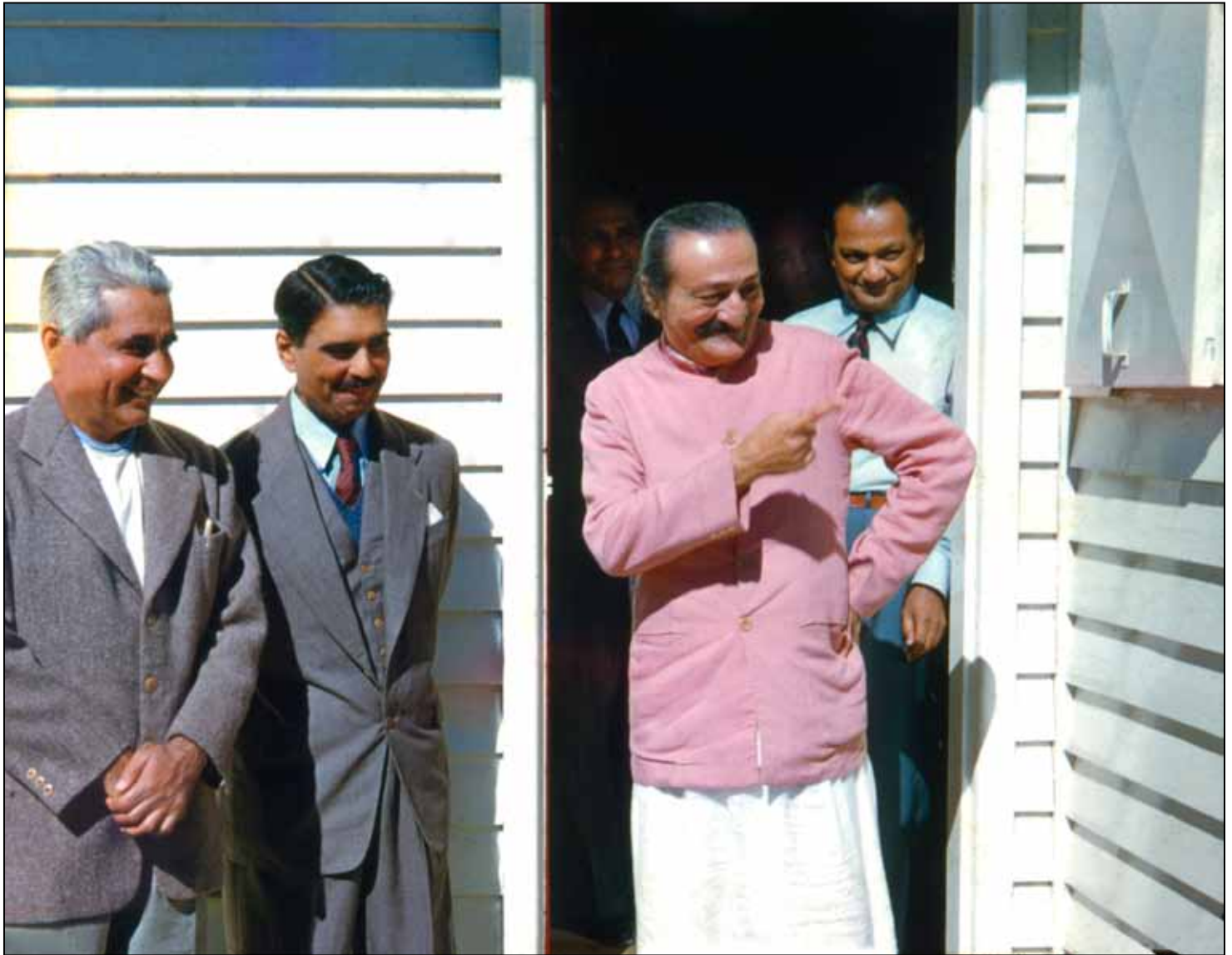


Meher Baba Australia

September – November 2015



Avatar Meher Baba at Meher House, Sydney, Australia, in August 1956, with Adi K Irani and Eruch Jessawala on the left and Meherjee Karkaria and Dr. Nilu behind Baba.

On Saturday, 11 August 1956, a general darshan program for the public was held from 9:00 to 11:30 A.M. Almost 150 people came. Baba stood on the sandstone slab at the doorway of Meher House to greet the crowd, paying special attention to the children, including some of the workmen's children. Baba distributed prasad of dried fruits and nuts.

“First I have come to sow the seed of love in this country; secondly, to visit and stay in the house you have built for me with so much love; and thirdly, to gather those who love me just a little and have done a little work for me, deeper into my love.”

– Avatar Meher Baba

Avatar's Abode Spring Sahavas

3rd – 5th October 2015

(Labor Day long weekend)



Pratap Ahir

Our guest for this year's Spring Sahavas is Pratap Ahir.

Pratap first heard Meher Baba's name when he was a 14-year old student staying in a Government run hostel in Pune for economically disadvantaged students.

The Hostel-In-Charge, Mr. L. B. Thade, was a Baba lover who was eager to tell more and more people about Baba. In the hostel students he found a captive audience and a series of Baba-doses were administered to the students by him and other local Baba lovers such as Ramchandra Gadekar. The seed germinated in the heart-soil of some students, including Pratap.

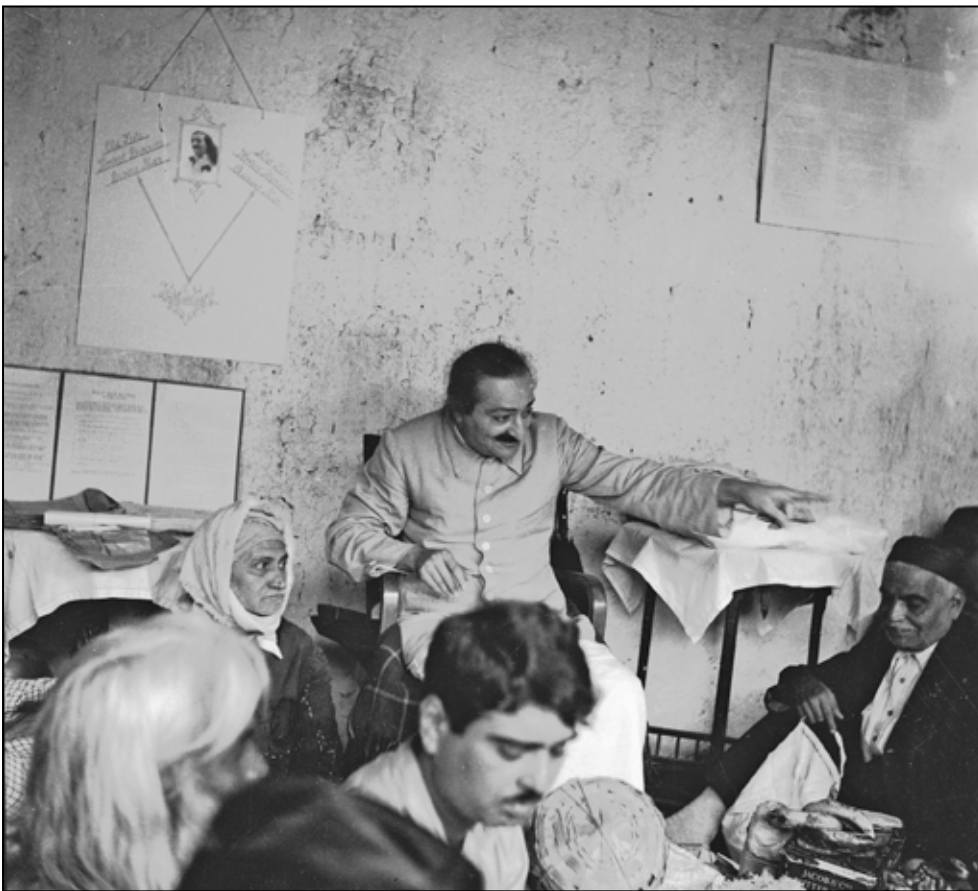
At this time Baba had entered the New Life and although the *significance* of Baba's New Life was far beyond the reach of these newly inculcated minds, one thing was clear to them and that was that they would have to curb their desire of meeting Baba, as Baba

had cut all ties with His Old Life.

They did not have long to wait however as Baba decided that on 16th October 1950, at Mahabaleshwar, He would step back into His Old Life for just four hours and He invited some of His old-time lovers to this meeting. This was the first anniversary of the beginning of Baba's New Life.

A group of Baba lovers travelled from Pune to spend these precious moments with Baba and Pratap had the great fortune to be amongst them.

Soon after this first meeting with Baba, another sweet surprise was to enter Pratap's life. During these times, a group of young performers was becoming popular with the local Pune Baba lovers. These young minds and hearts were being nurtured in Baba's love by long-time Baba lovers like Abdul Ghani Munsif, Khak Saheb and Ramchandra



Eruch, Babadas, Gustadji, Meher Baba, Papa Jessamala in black hat.

Chart on the wall with Baba's picture shows the Old Life as Perfect Divinity and Divine Man, and the New Life as Perfect humility and Ordinary Man.

16 October 1950, Agba Khan bungalow, Mahabaleshwar. © Meher Nazar Publications.

Gadkar. Madhusudan, the lead singer of this group, composed bhajans dedicated to Baba and would always be accompanied by Pratap on the harmonium.

The news about this group reached Baba and He invited them to Mahabaleshwar to perform in celebration of Mehera's birthday in December 1950.

For Pratap this was a very significant visit, for during the rehearsal of the program, as Pratap was introduced to Baba, Baba asked if he would like to come and stay with Him.

Pratap immediately agreed and just one week later Pratap got this life-time opportunity to be alone with Baba for over an hour which proved to be a life-changing hour for Pratap.

Since then, Pratap had many opportunities to be with Baba, to play marbles and card games with Him, and to sing before Him at all the sahasas programs that followed and during the intimate gatherings at Guruprasad in the summer months.

In May 1958 at Guruprasad, Baba asked the Pune Bhajan Mandali, as Baba Himself would refer to this group, to perform continuously for seven hours till all of them were exhausted while He carried out Avataric work of some special significance.

While at Pune, Pratap and his family had many opportunities to be with Baba. Pratap's marriage to Tara was approved and blessed by Baba and during the family visits in Pune, Baba visited his house.

When Pratap had to move to Mumbai for his career, he sought Baba's permission and Baba allowed him on the condition that he should remain connected with the Baba centre at Mumbai. Pratap took this as



Pratap Ahir greets Meher Baba, Guruprasad, 1959-1961. © Meher Nazar Publications

Baba's order and rarely missed any weekly meeting, both at Mumbai and thereafter, at Pune.

He has composed many songs on Beloved Baba. He also conceived, directed and presented, on a larger scale, children's performances in Baba programs. Today, he is the trustee at AMB Mumbai Centre, secretary of AMB Poona Centre and travels to many places in India to participate in Baba programs.

Along with his son Swaroop who accompanies him on tabla, Pratap has travelled to the U.S. twice, sharing his Baba experiences and memories, and also the musical compositions in Baba's love.

Pratap is now retired and resides at Pune with his wife Tara who is also from a Baba-blessed family. He has four children & three grand-children,

all of them doing their bit in Baba's service.

Pratap and Swaroop will be our guests at this year's Spring Sahavas, and will also visit the Baba families in Melbourne, Sydney and Christchurch.

