

Meher Baba Australia

September – November 2017



Commemorating Beloved Meher Baba's 1956 Visit to Sydney and Melbourne, Australia.

Notes on Meher Baba's 1956 visit to Australia

Francis Brabazon

On the 9th of August 1956, for the first time in known history, the Avatar, Who is the One Ancient One, God, came to Australia.

This Event, which a few of us had longed for consciously, and all people and things unconsciously; which the land itself, the plains and mountains, the deserts and fertile areas, the forests and streams and rivers, and the unique kookaburra and kangaroo and platypus had dreamed of and hoped for, occurred.

The plane bearing Him and four of His disciples came down out of the clear sky and touched down at Mascot, Sydney, at a quarter to four in the afternoon of the 9th.

Baba was welcomed by a few of His devotees, and taken to Beacon Hill, a suburb 12 miles on the north side of the city, where the rest of the Sydney group, a few from Melbourne (600 miles south), one each from Canberra (200 miles south), Newcastle (100 miles north) and Armidale (400 miles north) completed the welcome.

He embraced each one, and retired into the house which had been built mostly by the group's own labour as a centre for His work, and which was now given over to Him and His four disciples. The room, in which He himself stayed, worked and played with us, is 30 feet by 20 feet, with stone walls and wooden floor and ceiling, and has a large window opening out over bush-land, suburbs,



Meher Baba at Meher House in Beacon Hill during the Public Day on Saturday 11th August 1956. The woman and boy he is greeting are probably Pat De Bressac and her son Peter – wife and son of Eddie De Bressac, the stone mason, who with his brother, helped Francis with the stone work at Meher House. Eruch and Nilu can be seen behind Baba. Photo by Aubrey Rouse. From Robert Rouse's Collection.

and the Pacific Ocean. On one wall is a mural done by one of the group depicting Baba as the Creator of the universe and the Goal of all life.

Most of the Group were accommodated in a large shed and

three tents, with the remainder in two houses within half a mile. All meals including breakfasts were taken by the Group in the shed, so all were "on tap" all the time, and enjoyed Baba's company to the utmost.

The next morning, the 10th of

August, Baba summoned the writer and desired an account of the work done here, and then stated the reason for His visit:

1. To sow the seed of His Love in this country;
2. To visit and stay in the house we had built for Him;
3. To gather those of us who loved Him a little and had done a little work for Him, into His Love.

He then had the children called in, and played with them. And then He called the Group. Each one was introduced by name. He then asked, "Who is willing to love Me?" To one who did not raise his hand, Baba asked why he hadn't, and receiving the reply that he felt inadequate to love Baba, Baba asked, "Do you love Me enough to throw your children into the ocean if I asked you to?" And the devotee said he would do that for Baba.

He then spoke of love, and said that love meant doing the will of the Beloved at any cost. Turning to another He said, "Can there be any fear where there is love?" On receiving the reply that one could fear to displease the Beloved, He said that that was a different kind of fear altogether.

This Beloved then expressed His happiness to be with us and to be in the house we had built for Him; and urged us to make the most of this opportunity to be in His company. Fondling two of the children, He said, "One must become either a little child or an old man." He then sent all out, and had each one brought in singly to receive His love, and to receive what love each one had to offer.

To one He gave the special blessing of washing some of his clothes. This woman

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NOW HAS COME THE MOMENT OF JOY

Francis Brabazon

Now has come the moment of joy
in this land,
The moment it has waited in woman-waiting
through the ages,
The moment of BABA and the touch of His feet
on her earth,
And the rivers of His silent Word to her thirsty lips
and the cry of her soul.

Now has come the moment of joy in our hearts,
And the leaping in dance of our souls in the
steps of His feet,
And the breaking of bonds of our hearts, and
our heart's breaking
Into laughter of flowers of love and gratefulness,
And our soul's surge no less than the ocean in the
direction of His glory and human-ness.

Now will begin our history:
Of the withholding of the axeman's hand from the axe
And the mad career of our senses after
a vanishing wish
And the rivers of their waters to the sea:
A converting of the blow to the opening of areas
and districts in the heart,
A reducing of the senses to the sense and the
scent of the soul,
A channelling of the waters for the wheat-fields
and orchards of God.

The books of this history will tell the stories
Of obscure men and women lost of all else but love,
and in love well lost.
Of heroes of pastures and crops, and farmers
on wide seas storm tossed,
Of adventurers who work at a bench
And housewives who go forth with shopping
baskets to find God.

