barbarism [a transient state of mind] destroying itself,' – it is not actually stating anything that is liberating, that is, to do with universal Truth."

"So, where do we go from here?" Thomas asked.

"I think," replied Anselm, "in using the Siva-Bhairav image, God as Destroyer, Francis is saying that all that is non-real in us – 'the living lie' – has to be destroyed if what is real can be freely stated. We all need Siva-Bhairav to work on us.'

"Then," I joined in, "the pond of our hearts will be rid of all these long-legged pond skaters and an image of truth has the possibility of appearing on the newly stilled waters. There is a poem, 'Present Cancelling Line,' in *7 Stars to Morning* that for me expresses this beautifully:

*When in one's heart
 the Image of adoration
 is established, and its pure contours
 bejewel the lake of the mind,*

*and from the sense-shores
 a wind of refusal
 and doubting springs up
 to ruffle the waters,*

*utter it not to the loved-one;
 kill the self-seeming falsehood;
 keep the mirror steadily reflecting*

*the Image, that the Image
 may not for a moment
 have lost to its sight the imaging.*

Celebrating *Stay with God* - The Program
Continued from page 7

Michael Le Page. "The Three Heralds: Vivekananda, Inayat Khan, and Ananda Coomaraswamy." As the decline of modern civilization approached its nadir in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, these three heralds (as *SWG* relates) helped prepare for the new Avataric Advent.

Geoff Gunther. "Stay with God as Poetry." Close readings and appreciation of passages from the poem, with attention to the figurative language, rhythm and sound, and other poetic means by which Francis conveys his deeper spiritual sense.

Ross Keating. "Stay with God as a Guide to the Revitalization of Poetry and Art." An exploration of Francis's critique of modern art in Book V with suggestions as to what a revitalization might mean.

Ward Parks. "An Overview." Some general comments on *SWG* and the aspects of it explored over this weekend.

Why 40?
Continued from page 13

14. en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mithra
15. *CREATIVE IMAGINATION IN THE SUFISM OF IBN ARABI* Corbin 1969 p68
16. *THE KASHF AL-MAHJUB AL-HUJWARI*. R.A Nicholson p324
17. *LORD MEHER* V1 p290
18. *Ibid* V3 p995
19. *Ibid* V6 p2073
20. *Ibid* V9 pp3235 3242
21. *Ibid* V9 pp3348 3337 3373
22. *Ibid* V10 pp3742 3754
23. *Ibid* V13 pp4560 4586
24. *Ibid* V16 pp5486 5493
25. *Ibid* V16 p5671
26. *Ibid* V1 p130
27. *Ibid* V9 p3181
28. *Ibid* V6 p2090
29. *Ibid* V6 p2166
30. *Ibid* V5 pp1727 1730

Meher Baba Australia

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Next issue: Please email submissions for the next Meher Baba Australia newsletter to stevenhein101@gmail.com or mail to MBA, PO Box 335, Woombye, QLD 4559, Australia. Photos to be minimum of 500KB, preferably 1MB.

PLEASE NOTE that the editor reserves the right to edit all published articles for length and content prior to publication.

Deadline next issue: 1 August 2015.

Sydney Meher Baba Community Calendar

Saturday June 27, 7-10 PM. Our monthly Meher House meeting. Suggestions most welcome regarding a topic and coordinator for the meeting. Contact: Michael Le Page via michaellepage1@gmail.com or phone (02) 9971 2486.

Friday July 10 - Silence Day. Meher House will be open for anyone wanting to spend time in Baba's Room. Videos and books available. Kitchen facilities available.

Saturday and Sunday August 8 & 9 - The August Anniversary. The focus for Saturday is "Reliving Baba's Visit to Sydney and Melbourne". Exciting news! At least four people who met Baba in 1956 will be sharing their memories (Bernard Bruford, Cynthia Borg (Adams), Margaret Buchanan, Michael Le Page). Hopefully several other "sahavasees" will be joining us (Joanna Bruford, Rob Buchanan, Jennifer Keating). The **Sunday** program will include songs, poetry and companionship in our Lord. More details TBA.

Tuesday Nights - Discourse Meetings - 224 Nelson Street, Annandale. Reading and discussion on Meher Baba's Discourses in relation to a spiritual path. These meetings start at 6.30 and go till 7.30 when we break for a simple dinner. Dinner and discussion 7.30 to 8.30. All welcome.

Friday Meher House work bees - most Fridays Danny Baxter, Katie Pye, Ian Cox and I meet at Meher House to work on the gardens, Francis's Cabin and pathways and steps. You are most welcome to join us from 10:30 am. If you would like to spend some time in Baba's Room, you are most welcome to do so. Best to check with one of us re whether we will be there. If it is raining we usually don't meet on that day. (Michael 0408 225 987, Ian 0458 090 385, Katie and Danny 0487 335 529).

What's on at Avatar's Abode

57th Anniversary 5 - 8 June 2015

Special guests **Dr Digambar Gadekar** and **Jehangir Daver**. The Anniversary Program is available on the Avatar's Abode website at <http://avatarsabode.com.au>

Silence Day - Friday 10 July

All day – Silence. Baba's House open 8am to 4pm. Bring your own provisions. Kitchen facilities available.