We look forward to the intimate give and take of Sahavas with Pratap and Swaroop.

Jai Baba!

*David Hobson (on behalf of
the Spring Sahavas Committee)
Phone: 0401 035 083*



Your destination is your own heart in which the Eternal Ancient One eternally lives, but because Avatar Meher Baba the all-loving one stayed here, (at Avatar's Abode) the perfume of His Love may refresh and strengthen you on the way to His feet.

Francis Brabazon

Avatar's Abode 57th Anniversary

5th – 8th June 2015

Our special guests at this year's Avatar's Abode Anniversary Sahavas were Dr Digambar Gadekar, his daughter, Dr Mehera Bhoir, and Jehangir Daver



Dr Digambar Gadekar (centre) and Mehera (left) performing Meher's Memorable Music with Kush Samy on tabla. Photo by Kris Hines.

"You have come from great distances, not for some convention or conference, but to enjoy my company and feel afresh my love in your hearts."

Meher Baba in a message at the East West Gathering in 1962.



After Aarati singing in Baba's House. Photo by Jim Frisino.



Sue Jamison performing her skit, "Yma Dream". Helped by Kris Hines (below). Photos by Helen Forbes.



The Wine Shop Singers. Photo by Helen Forbes.



Meher House Sydney 59th Anniversary

7th – 9th August 2015



Meher Baba's bed at Meher House. Photos by Sage Andreasen.

Information about the casts of Baba's hand and feet is on page 6.



Meher Baba and Mehera. Photo by Sage.



Guest Speakers (from left) Cynthia Borg, Margaret Harrison and Bernard Bruford. Photos by Sage.



Meher House interior. Photo by Sage.



Michael Le Page telling the story of Frances Lee's mural.
LORD MEHER Online has details about Meher Baba's visit to Australia in 1956
<http://www.lordmeher.org> p.p. 4089, 4090

The photos on these pages show areas at the rear of Meher House and around Francis Brabazon's cabin. A lot of volunteer work has gone into these areas to make them beautiful. Photos on these two pages by Sage.



Sage Andreasen and David Hobson.



Kelly Malone looking out of the window of Francis' cabin..



Stuart Rigg, Meherose Borthwick, Kelly Malone outside Francis' cabin.



The ledge in Francis' cabin where he slept.

The casts of Meher Baba's hand and feet (see page 5)

Meher Baba sat for the English sculptor Edward Merrett in April 1932 for a portrait bust in a studio in Kensington Mews. At that time, the sculptor asked if he could make a plaster mould of Beloved Baba's right hand to which Baba agreed. [A limited quantity of copies of the cast of Meher Baba's right hand were later made and distributed among his lovers].

LORD MEHER Online pp.1379, 1380

In 1958, a Baba lover in Andhra had commissioned a bronze statue of Baba by the Bombay sculptor Balaji (Bhausabeh) Talim. During correspondence with Adi K Irani, the sculptor suggested that a cast be made of beloved Baba's feet. Baba agreed to this and after some time Talim's son/assistant came to Guruprasad and took the casts. Sitting patiently while the casts dried on His feet Baba remarked "Just see my plight! Another crucifixion for me!"

LORD MEHER Online pp 4347, 4348



Rear of Meher House.



Rear of Meher House showing the window where Baba could be seen giving interviews inside in 1956.

stars in sandstone

the stonemason wept stone open for love
and love came to draw over every spec
by the glance of hand

now in an amphitheatre of sown beds
impressions unravel hearts
on the stage of remembering

alligator logs surrender their weight
to burn on the heels of this great love
its flame calling out to the stars

who watched the good fortune
of their sandstone cousins
held by visionary coal hearing vibrations

to how fortunate this sandstone
the beloved's foothold
shimmering into each grain

awakened by the stonemason's tears
letters etch words to somehow carry
embers of all this great love

and sing whispers into the grain
of how hopeless and helpless
each blink of eye is without them

*Kelly Malone
Meher House Anniversary
9th August, 2015*



Back of Meher House – last night dinner by the fire.



Last night dinner fire flames with city lights in the distance.

A recollection – by a former inmate of Meherabad

John Mijac

When Padri died, Meherabad went through a sea change. Prior to that time (for the residents of Meherabad at least), one could imagine a bit what it was like to be in the Ashram with Meher Baba, and each of us worked together ... in harmony or out of it, knowing that for any big disagreement Padri was there to adjudicate in his unique way.

Of course we also knew Beloved Meher Baba was the Head Man, but Padri was immediately and physically available. So, when kerfuffles happened they got solved quickly. But he died, and as Bhau said: there wouldn't be another like him for 700 years.

I won't get into the particulars, but the atmosphere among the residents quickly soured. Everyone knew we were there for spiritual training, but all had a different idea of what that meant. Some thought we should live austere lives; others were for cakes and ale, well, sort of. Finally things got to a breaking point and we were called in by Mani and Eruch for a meeting at the Trust compound.

I'm quite sure everyone received something different, but for me the message was clear: "do your work, attend to your duties, remember Him, obey the simple precepts and agreements and, dare I say it, rules of life in Meherabad, and do not concern yourself about how others do what they do ... that is between them and Baba." Most importantly, we were to respect the fact that all were called by Him and that we knew nothing about

anyone else's path but our own.

This last was conveyed to me by Eruch directly. I was sitting with a few of my mates and, upon a comment by Mani regarding trusting others, I made a snide comment under my breath to whoever was sitting next to me – something to the effect of: "Oh yeah, like THEY will return the trust." Eruch stopped the meeting and called me out. He asked me to stand before the group as he gave me a verbal thrashing, "No! This is exactly what we are talking about, you must not make such comments." How he knew what I whispered I have no clue.

I learned a lot through that ... that we cannot make a heaven on earth, even when we all know we are here for the same purpose ... that's just not the point of creation. Also, that sometimes it is the kerfuffles that teach us best, and that there will always be rules, but how we follow them is always up to us and Baba, and last, that these strange, peculiar, mad folk who accompany us on the path are here for His reasons not ours, that they too are part of His way of benefiting all to the Highest degree.

I learned to take it all less seriously



*Padri, mid 1970s, lower Meherabad.
© Meher Nazgar Publications.*

... as Padri once said to me: "It has taken you eight million, four hundred thousand lives to get to this point, mister, you are not going to solve it today."

To me, that is good news and worth a smile every time.

Who is a Baba Lover?

by Allan Y. Cohen

Written in 1975

*Kendra Crossen Burroughs writes: "I thought of writing on this topic myself, but then I realized, who can say it better than Allan Cohen? So with the permission of the author and copyright holder, here is an excerpt from the out-of-print book **The Mastery of Consciousness** by Allan Y. Cohen, pp. 152-154. Copyright © 1997 Ira G. Deitrick".*

It is very difficult to define a Baba-lover. There are no formal or external criteria for followers of Meher Baba, no ceremonial initiation, no fee to be paid, nothing to sign, no membership cards to receive. No formal vows are taken to join the Baba family. No rituals, customs, or dress is required of a Baba-lover. There are no mandatory readings, meditations, or meetings. There is no required formal preparation, nor are there "tests" for membership. Nothing in a person's past necessarily disqualifies him or her from being regarded as a Baba-lover.

As for internal criteria, some might argue that only a handful of real Baba-lovers love and obey Him as He should be loved and obeyed. Others might contend that thousands of sincere, selfless, God-loving individuals who never heard of Meher Baba are more truly Baba-lovers than some self-proclaimed followers. Both statements are probably equally valid. But let us focus on those who consciously aspire to some relationship with Meher Baba. Perhaps the most that can be said is that such Baba-lovers exist along a continuum based on the quality of their love, obedience, and

commitment to Meher Baba as their Master and Guide. Possibly the true mark of a Baba-lover is the quality of his life, will, and heart. Even so, these inner qualities do not confer external status, for Baba discouraged his lovers from judging and criticizing each other.

Those who have tried to dedicate their lives to Meher Baba constitute a tremendous variety in race, religious background, nationality, age, educational background, and personality type. Some would be called eccentric; others would be seen as ordinary people. Baba never quashed variation in personal expression; rather, he stressed the increasing consciousness of unity.

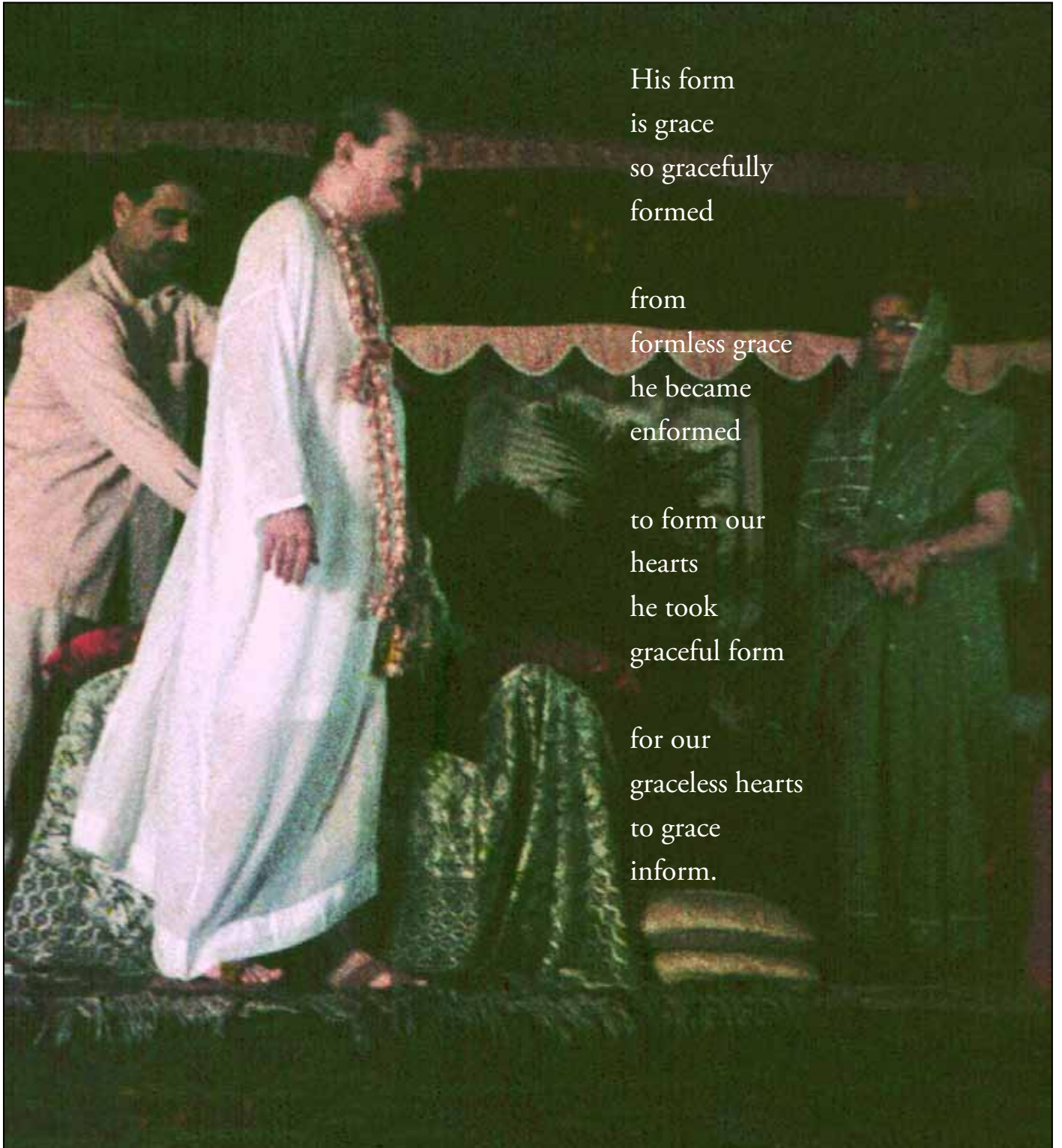
Undoubtedly, there are sincere devotees of Baba who would grate on the reader's nerves, and others who provoke justifiable criticism. But all seekers have problems with their ego, Baba-lovers being no exception, and Baba specializes in bringing weaknesses to the surface. Recalling His statement that one of His primary tasks is to "improve the vicious," we must also allow for the additional possibility that Baba might draw to him souls considered somewhat unsavoury by other teachers. Although a new follower of Baba can generally expect Baba-lovers to exhibit spiritual growth, absence of saintliness does not invalidate Baba's method. As a Master, Baba was more concerned about His disciples' working to slay their personal ego than with building their public image.