But now is not the history, but the moment ...
The moment of God and His advent in this
Land of Australia:
The touch of His feet on this earth, and the
breath of His Word on the breeze and
in the breath of our lives;
The moment long waited, the moment of joy
and apprehension ...
When each one ... when each leaf and piece of
earth and stone
On whom and on which falls His glance,
Must decide the issue of surrenderance, and lay down
that much of his life as he will.

*PRACTICAL SPIRITUALITY WITH MEHER
BABA, pp. 19-20. 1985 © John A. Grant*

To those who attended his Saturday night talks, Francis Brabazon had always stressed the importance to a country of having the living Avatar set foot on the soil of that country. There is no record in history of this previously ever having happened in Australia. Shortly before Meher Baba was due to arrive in Australia Francis read to us a poem that he had composed to commemorate this much longed-for event in our lives and this important event in the history of the nation. He also had copies of this poem printed 'in commemoration of the visit of Shri Meher Baba to Australia in August 1956'. *John A. Grant*



Photos above and on the next page are stills from a film taken by a freelance cameraman at the general darshan program for the public at Meher House, Sydney. Almost 150 people came. Photo images provided by Michael LePage.

has worked all her life washing clothes and doing for others, and now she had the reward of washing the clothes of the Master, her Beloved. To those women who cooked His meal He returned half of it for they themselves to eat. Truly it is that those types of work which most people desire to shift onto others or minimise for themselves, in the eyes of the Lord are the most worthy of blessing. For this reason He Himself, for long periods, has washed and swept and cleaned and cooked for others.

After lunch Baba called us all into His presence again to sit with Him; then visited our quarters. At 3:45 we presented for His entertainment a play called “*The Quest*,” which told the story of a search to find Baba. None of those taking part had played before, but Baba praised their performance and said that the play was to be published and distributed in other countries as well as here.

He also praised the mural highly and rewarded its painter (Frances Lee) with a loving look and embrace, and even suggested a slight change in one of the figures. To this writer’s view, this is certainly the best piece of depiction

of Baba which has yet been done—it is even sufficiently good to encourage one to think that the Avatar’s Advent this time will not pass unworthily recorded; that this painter, if no one else, will in time register this Advent in real art terms. Even the impossible (art in this time and period) is possible, God willing.

To return to that from which we have digressed—although the digression itself furthers the account in hand: Baba then retired for the night, and we returned to our quarters. Some two hours later, two or three of us were called to find out the cause of a noise on the roof. A high wind had sprung up. We got ladders, and two went up on the roof and tested for movement a frame carrying a banner of welcome. We were called down and sent up and called down again. Baba then smiled and said, “This has given you three more opportunities to see Me.”

The next morning (Saturday 11th of August) at eight we all assembled again with Baba. He inquired after our health and how we had all slept, joked with us, and played with the children. From 9 to 11:30 He received the general public. Some 150 obtained

that which all life and mankind, through all its multifarious activities, moves toward, the actual sight of God fully incarnate as Man, and the receiving of His blessing.

After lunch, Baba called us into His company again, and then left for Melbourne, accompanied by twenty of us as well as His four disciples.

Arriving at Melbourne Baba was welcomed by the members there, and taken to the home of Mr. and Mrs. Denis O’Brien in the suburb of Camberwell. The next morning (12th of August) each one of the Group in Melbourne was presented to Him and received His embrace. Baba then had them all sit down before Him, told them to feel at ease and to make the most of the time He would be with them. He said that He had come here for those who have come for Baba’s love, not to see crowds. In America many people came to see Him; here He wished to relax. Try to draw Baba’s love: there may not be another opportunity—His time is very nigh.

He then repeated the discourses He gave in Sydney, because He did not want the people in Melbourne to miss anything. He also told them



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. Photo on right: from left are Adi Snr, Eruch, Francis, Nilu, Meher Baba. Photo images provided by Michael LePage.

about the big Meeting He would hold in India next year, and invited many to come, but warned that it would be useless for anyone to come who would not be prepared to follow His instructions implicitly. There could be no compromise now. There would not be another opportunity as there would be in India next year- for another 700 years.