Monday morning meetings at Avatar's Abode:

10 – 11.30 am in the Meeting Hall. For more information contact Lorraine on 07 5446 8005 or babakalyan55@gmail.com. All are welcome to join with stories, readings, poetry, songs and a cuppa.

Saturday Nights at the Abode: Film nights the first Saturday of the month at 7 pm. Contact: David and Glenda Hobson on 07 5442 1220 or Jim Frisino on 0417 112 668 for more information.

Meher Baba's Discourses Reading Group continues to meet on Tuesday evenings 6.30 pm in the bookshop at Avatar's Abode. For more information call Geoff and Tian on 07 5442 2467.

On Friday mornings at 10.30 am in the Francis Brabazon Library the explorers of God's words are continuing to study and discuss Meher Baba's revelations of who and what we all are. For more information contact Geoff and Tian Gunther: 07 5442 2467.

Melbourne Meetings

Until further notice, meetings will be held at 12.30 pm on the **last Sunday of the month**, at Jasmine's home at 26 Afton Street, Aberfeldie (on corner of Beatrice Ave) – 0438 300193. Tony Zois has also developed a website with information about meetings and other Baba related things. The address is: <http://mehermelb.jimdo.com>

Meher Baba Gatherings in WA

For information about meetings and social get togethers, phone Paul 0429 310 169 or Julie on 0428 250 294.

New Zealand

Travellers to New Zealand who want to meet Baba lovers there are invited to contact Kelvin and Jill Hobbs, 19 Brassey Rd, Wanganui. Phone 06 347 2974, email: kelvinhobbs@clear.net.nz



Hendricks Peter George Breese

Born May 9th, 2am English Time
Coinciding with when Khadija's
parents Peter & Sonja Davies were
singing at the *Stay with God* Seminar on
Avatar's Abode:

“When Flags of Victory fill the Skies
Love is Dancing before our eyes
Nature is shouting surprise surprise!!”

42 and a half weeks - 7lbs 2oz

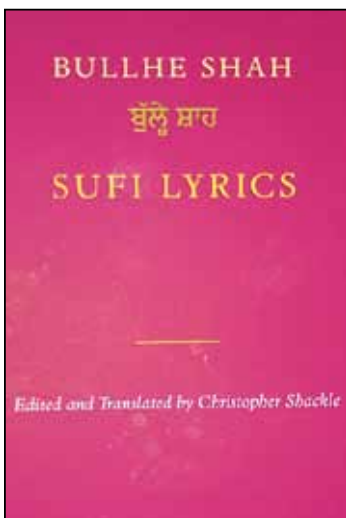
Khadija Manija Davies

Grant Breese

Born on Buddha's Birthday

“Once you open your wings to fly, you must fly straight like the swan. Do not flit from tree to tree like the sparrow, or many things will distract you on the way, and the journey is long.”

– *Love Alone Prevails*, pp. 713-714



Francis Brabazon Library at Avatar's Abode

Francis Brabazon called him The Very Ideal Man! (*SWG* p114).

He had the Powers of God arising from the mastery of a single letter (p 111)
He split the wall in two when he wrote with chalk!

Bullah Shah finally learnt much more than a single letter

A newly published book of his spiritual poems has just been bought for the library.

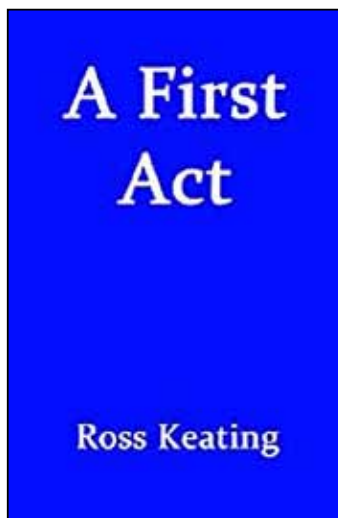
It is available for loan.

Sufi Lyrics by Bullhe Shah

The Editor & Translator: Christopher Shackle - Emeritus Professor of the Modern Languages of South Asia, School of Oriental Studies, University of London.

Series: Murty Classical Library of India (Book 1)

Geoff Gunther



A First Act

By Ross Keating

Review

Heart-warming and charming, quirky as hell, innocent naivety wedded to spiritual profundity, easy and fun to read, a little gem of inspiration; while the clarity, sweetness and gravitas of Ross' relationship with Meher Baba is the cherry on top.

Dear Ross - A First Act has us hanging out for The Second.

Jim Migdoll

Available At

Globally: Kindle or Hard Copy from <http://www.amazon.com/A-First-Act-Ross-Keating/dp/150842795X>

Hard Copies in Australia:

Sunshine Coast – Nadya Keating
nadya_keating84@hotmail.com
Other States – Ross Keating
ross.keating@hotmail.com

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or by direct bank deposit to Account name: Meher Baba Australia, BSB: 064424 Account number: 10379525. Please include your initial and last name for reference.

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