Baba often explained to His disciples that He guided them through the involution of consciousness "blindfolded," veiled from the experience of higher planes of consciousness. Probably even those closest lovers destined for quick God-realization experience themselves as merely human. Yet they and many other Baba followers are such jewels of Baba's love that their very contact is inspiring. A great number of seekers have been drawn to Baba's path by a certain magnetic quality in His devotees.

Perhaps most agonizing to the Baba family are spiritual pretenders, persons who declare themselves as Baba-lovers but who live in blatant disregard of His message, making no attempt to transcend their hypocrisy. Although Baba said He loves all souls equally despite their failing, new aspirants should emulate the gems rather than the hypocrites on their Avataric journey.

Editors note: <http://kendrasnotebook.blogspot.com.au/2007/08/who-is-baba-lover.html>.

Whilst *THE MASTERY OF CONSCIOUSNESS* by Allan Y. Cohen' has been out of print for some time, second-hand copies can still be found via Amazon.com



His form
is grace
so gracefully
formed

from
formless grace
he became
enformed

to form our
hearts
he took
graceful form

for our
graceless hearts
to grace
inform.

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

Poem by Peter Rowan

Guruprasad and Maharani Shantadevi

Peter Rowan

Avatar Meher Baba had been in seclusion in Mahabaleshwar for some time and toward the end of March 1951, Gadekar, one of His Poona lovers was asked to seek out possible houses in Poona for Baba to stay in as He felt like a change.

Gadekar arranged for Beloved Baba to see a few, including an opulent palatial bungalow known as Guruprasad, belonging to a Maharani Shantadevi of the former princely state of Baroda.

I should mention at the outset that the State of Baroda no longer exists, as it acceded to the newly formed Union of India in 1949, and the city of Baroda since 1974 became known by its ancient name Vadodra, and is in the state of Gujerat.

Baba looked at a few of the properties selected and liked Guruprasad very much, so it was arranged for Him and His mandali to stay after correspondence with Maharani Shantadevi; to Mehera Baba said, "I have some good news, wait and see what a nice house we've found."

The women mandali were astounded as their car drove through the huge iron gates spacious gardens and tree lined drive to a palatial mansion with a lawn out front with marble statues and a fountain. As they walked up the broad marble steps lined with palms and opened the magnificent entry doors etched with GP on the glass and entered the spacious opulent interior, and then being told they were going to stay there with Baba absolutely amazed them.

After showing the women the

interior Baba then asked Mehera to select a bedroom for Him. Baba stayed only eleven days on this first occasion and continued His seclusion work.¹

Maharani Shantadevi had not built Guruprasad but had purchased it from another Maharani who had never used it, Shantadevi herself rarely used it except for a week or two here and there but allowed family members and guests to stay.

It was not until 1957, after Baba's car accident that He returned to Guruprasad for the second time; Baba was in extreme discomfort and Mehera remembered how comfortable Guruprasad was for Him six years before and suggested to her Beloved that perhaps they could lease it again, to which Baba agreed.

As Shantadevi had promised it to other guests Baba and the mandali could stay for only one month at this second visit.²

The following year in April 1958, Baba stayed for two weeks before going to America and Australia and this was the first time Maharani Shantadevi had Baba's darshan and became His ardent lover³. Her darshan took place on the veranda of Guruprasad and after permitting her to sit with Him for a short time asked her to leave. From this time on Shantadevi began coming to see Baba often and each year made Guruprasad available to Him free of charge for as long as He wished to stay; Baba stipulated that under no circumstances was He to be disturbed nor should any other guests come while He was there in residence, to which Shantadevi very willingly complied⁴.

Eruch tells a wonderful tale of her hesitancy to disturb Baba in any way even though Beloved Baba had told her that whenever she was in Poona she could come for His darshan, even if He were in seclusion.

At one time when Baba was in seclusion, Shantadevi stood outside Guruprasad for quite a long time under a tree until someone saw her and asked why she was standing there instead of entering to see Baba as He told her she could, she said, "I don't wish to disturb Baba, only if Baba permits I will come in, otherwise I will go on my way." Baba of course lovingly invited her in for His darshan and was very touched by her humility and obedience.

At another time, even though Baba had a room reserved for her at Guruprasad should she visit, so as to not encroach upon Baba and the mandali's privacy she stayed at the Poona Turf Club.⁵

When visiting Baba in 1958, Baba said of Shantadevi, "I am pleased with her because she possesses honest love, not because she is a Maharani or because she has wealth"⁶.

In May 1959 Shantadevi visited Baba with her daughters and spent some time in His company; Baba asked her about her family and in the course of conversation she told Baba about her marital problems. She confided that her husband, Maharaja Pratap Singh Gaekwad had left her, and was considered an 'international playboy'⁷. Shantadevi also told Mehera and the other women that her husband

Continued over the page



Avatar Meher Baba standing in front of Guruprasad, Pune, 1960-61. © Meher Nazar Publications.

had a mistress, and had abandoned her and their children and moved to Paris.⁸

It may not come as a surprise to the reader that both the above mentions of her husband are extreme understatements; general details of the actual circumstances are as follows.

Shantadevi was born in 1914 in Kolhapur Maharashtra to a family of nobles, her father was a Sardar, a term widely used by Maratha nobility who held important positions in the imperial Maratha empire of the time. Her father took Shantadevi to Baroda when she was thirteen years

of age to meet Maharaja Sayajirao Gaekwad the ruler of Baroda, who liked her and immediately arranged her engagement to his grandson Pratap Singh Gaekwad. Pratap Singh's father had died at the age of twenty three when Pratap Singh was still a very young child.

Two years later, when Shantadevi was fifteen years of age, she married Pratap Singh who was then twenty one, over the next eleven years she bore him eight children, five daughters and three sons.⁹

Shantadevi lived with her family in

the vast and opulent Laxmi Vilas Palace of Baroda, which was reputed at the time to be the largest private dwelling in India, four times the size of Buckingham Palace.¹⁰

Pratap Singh's grandfather died in 1939, and Pratap Singh succeeded him as the Maharaja of Baroda. He had now inherited an estate conservatively valued in excess of \$US 300 million and was thirty one years old; he was considered to be the eighth richest man in the world and the second richest Indian prince.

Four years later in 1943, Pratap Singh met Maharani Sita Devi the daughter of the Maharaja of Pithapuram and became totally and hopelessly infatuated with her. They decided to marry even though both were already married.

After consultation with Pratap Singh's legal team, the lawyers recommended that Sita Devi convert

to Islam which would dissolve her marriage to her Hindu husband, this she did, she then adopted Hinduism again after her divorce.

Pratap Singh took her as his second wife, which caused great consternation as this violated the anti-bigamy law that his own grandfather had previously made; he was summoned before the British Viceroy in New Delhi to contest the marriage. Pratap Singh argued that the law applied only to the subjects of Baroda, and he being their monarch was exempt, this was confirmed by the Viceroy's legal advice

and the British Government accepted the marriage. Sita Devi was now also the Maharani of Baroda along with Shantadevi.

Three years later Pratap Singh and Sita Devi moved to Europe buying a mansion in Monaco in which Sita Devi took up permanent residence; Pratap Singh would return to Baroda often as he was still the monarch, and then return to Monaco taking some of the great treasures of Baroda with him to transfer into Sita Devi's ownership.

Eventually, in 1951, India deposed Pratap Singh due to huge discrepancies in the Baroda Treasury; India insisted that his interest free loans from the Treasury be made good and Pratap Singh complied to some extent by making several payments from his \$8 million-a-year income.¹¹

After being deposed, his and Shantadevi's first son Fatehsinghrao, became the Maharaja of Baroda.

Pratap Singh and Sita Devi's lavish lifestyle was legend in Europe but eventually Sita Devi divorced Pratap Singh in 1956 and he was then virtually exiled to London where he died in 1968; she continued on in grand style still sporting on her Rolls Royce the armorial insignia of Baroda, wearing the priceless Baroda jewels and maintaining an apartment in Paris, where she died in 1989.

The foregoing should give some idea of the burden and indignities heaped upon Shantadevi by Pratap Singh, but needless to say she had far more wealth in Reality than Pratap Singh, as in 1958 at the age of forty four she had the great fortune of having Avatar Meher Baba's darshan and becoming a close and loving disciple of the Highest of the High, virtually having total freedom to visit her Beloved whenever she was in Poona according to His open invitation.

By the early nineteen sixties her position as a trusted and dear lover of Avatar Meher Baba had become firmly established; Shantadevi would perform many tasks for Baba such as travelling to various places in India to perform opening ceremonies and inaugurating new Avatar Meher Baba centres, travelling with Baba for darshan programs, and was always in attendance at darshan programs at Guruprasad such as the East-West Gathering and the 1965 Easterners darshan program which I attended. At these programs Shantadevi would inevitably sit to the left of Baba on the dais in rapt attention.

After her husband Maharaja Pratap Singh had died in London in 1968 Shantadevi was called by Baba to be with Him at Meherzad, she spoke to Baba about her depression over Pratap Singh's indifferent behaviour toward her and their family even though she had always remained faithful to him. Baba consoled her, by telling her that he was blessed and at peace despite his behaviour, because of Shantadevi's close connection with Him.

Baba told her, "You have had innumerable husbands and wives in your previous births which you cannot remember", Shantadevi went from Baba uplifted and comforted and was told by her Beloved Baba not to worry and to take sleeping tablets to help her sleep.¹²

Her relationship with Baba was quite extraordinary as Baba never gave her any orders as He did others, even though she would wonder why; she would never ask Baba anything but would always wait for Him to initiate discussion on any matter. Even when Baba was in seclusion and not receiving any correspondence He would instruct the mandali to

always bring Shantadevi's letters to His attention.

Baba would repeatedly tell her, "Hold on to my daaman continuously until I speak the Word of Words and make my dear ones and the world receive my grace".¹³

Baba and the mandali stayed at Guruprasad for the last time in April 1968, and after Avatar Meher Baba dropped His body in 1969 Shantadevi no longer had any use for Guruprasad and after The Last Darshan it was sold to make way for a large complex of flats. Fortunately the Trust in India acquired a small portion to the front of the property and a memorial building was constructed using original materials from Baba's bedroom and other parts of Guruprasad; it also contains a chair on which Baba sat when giving darshan at Guruprasad.