The afternoon was devoted to house visiting. Each householder of the five houses visited had hurried home to arrange flowers, light fires, etc., and be ready to receive Him. Baba was taken through some of the most picturesque suburbs and nearby country scenery. The driver for most of the journey, Baba's host, was indiscreet enough to ask Baba a spiritual question while we were on a hill road. Baba gave such an exact and detailed reply that the driver partially forgot his driving and took a wrong turning and had to drive an extra two miles to pick up his road again.

To each one who drove Him, Baba said, "You do not know how fortunate you are to be driving Me." To one He said, "This mere act of driving Me will ensure that when the time comes and

you are traversing the Planes, you will not get stuck in them."

The next morning 13th of August all assembled before Baba. It had been planned that Baba would leave Melbourne to return to Sydney at 7:15 that night. Baba asked the organisers and His hosts whether they would be disappointed if He returned earlier. Upon their willing but reluctant-to-lose-Him-so-soon reply, "Whatever you wish, Baba," He said He would leave by the 4:10 plane. But He comforted them with His love; and then had the children brought in and played marbles and ball with them. One of the boys had previously challenged Baba to marbles, and was highly disconcerted at Baba's accuracy and the fact that Baba insisted that they fired Indian fashion. Later, it was noticed that all the boys were practicing round a ring in the back garden.

The public program which had been timed to start at 2 p.m. was shifted forward to 1 p.m. and finished by 2:30.

At the Melbourne airport, all the Group gathered again for a last sight of Him. But it proved to be not the

last ... for after the plane had taxied to the runway, it had to return to the tarmac owing to engine-trouble; and Baba said, "You see, their love (those at the barrier) caused the engine to fail so that we had to come back again."

Baba retired as soon as we got back to Beacon Hill.

On the morning of the 14th Baba decided to abandon a proposed all-day trip to the Blue Mountains, preferring to stay at Beacon Hill and rest and do His work, but accepted a short beach drive in the morning and visited the two houses where members of the Group had been staying.

Baba called us all in again after tea, told us to sit down, and asked the writer to get a volume of Hafiz, which Baba opened at random and asked the writer to read:

O ignorant one! strive to become a master of knowledge;

Until you have yourself traversed the road, how can you become a guide to others?

O son! strive to learn from the instructor of love in the school of divine truth, so that one day you may become one of the fathers.

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*Sleeping and eating has kept you far from attaining
the ranks of love;
You will reach the Friend when you become foodless
and sleepless.*

*If the light of the love of God falls in your heart and
soul,
I swear by God you will become more beautiful than
the sun in the sky.*

*Like the men of the homeward path, give away the
copper of your own existence,
So that by the alchemy of love you may become gold.*

*God's light shall shine on you from head to foot
When you become without head and feet in the path
of the Glorious One.*

*Be immersed for a moment in the ocean of God, and
do not think
That a single hair of your head will be wetted by the
waters of the seven seas.*

*If the face of God be the object of your gaze,
There is no doubt that from henceforth you will be a
possessor of wisdom.*

*When the foundations of your existence are destroyed,
Think not that the house of your heart will be
demolished.*

*O Hafiz! if in your head there is the desire for union
with the Beloved, You must become as the dust
before the door of those who discern spiritual things.*

The disciples then completed their packing and Baba was ready to leave. Just before He was about to leave, a signal was given and a series of fireworks, rockets and shells were fired. Baba came out of the house, looked with His child-wonder, at a bursting shell, and then brusquely turned back into the house saying, "What are they doing this for—they will cause a fire."

Two minutes later all the men were rushing down into the bush into the dark with buckets of water to put out the fire that had started! What a wonderful send-off! All then hurried off to the airport to farewell Him, and at 10:30 the plane took off for Singapore and India.

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Meher Baba in the Baron's Triumph at Mascot Airport, Sydney on Thursday 9th August 1956. Bill Le Page is in the driver's seat, Baba next to him. Francis is in the back seat. John Grant is driving the car behind with number plate BAB421. Photo by Aubrey Rouse. From Robert Rouse's Collection.



Visitors wait to meet Meher Baba on the Public Day at Meher House, 1956. Photo images from film by a freelance cameraman, supplied by Michael Le Page.



Late in the afternoon on Saturday 11th August 1956 Meher Baba flew to Melbourne from Sydney. Baba can be seen in the pink coat under the tail of the plane. Left of him is Eruch and right are Meherjee and Francis. Photo taken by Aubrey Rouse. From Robert Rouse's Collection.

Impressions of Meher Baba's 1956 visit to Melbourne

Elsie M. Smart

Several months before the 11th August, 1956, we had been preparing for the great day in our lives; the visit to Melbourne of our Teacher and Beloved, Meher Baba. We could hardly believe that such a wonderful experience would ever come.

Six homes had been offered for the accommodation of Baba and His mandali; the home of Dr. and Mrs. O'Brien of Camberwell had been selected as being the most central and convenient for all concerned. This beautiful home was lovingly prepared for the reception of Baba. August is an extremely cold month in Melbourne, but every detail had been arranged to have a warm temperature in all the houses.

Baba had specially requested that no publicity be given to His arrival in Melbourne. The plane was scheduled to arrive from Sydney at 6:30 p.m. at Essendon Airport. At the Airport had gathered the Melbourne group, their families and children. All were very excited as the time drew near for the arrival of the plane. It had seemed like a far-off dream; to really see Baba, whose books and discourses we had been reading and studying for many years; now the great moment had arrived.

Only through Francis Brabazon of Sydney, Baba's representative in Australia, had we heard of the personal contacts with Baba; then recently, Mrs. Clarice Adams and Miss Ena Lemmon of Melbourne had gone to India and had personal interviews. They had both brought back with them the full



Meher Baba was based at the O'Brien's home, in Fairmont Ave, Camberwell for His two day Melbourne visit in 1956. One afternoon, he visited the homes of other Melbourne Baba families. This photo by Le Buchanan tries to capture Baba as He moves swiftly to begin those visits. Camera Le used was his daughter Margaret's Kodak Box Brownie. Picture used by kind permission of Margaret Harrison, née Buchanan.

and loving feeling of their contact with Baba and His Circle. They gave to us such a picture of the Great Master whose teachings had come to be part of our lives, that we felt so much closer to Baba and those associated with Him. When it was known that Baba was to make a world tour it was suggested that He visit Australia on the return journey. Sydney first, then Melbourne. This was indeed a time for rejoicing when Baba accepted the invitation to visit our Southern land.

Over the loud speaker it was announced that the plane was ready to touch down. The great lights lit

up the tarmac and the huge plane, an A.N.A. Skymaster, drew alongside the reception center, the gangway was placed alongside and we all watched eagerly as the passengers came down; then suddenly, there was no mistaking—there was our beloved Baba, radiating His Love. I cannot describe the feeling of joy I had when I first beheld Meher Baba. He came through the aisle of His lovers, preceded by Francis Brabazon and followed by the four mandali, Eruch, Adi, Meherji and Nilu, and many

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of the Sydney group. Ena Lemmon welcomed Baba to Melbourne and introduced Him to many of the group. Words cannot be found to express the radiance of love and serenity that emanates from the presence of Baba. He did not stay long in the reception room; after He had warmly embraced many of the Melbourne people with Eruch speaking the loving words for Him, He was ready to go to the Camberwell home. All the people who came with Baba in the plane from Sydney seemed to be bubbling over with happiness. Baba and party were taken to the waiting cars, the welcoming band of people crowded around waving, and the cars slowly moved off. Mrs. O'Brien and her sister Mrs. O'Keefe were at the house in Camberwell to welcome Baba on His arrival.

There were to be no evening meetings in Melbourne. We had instructions to be at Dr. O'Brien's home at 8 o'clock on Sunday morning. It was a crisp cold winter's day, with a pale early morning sun. As I drove the ten miles from my outer suburban home, my heart was singing; I felt the world around me was singing, too; Baba, Baba was here; and soon again I was to experience His Wondrous Presence. Indeed, if only everyone could know there was One in this land who breathed Love to all men, regardless of race, colour or creed! One whom we should try to follow, to awaken all to the awareness of our true selves.