Maharani Shantadevi died in 2002 at the age of eighty eight, at the Shantadevi Hospital in Vadodara which is run by a Trust she initiated. Until then she still resided as the senior-most member of the royal family at her palace Laxmi Vilas; in Vadodara she was known as 'Rajmata', the royal mother, guardian of the city of Vadodara. Her funeral procession began at Laxmi Vilas palace then to Shantadevi Hospital and on to Kirti Mandir which houses the royal crematorium of the Gaekwad's; Kirti Mandir is a temple dedicated to Siva as Lord Mahadev, the greatest of the gods.¹⁴

When talking to Maharani Shantadevi at one time Avatar Meher Baba candidly told her, "You will become immortal just as Guruprasad will become immortal. Guruprasad is a place of great importance, in it I have done much work for the whole

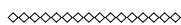
Continued on page 26

Glimpses of the poet in India

This expressive article by Robert Rouse is a re-print from *Meher Baba Australia* Sept-Nov 2000 issue. Initially, it was a rich evocative talk given by Robert, during the June 2000 Anniversary celebration of Beloved Baba's visit to Avatar's Abode. The talk was much enjoyed by all and soon Robert with assistance from Wendy Borthwick, the MBA editor at the time, turned it into this article.

NB: The article includes letters sent by Francis Brabazon to Australia. Francis used his own 'shorthand' and date system in the letters. Please refer to the Notes on this page to familiarise yourself with his 'systems'.

– Ed.



When Meher Baba was at Avatar's Abode in 1958 He told Francis that He would be asking Francis to come to India later in the year and intimated that Francis would be staying longer with Baba than he had in the past. Baba called Francis in December of that year and Francis arrived at Meherazad on 27th January 1959. In March, Baba and Mandali moved to Guruprasad, Poona, for the next five months. Francis' accommodation was with Ramakrishnan, a Poona Baba lover. During the early days of Francis staying with Baba, Australians would write how they envied Francis being in the presence of Baba day after day. Francis commented that going for a dip in the ocean is very pleasant, particularly on a hot day, but treading water 24 hours a day is another matter.

Francis wrote: "At Poona I was always exhausted. Many times I felt that there was no way out of / humiliation of defeat – tht I wld have to go to Baba + say tht I hd reached my limit – yet, /

Notes

Francis Shorthand

this.....equals
/the
Tht.....that
+and
abt.....about
w/outwithout
wld.....would
hdhad
w.with
b/fastbreakfast
etc.
Meher Year 66Baba born in 1894
.....add 66 years = 1960
Meher Year 106Baba born in 1894
.....add 106 years = 2000

v. thought of doing so, became absurd. And I was heartened to face another day by / fact tht "veterans of the Lord" were not entirely unaffected – they too were suffering from exhaustion. At night I wld go to bed around 10 + after wondering for a couple of hours how one went to sleep, I wld get up and sit outside for a couple of hours – hardly even thinking, just in a sort of stupor. Then I wld go to bed then sleep till Ramakrishnan brought me a cup of tea at 5.30. Then after breakfast of bread and jam we got on our bikes and rode / 6m. to Guruprasad + / 1st session w. Baba wld start abt 7.

By 8 o'clock I wld feel a complete blankness overwhelming me and my eyes wld just close. I had no power at all to keep them open – and I wld hear / snapping of Baba's fingers + force my eyes open + He wld "rebuke" me for falling into sleep. I changed my position in / hall + sat along a wall so tht I cld surreptitiously bang my head on it – but even tht didn't prevent /

dreadful blankness overpowering me. The other men, between sessions used to take quick naps, but / moment I was also free to do this, I became instantly awake!"

But on their return to Meherazad things were different.

Francis wrote, "This last 2 and a half months has passed much / same as / 5 months at Guruprasad (except for the crowds) + much / same as / previous periods here. Baba spends / mornings w. us men till abt. 10.45, then gives / women His company for an hour. We have lunch ab 11 am + abt 11.45 Baba comes back to us + then generally leaves us around 3 pm.

He spends a little more time, I gather, w. / women + then retires. Back here at Meherazad a lot of this mental fog has lifted and I sleep better. The whole day is much more simple. At Poona to my gross-conscious, nit-witted view, Baba appeared to be under great strain – like a man controlling a vast business or a great art-work; now, despite His apparent suffering He has seemed more "relaxed". It is a strange thing tht despite / fact, as He told us at / beginning of this period, that during this period, He wld. "have to go thru / slaughter house" He seems to have borne it more "lightly". He often sits w. us enjoying light chat and humorous bits – in short, enjoying being entertained. At Poona He lavished love upon us – every day giving us drinks with His own hands and often pieces of cake and such like. But He was often v. severe and at times "grilled" one or another of us for 2 or 3 hours at a stretch. Back here He has continued to just shower His love on

us and even v. sm. things bring from Him an embrace or a kiss. Yesterday morning He mentioned you dear ones again. He has also been increasing His walking distances. Today has been like a holiday – everyone just abt. doing nothing. Tonight is / 1st night of / 3 days Diwali Festival – lit. Festival of / Chain of Lights. Every doorway and window in India will have a little light, made by a wick burning in an open earthenware saucer on each side in honor of Lakshmi, / Goddess of Wealth. In villages + towns there will be visiting + general hospitality + many will sing / sort of songs tht She likes for the whole night. Tonight / business man closes last year's ledger + places / new one at Her feet. Here also, every doorway has its 2 little lights + / main entrance is a fairyland.”

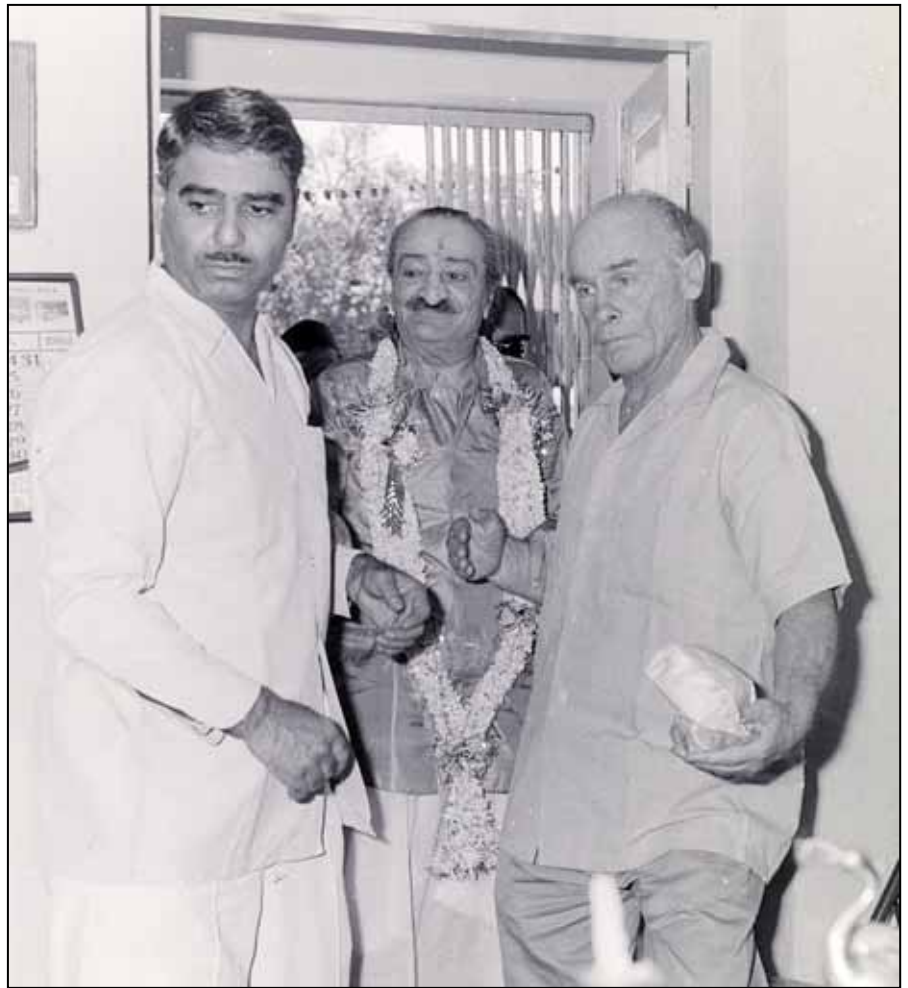
One thing that affected Francis as a member of the mandali was when Baba allowed His physical suffering, not as the result of His accident, but from doing His universal work, to show, and Baba saying such things (and looking such things) as, “It is only a miracle that my body continues to bear the burden that is put upon it.” and on another occasion, “I am so tired I want to go to sleep for 700 years.”

Francis wrote,

“Meherazad 4-52-66 (21-2-61)

Dear Avatar Abiders

Here is a new poem which I wrote yesterday – a couple of hours before b/fast and last night – for AVATAR MEHER BABA'S 67th Birthday on / 25th, or more exactly, / First Day of / First Week of Meher Year 67. I hope it reaches you by then. I forgot to mention in my last, that at 5 am / Southern Cross stands plumb on top of Baba's Seclusion Hill w./ 2 Pointers out in space between that



Avatar Meher Baba with Eruch Jessawala (left) and Francis Brabazon (right), Pune Centre, 1 May 1964. Photo supplied by Bill and Diana Le Page.

Hill and Khandoba Temple Hill. I also forgot to mention tht on / day I returned here from M/bad and went in to beloved Baba, He asked after you all. This was quite surprising as it is a long time since He has enquired about anyone. It must be tht you are all doing those things tht you shld be doing – or maybe you are all secretly being so wicked tht He hd to give you a thought in order to save you! Beloved Baba's general condition is so low tht I dont think it cld go any lower w/out Him dropping His body. It is obvious even to me, tht His condition is nothing to do w. His physical health, but is because of His World Burden. This He has to suffer every time He comes – but this time is probably worse than His previous

historical Events, the world being in the mess of violence tht it is in. His medical condition (reported in Mani's last letter) cleared up some time ago. His actual condition is worse now than it was then – much worse. Since Jan 21st He has not only been in Seclusion from the world, but from us here also. We see Him for / same number of hours as before, but He has drawn a veil across Himself, and we just sit dumbly w. Him. Eruch is / only one who can get Him even to get up from His chair + walk, supported by 2 of us, a few yards. What He eats wld hardly keep a sparrow alive. I thought I shld tell you these things. With much love dear Ones Francis.”

And on another occasion, “To

Continued over the page

be with Baba so much is sometimes almost too much for my weak emotions and weak mind and I have to exert myself not to get choked with tears. You will remember Baba's figure of uncontrolled emotion being like the smoke of a fire and that one must control it so that there is fire without smoke and that that is the fire that burns away self. Baba recently gave us a most beautiful figure from Hafiz – 'If it is not your portion at this moment to obtain union with the Beloved, then at least refrain from washing His face with your tears.' And my God, He expects a man to remain in control of himself in the presence of He Himself saying such a saying."

*

Of course it was not always as severe as this every day all the time. A lot of the time it was straightforward routine, a routine that sometimes included the Mandali carrying out fasts on Baba's instructions.