When all the group were gathered outside the O'Brien home, we were ushered into the big lounge room; Baba, radiating love, beckoned to us to be seated, to be comfortable and to gather close to Him. Eruch stood close to Baba and interpreted His gestures with loving words; his rich



Crowd standing outside the O'Brien's home in Fairmont Ave, Camberwell is there to see Baba off on his visits to other Baba families in Melbourne. Margaret Harrison, née Buchanan, is standing in front, far right next to her mother Beth and brother Terry. Photo taken by Le Buchanan. Picture used by kind permission of Margaret.

voice like a warm caress. We could not take our eyes off Baba. He told us of the wonderful welcome the Sydney people had given Him and how He was so happy to be with us. He also said that they had nearly cancelled the trip to Australia, but then thought how disappointed everyone would be after all the plans had been made, so decided to come on. He said there might not be another opportunity to visit Australia, or England, or America, because His time is very nigh. Baba said He would repeat what He said to the Sydney group as He did not want us to miss anything. He then gave a discourse on the Ego: "There are two types of ego; one is the false ego which has wants and desires--'I want this, I want that'—until this false I is annihilated. When it is annihilated, a transformation takes place, the false I is replaced by the real I and then that experience that 'I am free from wanting or desires' is gained. 'I am Infinite, I am one with God,' that Ego is the Real Ego."

Baba continued to explain that although we understood this intellectually, thinking is still there. That means duality. This is not real

experience, and is not the Real Ego. There cannot be any compromise, there is only one in One; we have to become one with God and no compromise. If God is within us, and we know that God is powerful, then we must be all-powerful. Why do we feel helpless? God who is all Power, resides within us. What is the cause of feeling helpless?

Baba said to take it slowly, try to accept and digest it; and gradually, if you try, it will unfold that Baba is the Lord of the Universe. All are One, we are all God, and yet all feel so helpless. Why? Because there is a veil, a sort of veil, that veils us from God. We ourselves are the veil. Our eyes look outward so cannot see this. Baba said His Grace is the mirror. If His Grace is bestowed, it reveals our true Self in an instant. Baba said it is very difficult to have His Grace... one in a million can have it. One must completely drown in the Ocean of His Love, to find His Grace there; otherwise there is compromise. There is only one way to find God, to drown in the Ocean of Love . . . no compromise.

Baba continued this discourse by

explaining the many types of love, the so-called love of the world where happiness is not to be found, only misery and happiness. Once you experience bliss, it is continuous, Baba said.

I always think of Baba as “speaking,” although He has been silent for 30 years. This was because of His vibrant Presence and the quick beauty of His expressive hands as Eruch interpreted His meanings. Baba then invited those of us who could leave their responsibilities and had sufficient funds for their return fare, to come to India towards the end of October, 1957, for a world gathering of Baba lovers. The place for the gathering in India was to be arranged later. Francis and Adi compiled the list of names of the Sydney and Melbourne people who had accepted this wonderful invitation. After 10 o’clock the meeting finished and we gathered outside.

The private interviews commenced. Interviews were given to all members of the Melbourne group and lasted till nearly 11:30 a.m., when it was the luncheon break for Baba and party. Baba then asked his lovers to go home for the rest of the afternoon, and reassemble in the evening at Doris O’Keefe’s home to hear Francis read some of Baba’s latest unpublished messages. The next meeting with Baba was called for 8:30 a.m. on Monday morning and to bring all the children.

For the Sunday afternoon, August 12th, it had been arranged and agreed that Baba would visit the five homes that had been offered for His stay in Melbourne. All who wished to follow in their cars were invited. This gave Baba and the mandali an extensive tour of the eastern suburbs and outer areas of Melbourne. We had all gone to great efforts to have our homes as

beautiful as possible for this honor. At one of the homes, Baba played marbles with the children, and listened to some music played for Him. My home at Ringwood was one of the five to be visited. My son, Bill, and daughter, Jean, were with me when Baba and party arrived; I welcomed Him and introduced Him to my children. He warmly embraced us and said He would like to see all the rooms.

He went into each room and looked around; when He was in the sun room, which is used as a study, sewing room and bedroom for Jean when she is at home (as she is a nursing sister at Royal Melbourne Hospital) He gave the sign of Perfection (thumb and forefinger forming a circle). In each room He stayed a few minutes, saying it was a great blessing to have His Presence in my home. They would not stay for any refreshment as they had one more home to visit at Eltham, and then had to be back at Dr. O’Brien’s at five. As we made our farewells, He took and stroked my children’s hands; then we were waving to the departing cars. A King of Kings had come to our quiet suburb, had passed through my home and garden. There was no fanfare or banners flying. It was His wish that it be so; but the living memory of Baba’s visit will never fade. The pink camellias I had decorated the living room with are still alive and glowing as I write this, three and a half weeks after the visit.

The sun shone again on Monday morning as the cars with the Melbourne group and their children arrived at Camberwell at 8:30 a.m. The adults gathered in Baba’s Presence again. He asked several members how they had slept. Baba said He was very busy in the night with His Universal Work, felt burdened with the work,

and did not feel fresh and bright. He said we would not understand or realise this. Later He said He would like to go back to Sydney earlier than had been arranged; previous booking was on the 7:15 p.m. plane. Dr. O’Brien rang the airport and found that there was a plane at 1 p.m. and 4:10 p.m. Baba decided to leave on the 4:10 plane; one of the Sydney group went at once to exchange the tickets for all the party. The afternoon program was altered for the general public. Interviews were now arranged for 1 p.m. to 3 p.m. instead of 2 to 5 p.m.

We had a moment of silence with Baba; then we all went outside and the children were brought in, the parents introducing them to Baba. This was a delightful scene; as all the children sat on the carpet looking at Baba, He patted their heads or embraced others. He played marbles with the boys—the Indian method of firing the marble is to use the fingers of both hands. He played at ball with them, looking at one child, then quickly throwing the ball in the opposite direction. After a time He beckoned for a cake to be brought in; but as the cake was being handed to Him, He waved it away and asked for the other cake; after some rummaging around in the kitchen another iced cake was given to Him. He signed His agreement and commenced to cut it; then handed it to Eruch to cut into slices. These He handed to all the children, and, of course, they set to happily eat it all up. This is called “prasad,” in India.

After the children’s session, each group member had a last personal interview of a few minutes with Baba again.

When the lunch break was over, the arrangements were for Baba to see the

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general public from 1 p.m. to 3 p.m. There was a large gathering mostly friends of group members. They were taken in one at a time and introduced to Baba and were allowed to ask any question they wished. As my daughter was on duty at the hospital, she had asked me to meet two of her friends who were interested to meet Baba; one a final-year student of medicine, and the other a student of philosophy at the Melbourne University. These two young men hope to make a world tour when their studies are over. When they told Baba they were interested in India and in understanding the purpose of life, Baba invited them to come to India next year for the big Meeting. He also instructed them to read "God Speaks." Baba made a tremendous impression on these young men, who came to see Him partly from curiosity, but left with an overwhelming desire to know more of the real purpose of life and the teaching of "Meher Baba – The Awakener."

Some members of the public said they thought He could be the Avatar, and others were skeptical; to all Baba gave His great Love. After all the interviews were over, we waited until Baba and the mandali came out to waiting cars. All the cars that were available took people to the airport to see Baba off. Just a small group of His lovers surrounded Him before the plane left. He would beckon a child to come across and sit with Him for a minute, while He caressed him. Baba said He had very much enjoyed His visit to Melbourne and the loving atmosphere that surrounded Him all the time.

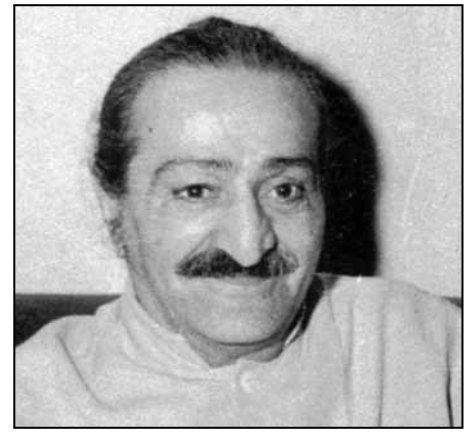
The hour of departure had arrived. There were a few handshakes from Adi, Eruch, Meherji, and Nilu. Baba smiled and raised His hand in farewell.

My heart was full, both of joy and sadness; the two wonderful days were almost over. Baba, the mandali, and the Sydney people climbed into the plane. Baba had a seat at the window; soon He was waving to us and smiling.

The mighty engines were revving, and slowly the plane taxied to the other end of the runway to take off into the wind. We all waited for a last glimpse of the plane again; the biting wind whipped around us; but we could not care for this when perhaps another glimpse of our Beloved Baba awaited us. But it was a long time before the plane reappeared, and—then it came slowly back, right in front of us again, and behold! Baba was waving merrily. Was there a twinkle in His eye, or did I imagine it? There was His loving smile; we were thrilled to be greeting Him again.