Francis wrote, "We have just broken our last fast of this period (Aug 14 – Oct 28) w. many "Jay Babas" + much merriment. This last fast was for 24 hrs, w. silence, but we were allowed water, + tea + cigarettes twice (tht is for those who smoke). The previous fasts – twice a wk. were all-day ones (12 hrs) + were total – no water, no tea, no smokes. Some of us also had concentrations morning + night – not for our benefit, Baba told us, but to help Him in His work. God alone knows how ordinary men can help God!"

And sometimes, Baba would give the men and Himself a break with games of cards or draughts or getting them to put on short playlets.

Francis wrote, "Since the end of October we have had a series of little plays. Three of these were put on by

one, Aloba. They were mostly one-man affairs with the "dialogue" mostly consisting of telephone conversations or orders barked at an unseen squad. But to make up for the dearth of dialogue he constructs the wierdest stage machinery. Suddenly a globe atlas starts revolving, liquid starts bubbling in a glass jar and a board tips over revealing a written message on another board and an alarm bell starts ringing. And all constructed out of whatever he can find around the house or in the junk heap – and all moving parts powered by an ordinary clock! Meherdas is rehearsing a play for Baba's Birthday. Nearly all the men have been roped in for it. Meherdas makes up the dialogue and teaches it by word of mouth with accompanying actions at the same time. The story is from the ancient scriptures but turned to bring the present Avatar, Baba, into it. This is, after all, quite reasonable – there has only ever been one Avatar. Baba doesn't mind whether He is called Baba or Krishna or Rama. He enjoys it all hugely. In fact Baba has taken a hand in making this up. He has cast Kaka, a little man, and Pukar (Great Bear), the biggest and fattest of the Mandali as husband and wife. Poor Kaka. He is 67 years old, has been with Baba through every trial and hardship since the beginning – and now has to start play-acting. And Baba teases them all the time by suggesting situations suitable for the roles."

Baba would also take part in the happinesses of His lovers who would be allowed sometimes to visit Him. On one occasion agreeing ('for the first and the last time,' Baba said,) to marry 2 members of the Pune Bhajan group. Francis, who had become fond of Madhusudan and Subhadra, announced at a meeting of Baba and

the mandali to discuss the wedding arrangements, that he was going to give the pair a present. Baba looked at Francis for a few seconds and then asked, 'And whose money do you intend spending?'

Francis wrote, "Thus reminding me that I have nothing of my own. That I have been promoted to being a beggar at God's door even for my food and cigarettes."

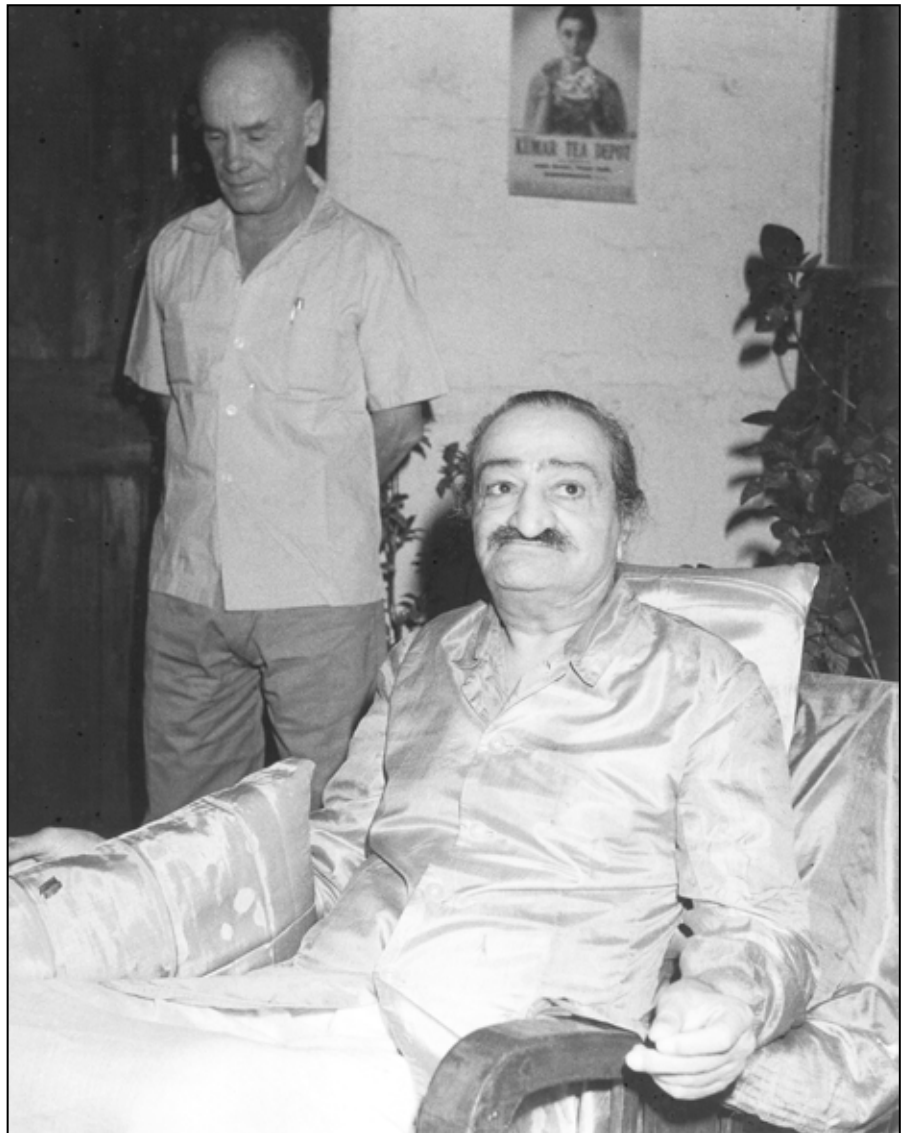
*

After *Stay with God* was on the road, during 1960/61 Francis went on writing, mostly longer poems. However in January '61 Francis had a new idea. In 1959 and 1960 we had celebrated the Anniversary of Baba's visit to Avatar's Abode by gathering in the Baba House on a relevant day, having our evening meal there and then reading some material sent for the occasion by Francis. The new idea that Francis had thought up was to celebrate the Anniversary by entertaining Him.

Francis wrote, "Love of God and knowledge of the divine truths has always been spread thru art, never by evangelism. Evangelism is Message minus beauty of form, + so it is No-message because God-Man is v. beauty itself. Mere "wanting to tell people" + doing so, is an affront to intelligence; but the presentation of / Message in beautiful form delights / spirit + awakens / heart. The P. Masters are / rivers of life, but it has always been thru artists tht / water has been taken to / people. Even P. Masters have taken on this role. Shankaracharya wandered / country talking to / people in beautiful, clear, faultless sentences + sometimes singing little songs; Tukaram roamed abt. keeping / people spellbound all night w. his dances; Chaitanya / same; Francis of

Asissi always used to say to his friars “We are jongleurs (entertainers).” Even God likes to be entertained. Baba loves nothing better than gd. singing or dancing or a little play. I was never more ashamed than when beloved Baba came to Kl. Mtn + asked for a little entertainment to lighten His burden for a moment, + we all sat like bloody roosters and hens on perches; + worst still, a few started up a horrible sentimental moaning whh was supposed to be singing. This must never happen again... The 1st step is to make ea. Anniversary of beloved Baba’s Visit an Entertainment... But whatever is done must be done well. And it must be in reference to Baba or on some direct spiritual theme. To this end I have asked Robert to start a Baba Entertainment Workshop + to start with / children. Even if only one little something is performed next June, it will be a beginning.”

Francis decided that his contribution would be some songs. So to this end, when he had the time he would fit in writing words to some traditional tune that he remembered. When he had written four of them, he one morning tucked them into his pocket before joining the morning session with Baba. And The One Who Knows Everything just happened to ask Francis what he had been up to lately. When Francis told Baba that he had written some songs, Baba told him to sing them. After Francis had sung them Baba told Francis that he wanted him to write a song a day for the next 21 days and to sing each song each morning as they were written. Hence a frantic cable to the Rouses to “send tunes.” He did not want the tunes written out, just reminders of tunes by quoting the words of folk songs we had listened to together. So Francis’ contribution to



*Ahmednagar, 1965: Avatar Meher Baba with Francis Brabazon (at rear).
Photo supplied by Bill and Diana Le Page.*

the 1961 Anniversary was the first four songs that he had written. To indicate the tunes, he invented his own form of tablature that indicated pitch but not rhythm. I had to play the notes indicated on my guitar in “plonk plonk” tempo until I remembered which tune and hence the rhythm. The twenty five songs (without tunes) would be published in early 1962 as *Let Us The People Sing*.

*

In 1962 Baba gave his eastern and western lovers the opportunity to come together in a mass meeting in His presence for four days. After the event, Francis essayed an account of

this gathering entitled *The East-West Gathering*, and as his natural bent for means of reflection on circumstances and meanings was poetry, a large part of the account turned into short poems and songs. Prior to the East-West Gathering Baba would sometimes give mass darshan to lovers in Pune, Mumbai and other places and Francis would watch the hundreds or thousands have sight of their beloved and sometimes His touch in the form of prasad – a sweet or piece of fruit handed to each one personally by Baba. And Francis would think to himself, ‘Well they are the lucky ones –

Continued over the page

but what about the millions who can't have such contact?' One afternoon Francis was working in his room when Baba popped in and told Francis that He was very pleased about the work Francis was doing, and then said to Francis' surprise, that that meant He was also pleased with His Australian lovers. This statement by Baba was a little epiphany to Francis. So that! is how the millions have contact with the Avatar – through the ones that by God's grace have in some way, proximity. Now there was an American lover by the name of Harry Kenmore – a blind chiropractor built like a bear, a dominant character who handled his blindness with absolute confidence and a loud resonant voice. Devoted to Baba, he was allowed over the years to come at odd times to India, even when Baba was in seclusion and Francis assumed after the above statement by Baba, that Harry was in some way Baba's connection with His American lovers. And it befell Francis to be Harry's leader-arounder and factotum on his visits to Baba – a job Francis found because of Harry's energy and dominance, rather exhausting and slightly nerve-wracking.

On one occasion Baba told Francis to take Harry to a restaurant and give him a good feed. They ordered their food and Harry ordered a side dish of half a dozen chapattis to keep him going. He immediately started on the chapattis as soon as they arrived. When the waiter brought the main meal he shifted the plate of chapattis. When Harry reached out for another one and found the plate missing, he started banging about on the table with his large hands and shouting very loudly 'Chapattis! chapattis!' The whole restaurant, as well as hangerabouts outside the entrance, directed their

attention to the noisy table. An embarrassed Francis hastily retrieved the chapattis and stuck them under Harry's hand exclaiming 'Here! here!' to shut him up. In 1966 Harry turned up at Meherabad, and during his stay got a very reluctant Francis to read the whole of his book *The East-West Gathering* for Harry's tape recorder. When Francis wrote me about this, I asked if he had sung the songs not just read them.