They tested the port engine, gave some part extra grease; then the plane taxied off once again. In the distance, she turned into the wind, rose gracefully into the air, and a small speck fading into the blue gray sky, carried the Avatar of our age towards Sydney.

We have renewed our workaday lives with the seed of His Love in our hearts, and His books and his teachings have a new life and meaning for us. Some of us look forward to again having the wonderful experience of Baba's Presence in India, in November, 1957. But to have had Baba with us in Melbourne was the greatest event in my life, and who knows what unfoldment it may mean for others in our land.



Meher Baba at Sydney Airport, Australia, August 1956. Photo taken by an unknown press photographer.

At 1:30pm on Monday 13th August 1956 during the afternoon program of interviews in Melbourne, Baba dictated these poignant lines to Francis Brabazon:

Die in Baba,
Die for Baba
Die with Baba,
Then you will
Live as Baba.

Deny your false self
And your real self
Asserts itself.

Ask for nothing and
You will get everything.

Renounce everything to
Such an extent that you
Eventually renounce even renunciation.

To love me is to
Forget yourself completely.

To know me as I really am
Become like a child (in heart)
And be as wise as the Man of Wisdom.

*LORD MEHER Online
p. 4109. ©AMBPPCT.*

Three discourses Meher Baba gave during His 1956 visit to Australia

TWO TYPES OF EGO

Baba said: “There are two types of ego. One, the false ego, has innumerable wants and desires. It says, ‘I am a man, I want this; I am a woman, I want that; I am sick, I have a pain; I want to be happy, I am not happy; my wife does not love me; I am very rich; I am very poor.’ It is always ‘I.’ But when it is annihilated, then a transformation takes place, and the false I is replaced by the real I, and then the experience, ‘I am free from desires and wanting,’ is gained. ‘I am infinite, I am one with God, I am Christ’—that is the Real Ego”.

“One asserts ‘I am God’ because he has read and understood intellectually that there is nothing but God. But this assertion, ‘I am God,’ falls down because he and his mind are not united, are not One. This assertion is due to having thought. Thinking is there, that means duality is there. There is no direct experience here, but he experiences an idea of unity through his understanding of the oneness of God, therefore this is not real experience and is not the real ego. There cannot be any compromise; there is no room for compromise. There is only one God; one has to become One with God. You cannot be the man of the world and at the same time become One with God”.

“If you have realised God within you, and we know that God is all powerful, then you must also be all-powerful. Why then do you feel

helpless? What is the cause of this helplessness? I remain the same Eternal One and am in all; therefore you all are God; and yet you feel so helpless. Why is this? Because there is a sort of veil that veils you from God”.

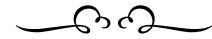
“You yourself are the veil, and it is not possible for you to lift it . . . this veil which is yourself. Your eyes, which are quite small, can see a vast panorama and all the objects contained in it, but they cannot see themselves. To see themselves a mirror is required. So, when the mirror of My Grace descends, your own True Self is revealed in an instant”.

“But how can you obtain My Grace? It is very difficult. Only one in a million can have that. You must drown yourself completely in the ocean of My Love, then you will find My grace there. If you cannot bear to drown yourself, then there is compromise. There can be no compromise if you want Me”.

“What is this love? There are volumes of books on love. . . but they cannot give you love. Love wants to give itself. It does not want anything for itself. It wants only to give. Now you have a wife and you love her very much . . . you want to possess her for yourself. It is a great love you have for her—you do not want to be separated from her for a moment; you feel lost if she even talks with someone else. But this craving for possession is your selfishness and breeds jealousy and fear. You do not look for your wife’s happiness, but only towards your own selfishness.

“Now in the divine love of which we were speaking, there are two stages: in the first stage there is the longing for the Oneness of Union with the Beloved; and of course in that is craving—‘I want to be one with God.’ But in the next step, the lover does not want anything of His Beloved, he feels satisfied in pleasing the Beloved under all circumstances. And that is the only love which can be called real love. In the so-called love, abiding happiness is not to be found, there is only happiness and misery.”

Meher Baba. Copyright AMBPPCT.



WANTING

Baba said, “I want you all to know that love for Me should not have any demands, or wants.” Baba said, “Wanting had its origin in the very first urge of God—‘I want to know Myself. I want to know who I am.’

“The Original Want has expanded into so many different wants, illusory wants—‘I want to know myself, I want this and that,’ it is continuous. Life after life, evolution of the illusory want goes on. Until one gets fed up—and wants nothing. At that instant he gets the answer to his first question, ‘Who am I’ with, ‘I am God.’