Francis replied, "No I did not record the songs in E.W.G. sung. Wot yer take me for, w. my frog's voice? Even / speaking voice is not gd. I did not do / recording of my own, but as part of my 'looking after Harry K.' and pleasing him on his last surprise visit. And he is an impossible person to do a job w. He will not wait for / mood of / performer, just sets up his machine and says, 'Ready!' And wont even play back what one does. My voice kept breaking down, whh was a signal for him to leap up w. "I'll fix tht in a moment," sieze me + dig his fingers into certain nerves until I nearly fainted, and yell, "tht's better, isn't it!" No one will ever know what all of us here have suffered for dear Harry's sake!"

*

Sometime in 1961 Francis conceived the idea or as Francis once put it, Baba gave him the idea, of attempting an English language version of the ghazal form. He had once been taken to a reading of the ghazals of Hafiz and other poets by one of the mandali who had whispered translations enough that Francis cd follow somewhat the meaning of the monorhyming poem, and when, at the end of a poem there would be a final couplet with a clever turn on the preceding text, an image wrapping up the essence and tying it off with a neat knot, there would

be shouts of 'Wha! Wha!' meaning 'Beauty, mate!' in appreciation. As monorhyming in the English language is a difficult proposition, Francis after much indecision decided on rhyming couplets on a framework of the fourteen lines of the sonnet, some forms of which end in a rhyming couplet epigrammatically clinching the theme. Having written two or three ghazals he told Baba what he was doing and Baba asked for them to be read to him. Baba was pleased with them and told Francis to continue writing ghazals, and on several occasions gave him clues to the writing. So the long poems of 60/61 were put aside, and it was not until 1965 that Francis dug them out again and reworked them and composed them into a book he at first entitled, *Song at World's End*, and another six years before they would be published as *The Word At Worlds End*.

Francis wrote, "I have been working over a pretty large mass of M.Y.66 + 67 material. I have now completed a new bk, 'Song at World's End'. It is in 5 small "bks" or sections:

1. *A Dream of Wet Pavements* – which is a final working out a short piece abt. wet pavements done some years ago + whh Robt liked v. much;

2. *Elegy for Y. Poets* – v. little changed, just two or three stanzas made clearer. This piece reads as well to me now as when it was written.

3. *Two Ballads: The Ballad of / Rhyming Knight* (v. funny!) *The Ballad of Bruised Bosoms* (v. tender, I hope.)

4. *After the Flood* – a view of / world + us after Baba's Manifestation; the destruction + our beginning afresh, told v. barely and simply.

5. *Hymn to God the Man* – an improvement on draft sent you 3 or 4

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Some examples of Meher Baba's ways of working

In Panchgani (on a morning in March 1938), Baba sat in seclusion in his room from ten to eleven o'clock. Later that day, Norina and Elizabeth suggested to Baba that if he established a "Universal Center" somewhere, (through such a hub) his messages could be conveyed to other centers throughout the world. And if he were more publicly known, enthusiastic workers would have a chance to actively spread his messages among the masses.

In reply, Baba stated: "It is a good idea indeed, but by attaching to it great significance or giving it too much importance, it develops into a regular organization or system, and I do not wish to limit myself or bind myself with any such thing. I create things on a firm foundation and then pull them down. Neither do I want an organization, nor any society.

That is exactly what I am afraid could happen. If such centers are allowed to prosper, they form themselves into organizations or societies. For that reason, I build structures and then demolish them. The more changes I make, the more unchangeable I become! Organisations are like the foam which brings unwanted things up to the surface of



From left: Nonny (Estelle Gayley), Meher Baba and Elizabeth Patterson at the Tiger Valley Cave, Panchgani, 6 May 1938. © Meher Nazar Publications.

the sea, letting the real substance lie beneath, submerged in the depths".

Love and Forget

Discussions continued in Panchgani about establishing a center for Baba. Norina, who had been to Mysore and Bangalore, wished an elaborate Universal Spiritual Center to be established. One day she was talking with Elizabeth about the possibility of relocating to either Mysore, Bangalore, Hyderabad or Panchgani. Norina's grand visions did not appeal to Elizabeth's more practical nature. Elizabeth tried to point out the difficulties involved and flaws in Norina's plans, but Norina was not to be dissuaded.

Once, when they were (resolutely) discussing the issue, Baba called

them. He allowed them to continue their argument in his presence, and then said, "You are both in the right, but Norina has got to go a little slower, and Elizabeth has got to try to move a little faster." Looking at both with a smile, he added, "Now both embrace."

On another occasion, when there was a quarrel between two women, Baba intervened and stated: "Love and forget.

This is the only thing that matters, and it pays. Almost all of you are weak. By weak, I mean taken up with desires. Anger is weakness, pride is weakness, and so on. If a mother found her child weak, she would love it all the more. So all love more.

Don't you remember what I told you in Nasik? Learn to say, *Jaane Do* ... Let it go. Give up wanting the last word. Give up all wants and be happy. But you must try consciously. Now be happy. I forgive you all, but continue trying".

Meals

Meals always seemed to be a sharp point of contention, especially now that there were both Easterners and Westerners living together, sharing the same fare. Indian food was too spicy

Continued on page 26

What can you teach a dreaming man?

Eruch Jessawala

You ask why, if God is compassionate and loving, should there be suffering? This is a question many people have asked for centuries. And the answers the great ones have given over the years seem to suggest that suffering is necessary. That it is only through suffering that we are able to reach that place where suffering no longer exists.

Of course, so much of our suffering is self-created. We bring it on ourselves, and much of that can be avoided, but as long as we are in a human body, we will suffer, that is what the human body means, it is a vehicle of suffering.

But no matter what I say, it will not satisfy you. It will just be throwing out words until you experience for yourself that this is all illusion, and that you are really infinite knowledge, power, and bliss. No matter how much you tell a man he is dreaming, he will not be able to believe you unless, and until, he wakes up.

That is why Baba says that He has not come to teach us anything — what can you teach a dreaming man about the real world — He has come to awaken us. And, He assures us with His divine authority, that when we wake up, all of our suffering, will be as if it has never been.

THAT'S HOW IT WAS,
p. 258, 1995 © Avatar Meher Baba
Perpetual Public Charitable Trust

Amusement

In 1947 at Mahabaleshwar, Baidul was the manager of the mast ashram during the first two weeks of its functioning, and thereafter Kaka and Pappa Jessawala managed it together.

Once, when Baidul was managing matters, an amusing confrontation took place between Kaka and him. Kaka brought a mast one day and, without asking Baidul's permission, took a gunny sack to make the mast comfortable. This small incident immediately gave rise to a heated quarrel between Kaka and Baidul. Overhearing them argue, Baba called them, and in the presence of the other men asked Baidul what the ruckus was about.

"I am the manager of the mast ashram and Kaka, without asking me, took a sack," Baidul replied.

Baba gestured to Kaka, "Why did you do this?"

"It was lying unused," Kaka said.

Baidul interrupted, "It was **not** lying about. Kaka stole it for his mast. He is very careful with his masts, but not with mine."

"That is because your masts are **not** masts but **mad** persons!" Kaka taunted.

"**Your** masts are mad!" shouted Baidul. "You think after all these years I cannot tell the difference between a mast and a madman? What do you take me for?"

"What do I take you for? You too are mad!"

There was an intense argument between them, and Baba encouraged both by slyly winking at Baidul, indicating that he was right and Kaka was wrong, and then winking at Kaka that he was right and Baidul was wrong.

But the funniest part was that during this verbal battle, Baidul's dentures kept falling out. He would put them back into his mouth and continue vilifying Kaka. Baba was highly amused by the scene, and when both began debating about which plane each one's masts were on, Baba could hardly contain himself!

"My masts are **all** on the fifth and sixth planes," Baidul shouted. "You have brought only insane-wallas!"

"Is that **so**?" Kaka hotly replied. "My masts are of the sixth **and** seventh plane! But how can an uneducated Jungli Irani like yourself recognize their worth?"

Baba was laughing and laughing and asked, "But how do you two know which plane your masts are on?"

Both kept quiet, and Baba observed drily, "It is a matter of great honour and privilege for me that both you 'Sadgurus' are staying with me, as only a Sadguru can know which plane a mast is on!"

This ended Kaka and Baidul's argument — at least for that day.

Baba really enjoyed their battles of wits, especially when Baidul's dentures would fall out and he would quickly plop them back in so as not to lose the edge.

Pappa Jessawala - Eruch Jessawala's father
Jungli - uncultured, wild.

LORD MEHER Revised Online - 1947- Pages 2558 & 2559

<http://www.lordmeher.org/rev/index.jsp?pageBase=page.jsp&nextPage=2559>

Potentialities and limitations

“After one comes in contact with Meher Baba – not necessarily in person but when the “heart clicks” – a new sport awaits you. Baba shakes you, your thoughts and feelings, perhaps violently, thus helping you to shed the peripheral view of life. The inside is revealed, the good and bad in you come out, and a thrilling romance with the Divine is ushered into your life.

Through triumphs and penalties you learn to express what you are, to do what you can, and to leave the rest to the God-Man. In the end He awakens you to an understanding of your potentialities and limitations for service and the part you have to play in this world.”

Bal Natu, GLIMPSES OF THE GOD-MAN, MEHER BABA, vol. 1, pp. 238

Baba is the answer to all questions

In a letter Beloved Baba’s sister Mani writes:

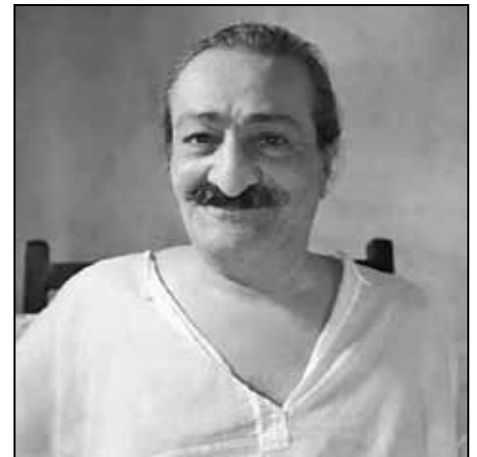
I was waiting to take your letter into Baba’s presence before replying. Of course those whom He awakens to His Love need no such ‘introduction’ – their introduction is of long standing duration from past lives, and when the time comes He knocks at the doors of those few hearts whom He has chosen to know Him even in the dreaming. As He said during a Sahavas, “I have come for the many, but I am for the few.”

How right you are when you say Baba is the answer to all questions -- it makes everything fall into place and you know where you are. Trying to understand Him just through books or discourses is not enough. As Baba said, do not ‘learn’ God, just ‘yearn’ God.

I know what you mean by the need for expression -- just as God speaks through every grain of His creation, the lover must speak through some aspect of His beauty when the Awakener awakens him, and so starts the journey of the Beloved: the heart begins to know Him as “there is none like Him,” and ends knowing “there is none but Him!”

- Mani

LETTERS FROM THE MANDALI OF AVATAR MEHER BABA -Vol 1 pp.28 Compiled by Jim Mistry



Avatar Meher Baba

Like a stream running down the mountain

•••

“... let your love flow on ceaselessly, like a stream down the mountain on its way to the Ocean. Obstructions there will be, of pleasures, of pains. Pass by these as passing phases.

There will be flowers and thorns by the bank and in the flow. Do not get attached; do not get affected. Go on and on and let the stream become a river. Doubts may assail you, self-complacency may lure you, but with love in the heart, roll on, flow on to Me — the Ocean.

Worry not, fear not. I am the Ocean of Love. Now, go and have tea “

Meher Baba told Bal Natu, in Madras, 1947

GLIMPSES OF THE GOD-MAN, Vol. 1. By Bal Natu. pp. 212-213

**POEM WITH
HAPPY ENDING**

When everything
seemed wrong
and I seemed
to have lost You
who alone make
anything worthwhile
I stopped
what I was doing
suspended all
my strategies
and just sat
in front of
Your picture
as long
as it felt
necessary,
usually more
than once
a day.
I had
no ideas
except to
let breath
and thought
come and go
and then
when quiet,
seek You
in my heart.
If You are really,
as is said,
only a thought away,
then surely if
I surrendered
all I could
and just sat
before You,
I would
find You again
within me.
And
I did.

*Max Reif
July 28th 2015*

LIVING LINES

When the Beloved
put aside his physical
body the crisscrossing
lines that were the
mystery of his human
form became unwoven.

The lines that were
the beauty of his eyes,
the grace of his limbs,
the glory of his face,
the agility of his hands,
disappeared from view.

These lines that once
mapped the contours
of love's shining world
became for us the living
lines of the turning
axis of our souls.

*Ross Keating
A FIRST ACT © Ross
Keating 2015 - pp.93*

GHAZAL 146

No one knows the pain of stone---its dull dream and slow lust.
Yet this is the halfway stage from man to singing dust.

No one could endure this state but for the Beloved's smile
Supporting, and urging one on mile after static mile.

This non-travelling is what is called the spiritual way
By which is made living the image which God wrought in clay.

The moon rose tonight in all her beauty, yellow and round,
And I wept for the chains of distance with which she is bound.

Nearness and farness: these are the only two words
That make sense to the lover: kisses and wine, and swords.

I could not endure distance if my Beloved were not near.
But the nearer I draw, the further away does he appear.

Then suddenly he is beside me pouring wine between my stone lips.
And in a moment the night and the pain are gone. How quickly time slips!

*IN DUST I SING by Francis Brabazon ©1964
Avatar's Abode Trust, Australia*

**WAS BORN DEFORMED (OR, TO SEE ALL AS
YOUR GIFT)**

Was born deformed in not one leg but two,
And mentally mangled by OCD.
What reason had I to have love for You?
Yet of Your Love have I never been free.
Never could I see this Love as Your gift.
Events to me were either good or bad.
Thus has my heart been set so long adrift;
Your ways and Your will just made me damned mad.
Yes I'm deformed in flesh and thought too,
But see it now as Your blessing to know.
Whatever trials I have yet to live through,
It's courage's colors I hope will show.
Long time it took to see all as Your gift;
Where once heart sank, it does gratefully lift.

Mickey Karger

COMPASSION

Have compassion for everyone you meet
Even if they don't want it.

What seems conceit, bad manners,
Or cynicism is always a sign
Of things no ears have heard, no eyes have seen.

You do not know what wars are going on
Down there where the spirit meets the bone.

Miller Williams

FROM THE DIVAN-E-HAFEZ, KHANLARI EDITION:

I speak freely and am happy with my words:
I am the slave of love and am free of both worlds!

A bird from heaven's garden, how describe
My fall into the pit and snare of disaster?

I was an angel and sublime heaven my home:
Adam brought me to the ruins of this world.

Blissful bower of houri's arms by heaven's pool
Was forgotten in the desire of your alley.

My heart's slate bears only the alif of the friend's form;
What can I say- the master taught me no other letter!

No astrologer recognized my star's fortune;
O Lord, to the mother of time with what fate was I born!

Ever since I became the ear-ringed slave of love's wine,
Each breath brings me new pain with "may you be blessed"!

The pupil of my eye drinks the heart's blood- amen!
Why did I give my heart to the crowd's favorite?

Wipe the tears from Hafez's face with her curls-
Or this constant flood will carry him away!

*Translated by Bill Gannet
(yes, he does speak the language)*

notes:

alif= the first letter of the persian alphabet
which symbolically contains all other letters, and
which resembles a standing figure.

houris= buxom
astral girlfriend.

Here is Bill's reply to Hafez:

I am the slave of desire and expectation;
My speech is twisted by the play of djinn.

A squawking jay from high hell, why describe
The noxious nest of mind where I reside?

I was never an angel squatting in heaven,
But Adam played me for sixes an' sevens.

No Houris filled my arms by crystal water
Who compares with the supernal Master!

O Master, you taught me only two letters:
A and B twice reversed spells you better!

What astrologer can read my stellar fate,
Unless the mother of time reveals her mate?

Ever since he became the slave of love's wine,
Darvish oinks with the great pleasure of swine!

A FLEETING GLIMPSE

For some reason
I woke early --
it was still dark.

As I lay in bed
the reflected light
from a passing car
entered the room
and moved around
the walls like an
angelic visitation.

As it sped across
your framed photo
I caught just a
fleeting glimpse
of your sparkling eyes.

But it was enough
to reassure me that
even in darkness your
nazar is never absent.

Ross Keating

A STARTLED FISH

What a strange cloth
is the veil of my
worldly experience.

It is spun
from a spell
which I continually
cast and fall under.

But if I keep still
like a fisherman
in a lone boat at night

I become aware
when a startled fish
just below
the woven waves
suddenly plunges
to the calm
of the ocean's depth.

Ross Keating

A LETTER TO THE DIVINE BELOVED (poem)

Why would You do this? Dress Yourself up as me
Without imagining Deliverance from this raging sea?

Yes, I've known its waters when they were crystal, calm and healthy.
I've lain upon its beach feeling young and strong and wealthy.

But now BABA, I'm tossed in during a storm again, like Jonah —
And without the capacity to breathe underwater like a tuna!

Let's review: Since You had no one to love but Yourself,
And God must love, You imagined a "somebody else!"

That "somebody else" is me, Beloved! But I think You've imagined too well,
And forgotten that YOU are the only One who's come down here to dwell!

Did You forget You've disguised Yourself? Get beguiled by Your own art?
That it is You who became "me", but that's only a role; a part?

What about the next part — when I discover I'm You,
And this whole Game has proved itself a divinely meaningful Show?

*Max Reif
based upon Baba's Gnosis as described in
THE EVERYTHING AND THE NOTHING, pp 1*

<http://avatarmeher.org/the-lover-and-the-beloved/>

Talks by Allan Cohen at Avatar's Abode

Given at the Spring Sahavas weekend, October 2014

Steven Hein

Our invited guest speaker at the 2014 Spring Sahavas was Allan Y. Cohen.

All of Allan's talks were video-taped. Soon after the Sahavas, Tony Foley volunteered to put on a producer's hat as well as taking on the lengthy time consuming responsibility of taking the tapes and working with pro-editor Geoff Cantor to edit them.

So, where are the videos you may be asking? The good news is that completion is close and the release date of the DVD set is fast approaching. Looks like they will be a set of affordably priced eight or nine DVDs. Contact: anthonyrfoley@gmail.com

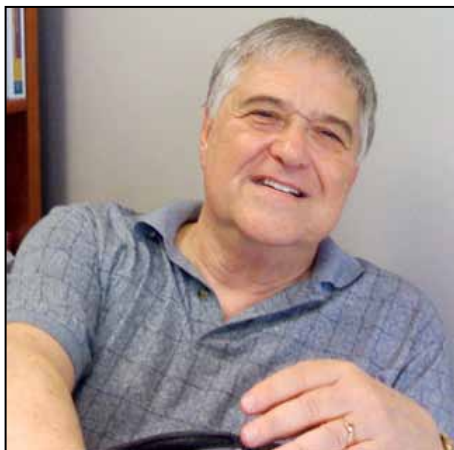
Content of DVD set

Allan's interesting and frequently humorous talks, covered a wide arc. From his 'beginnings' at Harvard University in the 1960s, they carry us forward to the present time. The talks explored perspectives on drugs, spiritual implications, drug abuse prevention, the psychological and experiential challenges of travelling on Meher Baba's path and the practical implications of the New Humanity ... and more!

A bit of info about Allan

While working for his Doctorate at Harvard, Allan encountered new faculty members Timothy Leary and Richard Alpert (a.k.a. Ram Dass) who invited him to participate in experimental trials with psychedelic drugs such as psilocybin, mescaline, and LSD.

Then Meher Baba entered and changed Allan's life. As a new Baba-



Allan Y Cohen

lover in the mid-1960s, Allan was just finishing his Ph.D. in Clinical Psychology at Harvard, when Meher Baba asked him, Robert Dreyfuss, Rick Chapman and other young Baba-lovers to let America know that drug use was not an authentic path to spirituality.

While carrying out Baba's directives, he began developing pioneering anti-drug work and that led him into a professional four decade long career in drug abuse prevention. Allan developed and applied innovative principles and techniques to the field of prevention and the "alternative to drugs" concept.

As a consultant he served as an advisor to over 200 national and international institutions and governments. He lectured globally at Universities and consulted for the White House, U.S. Department of State, ABC and HBO television, the US Air Force and US Army among many others. With Peter Marin, he authored a then ground-breaking book, "*Understanding Drug Use: A Guide to Drugs and the Young* (Harper & Row, 1977)".

Some Awards

Lifetime Career Achievement Award by the National Association of State Drug and Alcohol Directors (ASADAD). In 1999 a Career Achievement Award from The Center for Substance Abuse Prevention (CSAP).

Allan and a colleague established the Pacific Institute for Research & Evaluation (PIRE), a successful non-profit organization that is nationally respected in the field of public health research and consultation. Refer to the PIRE website <http://www.pire.org>

Meher Baba

Allan was in constant correspondence with Meher Baba from 1965 through 1968. Encouraged to spread Baba's message of love and truth, he delivered over 1,000 lectures or media appearances globally. Allan is also known for a book compiled and edited for persons 'new' to Meher Baba. Approved by Baba in 1966 and published in 1977 as "*The Mastery of Consciousness*". Now living in Washington DC, Allan has been involved intensively with the work of Sufism Reoriented. <http://sufismreoriented.org/>

∞∞∞

DVD Project team: Producers – Anthony & Charmaine Foley. Editor – Geoff Cantor. Camera work – George Fricker & Steven Hein.

Copyright © 2014 Allan Cohen, Steven Hein, George Fricker.

The DVD set will be in PAL format. Availability initially restricted to Australia / New Zealand.

The views expressed by speakers are solely those of the speakers.

Faith

A story which comes to my mind is a joke which Eruch would share in the Mandali Hall. It is as follows:

“Once there was a man who was taking a stroll near the side of a tall cliff. He slipped on some loose pebbles and fell over the edge. As he is falling, he grabs a tree branch which was growing from the side of the cliff. Eruch paused for a while and then continued, “You might have seen how trees grow out of the side of a cliff. It’s strange that the tree manages to survive, but somehow it does. So it was lucky that the man grabbed on to the branch of the tree that happened to be projecting from the side of the cliff. Hanging on for dear life, the man screamed for help at the top of his voice, ‘Is there anyone up there? Is there anyone up there who can help me?’ ”

“As the man was screaming, a loud thunderous voice appeared to be coming from the top of the cliff. The voice said to him, ‘I am GOD and I can help you, provided you have faith in me and obey me.’ The man quickly replied, ‘Yes, I will obey you, but first help me quickly as my grip is slackening.’ The voice said to him, ‘Then let go of the branch and I will save your life.’ “There was complete silence. The man did not reply for a long time. After some time passed, the man started shouting again, ‘Is there anyone else up there?’ ”

Everyone laughed. Eruch then added, “We are all like that when it comes to having faith in Baba and obeying Him implicitly. He has come.

He has taken this advent just to save us from the clutches of Maya; all we have to do is to trust Him, and let go of our hold on Maya which we so strongly cling to. But just as the man finds it difficult to let go, we find it difficult to let go of all the mayavic distractions that we have been clinging to over lifetimes.”

THE REAL TREASURE, VOL.3
2009 © Rustom B. Falahati

Love for the Beloved

“I am the Avatar, I am the Perfect Master; I am whatever you take Me to be. I am what I am, and, in fact, I am beyond that too! Those who love Baba may have to pass through a phase of suffering. But out of this barbadi [ruin] emerges the real abadi [prosperity]”.

Bal Natu writes: His fingers gesturing with grace yet rapidity, Baba expanded on this comment. The following is the gist of what I gathered from Baba’s impromptu comments:

The average man of the world feels as if he has a stable position, but remains ignorant of the fact that his very “security” is like a pool of quicksand which will drag him down.

Those who are comfortable in the world seek even more comfort and there is no end to this seeking to further solidify one’s position. But the only way to achieve permanent stability is to not depend on worldly security.

Invariably lovers of God do not seek a worldly refuge. In their overwhelming love for their Beloved, these lovers are unmindful of all calamities or suffering; the only thing they can cling to is their love. Hence, they are like particles of dust floating in the air. But as soon as this type of love for the Beloved blossoms in their hearts, the love itself becomes their refuge.

So they find themselves, before long, established on a rock-like foundation of unshakable faith, a profound conviction in the Beloved as Love Itself.

To quote a Sufi mystic:

*On some occasions, He gives by depriving you,
Sometimes He deprives you in giving.*

To accept cheerfully the refusals and favours of the Divine Beloved, in a spirit of total surrender to His will, is to invite His grace.

Extracts from GLIMPSES OF THE GOD-MAN Vol V. by Bal Natu pp.179,180.

Surrounded by difficulties with no immediate solution?

Baba stated: “That is not bad news; that is very good news! You are lucky to have so many hardships. The fact is there are no hardships, because everything in the world is one big zero! I see and experience this every moment. Once tested by the Avatar or Sadguru, the devotee will feel as if he is about to die! It is terrible; this path of God is the harshest and most insurmountable thing possible. Still, don’t worry and don’t lose hope. Good times are ahead and after these difficulties, quietude and comfort await you. Terrible suffering is the sign of happiness and peace to come.”

Revised LORD MEHER online, pp. 1227.

Guruprasad & Maharani Shantadevi
Continued from page 13

universe. You are blessed. I love you more than you love me, I have my Nazar on you".¹⁵

At another time Avatar Meher Baba promised Shantadevi, "You will see my True Light."¹⁶

References

1. *MEHERA MEHER* D. Fenster V2 p 542
2. *Ibid* V3 pp 179-181
3. *Ibid* V3 p 202
4. *LORD MEHER* V15-16 p 5378
5. avatarsabode.com.au/1969/Guruprasad.htm
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9. *TIMES OF INDIA* May 24th 2002 <http://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/city/ahmedabad/Shantadevi-Gaekwad-passes-away/articleshow/10803621.cms>
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12. *LORD MEHER* online p 5353
13. *Ibid* p 4924
14. *TIMES OF INDIA* Shantadevi passes away <http://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/city/ahmedabad/Shantadevi-Gaekwad-passes-away/articleshow/10803621.cms>
15. *LORD MEHER* online pp 4546-7
16. *Ibid* p 4924

Some examples of Meher Baba's ways of working
Continued from page 19

for the Westerners, and Western cooking too insipid for the Indian palate. In the beginning Baba was particularly attentive to the Westerners, lest the spicy food make them ill. But gradually he stopped taking an interest in such matters and stopped catering to their tastes. One day in Panchgani, when discussing the menu, Baba remarked:

"Dislikes are as much 'wants' as likes. Both are desires of the ego and hence both have to go. Some like one thing and some do not like another. You like one thing but not another. Both are opposite desires and should be left.

As far as desires go, you should consciously try to be like a stone. A stone never says, 'I want this, I don't want that!'. It is oblivious to likes and dislikes. When you go beyond your limited wants — your likes and dislikes — and turn into stones, then you will experience infinite consciousness!"

Revised LORD MEHER Online Edition. Extracts pp. 1907, 1908, 1922, 1923



Sher DiMaggio and Tony Zois (above) were married on 8th April 2015 at Buz & Wendy Connor's home on the Meher Spiritual Center, Myrtle Beach, SC, USA. Buz was celebrant and Jeff Craddock was Best Man.

Meher Baba Australia Subscriptions

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Glimpses of the Poet in India
Continued from page 18

yrs ago, + shifting it into past tense to fit / foregoing. ...I hd. hd. it in mind to present it to beloved Baba on His Birthday, but since it is in v. modern idiom I didn't know whether He wld really like it. So it has already been read to Him. And He enjoyed it v. much. Now I have nothing for His Birthday!"

*

While all of Francis' ghazals are 'serious,' many are enlivened by a sense of humor regarding the path to His feet, couched without solemnity, rendered with a touch of colloquial aussie larrikinism. Others, while not more serious and certainly not solemn, have a certain rigoressness of attitude. A something that we sometimes got in his letters to us.

Francis wrote, "Note on Baba's conversational talk: Since Avatar is / Axis of / universe + of every individual particle of it, no word or gesture of His can be w/out / profoundest significance. As a poet sd, speaking of a P. Master of his time, 'Ah, this sudden upheaval of / earth + sky! It is because my Master has turned on His side.' Notwithstanding, it is absurd for us to try + read significances + inner meanings into Baba's simple actions + general talk – there is no means whereby it cld be correct. The only intelligent reaction to 'The Rain-god wants me to suffer more yet' wld be / parrots 'The Rain-god' etc. I remember one day at / '55 Sahavas Baba was walking up + down / meeting hall after lunch. Naturally a number of Sahavasis gathered in / doorways + watched Him. Afterwards Baba sd, "When I was walking up + down some of you were thinking 'Baba is doing His universal work', but as a matter of fact I was only digesting my lunch."

The point is, since there is no time when Baba is not engaged in His universal work, why single out some isolated individual action as being linked w. it? It is nothing more than an expression of "we are in / know!" "we are a little bit on / inside!" The same applies to statements that one has heard or read, that Baba was "working through someone" or "using such + such situation to further His work", or that during His travels He was "laying cables". Since Avatar, as sd, is / Axis of all things, + since His mission is universal, there can be no one or no insect thru whom + with which He is not working, + no situation wch He has not created let alone using. And as for "cable laying" well I suppose one person's fancy is as gd as another's. But last year we had a change of divine Agency. From Baba doing this or that, it became / "workings of Maya" or "Maya's hand" that was in everything. When some one missed a train connection or a plane was late, or he cdn't get on it, it was Maya's doing; if someone caught a cold or hd a toothache, it was Maya's doing. In some instances it was Maya trying to cause / person to loosen their hold on Baba's Daaman! No one ever sd that / promotion or salary raise they got, or / pleasant evening that they hd hd was Maya. Not / "nice" things, only / unpleasant + uncomfortable things were Maya. The correct definition of Maya is "/ principle of ignorance". That simply (+ uncomfortably) means that every action one does, every breath one draws, is nothing but Maya – right up to + includin' / 6th blooming plane. Poor Baba, poor dear, beloved Baba has been saying this over + over + over now for 40 years. No wonder He suffers."

Frightfully frank

"To be frank and fair is a quality and characteristic of persons who are honest and have the courage to openly say out what they feel rather than to keep things in the heart or say things behind people's backs. Some take pride in that quality of being 'frightfully frank' and hate those who do not say out things as openly.

Yet, there are times when one has to discriminate. Sometimes things spoken with the best of intentions totally spoil the case, if said when silence would serve the purpose for the time being.

A person sensitive and of quick temperament would probably misunderstand words spoken with the best of intentions, if said when he is not in a mood to listen. Such a person might fly into a rage, become overexcited and be prejudiced against the best of friends or well-wishers. He thereby loses the benefit of the advice and words of wisdom that would have done him good if said in quieter moments when he would have understood their import and even appreciated it. So it is not always the words and things however frankly said that matter, but the right time and the way they are put.

Silence, even though misunderstood for diplomacy or hypocrisy, would serve the purpose better ultimately than the best of the glorifying quality of being frightfully frank. Sometimes the best of qualities which mankind glorifies are the worst of defects, if not used discriminately at the proper moment."

*Revised LORD MEHER
online, pp. 1798, 1798*

Meher Baba Australia

September to November 2015

Editor: Steven Hein

Design and Layout: Liz Gaskin

Proof Reading: Steven Hein. Seeking additional volunteers. Please contact Editor.

Mailing List and Subscriptions: David Bowling. Email – mbaust@westnet.com.au for more information.

Front Cover: Photo of Avatar Meher Baba at Meher House, Sydney, in August 1956, by Robert Rouse.

Quote: *LORD MEHER* Online, <http://www.lordmeher.org> page 4090.

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 November 2015.

Sydney Meher Baba Community Calendar

Meetings at Meher House – are held on the last Saturday of each month 7-10 pm. Suggestions most welcome regarding a topic and coordinator for the meeting. Contact: Michael Le Page at michaellepage1@gmail.com or phone (02) 9971 2486.

Tuesday Nights Discourse Meetings – 224 Nelson Street, Annandale. Reading and discussion on Meher Baba's Discourses in relation to the spiritual path. Please come at 6.15 for a 6.30 start and we will go till 7.30 when we will break for a simple pot luck dinner and continue discussion till 8.30. All welcome. For more information contact Kris Wyld at truestories@ozemail.com.

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' 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).

Interesting websites worth checking out

Mandali Hall Talks

<http://www.mandalihall.org>

A non-profit library of over 1800 audio recordings including talks, discussions, stories, samadhi tunes and musical performances by Meher Baba's mandali and other lovers.

Meher Legacy

<http://www.meherlegacy.org>

An archive collection of unique and interesting material, some of it not published elsewhere.

– Ed.

What's on at Avatar's Abode

Spring Sahavas 3-5 October 2015

Special guest Pratap Ahir

For information about Pratap see pages 2 – 3 in this MBA or visit the Avatar's Abode Trust website at http://www.avatarsabode.com.au/spring_sahavas_avatars_abode.html. Pratap and his son Swaroop will also visit Baba families in Melbourne, Sydney and Christchurch.

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 Works Reading Group continues to meet on Tuesday evenings 6.30 – 7.30 pm in the bookshop at Avatar's Abode. All welcome. For more contact Wilma Pearson wilmapearson@aapt.net.au or 0404 775 789 / (07) 5473 9947.

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. Library is located in the Reception Centre building at Avatar's Abode. Coordinators Geoff and Tian Gunther: 07 5442 2467 are presently away on Pilgrimage. Temporary co-ordinator Steven Hein 0412 080 424.

Melbourne Meetings

Ongoing meeting dates and locations are under review and still being finalised. In the meantime please contact Anthony on 0412 099 890 or Jasmine on 0438 300 193.

Meher Baba Gatherings in WA

For information about meetings and social get togethers, phone Paul 0429 310 169 or Julie 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