“One should live a normal life and just love Baba, and not be attached to living. Then you will have a curtain of Baba’s love protecting you from the world.”

Baba also said: “Christ’s greatness

Continued on page 16

The Poona Story – Part I - The Advent

Sarah McNeill

Preamble: By way of making readers aware of a book, recently completed and currently with publishers awaiting a decision, *Meher Baba Australia* September 2017 issue is featuring excerpts selected by the author, Sarah McNeill, to introduce the content and purpose of her work.

Its title, 'The Poona Story' begs the question, 'Which?' or 'What?' Poona story – there must be dozens.

In this sense it is a book for Baba lovers for whom there is only one story, that of the birth, early years and work of Avatar Meher Baba. Sarah draws on many sources to reconstruct a picture of those years up until 1922 when Baba left Poona for Bombay. (Her book focuses on this early period, so the glorious days of Guruprasad are not part of the picture.)

This opening account is the first of three. The others will be featured in the December 2017 and March 2018 issues of the magazine.



God alone is Real. All else is illusion. Everything – the universe and all that therein is. The Avatar is God in human form. When Reality takes form in the illusory world, does it somehow become crystallised in illusion, as a diamond takes form in the deepest layers of earth's molten formative geology? The term 'Advent', which usually refers to the period preceding the birth of the Messiah, is used here to identify and describe sequences of events taking place in Poona and India and the rest of the world during the



Meher Baba, 1925.

second half of the nineteenth century and the early years of the twentieth.

These were the decades preceding and following the birth of Merwan Sheriar Irani. The manner, in which details of the birth and manifestation of this Avatar are documented and made available in the pages of *Lord Meher*, is unprecedented. Each and every step or stage in the unimaginable proceedings of transition and transformation is delineated for posterity. Witnessed and written down by Baba's close companions during those early years and reaffirmed by Baba himself, the record of the Avatar's ascent into the state of God-Realisation, and subsequent descent

from that state into his being God-in-Human-Form is not locked away in arcane archives for the eyes of a privileged few, but ever available, ever accessible and ever readable in different languages and now forever downloadable by means of the internet anywhere in the world.

The miracle of the manifestation of the Avatar is brought about by the powers of the five Perfect Masters of the time. Meher Baba Himself said that it is an act of their Love. Such things are beyond human understanding, but the story of the way it happened on this occasion in Poona is recounted in *The Poona Story*. The force of the combined powers of the five Perfect Masters actuates the presence of God on earth in

human form. Age after age, with the timeless timing of an eternal heartbeat, they make this miracle happen, and for the Avatarhood of Meher Baba, it so happened that all five Perfect Masters of the Age established their separate locations each within a day's journey of the city of Poona, with one of them, Hazrat Babajan, actually living in the city close to where young Merwan Irani lived and grew up. In later years, speaking of this recurring Advent, he said,

"Baba wants you to know that He is the Ancient One. Baba is Krishna of Mahabharata, Rama of Ramayana, Jesus of Bethlehem, Buddha of Buddha Gaya, Mohammad of Arabia, Zoroaster of

Persia, and many, many of many, many such Advents of the past and will be the same One of the future of the Earth.” (...)
“My next advent after I drop this body will be after seven hundred years and that will mark the end and the beginning of a cycle of cycles. All cycles of time in illusion end and begin after seven hundred years to fourteen hundred years, and there have been and will be millions and billions of such cycles in a cycle of cycles, thus there is no end to illusion which always remains illusion.” (...)
“My advent is not to destroy illusion because illusion as it is, is absolutely nothing. I come to make you become aware of the nothingness of illusion. Through you I automatically maintain illusion which is nothing but the shadow of my infinite self, and through me, you automatically discard illusion when you are made aware of its falseness.” (From Meher Baba’s Final Declaration)

The Poona Story is an enlivened account of this most significant time in the history of the city of Pune, when the Avatar of the Age took on his predestined role. Thus Part I of the book is titled ‘The Advent’; Parts II and III, titled ‘The Descent’ and ‘The Commencement’ describe the immediate outcomes and the first public unfolding of this momentous happening, all set within the context of the streets and surrounding areas of Poona as it was then.

During the years preceding the birth of Meher Baba, immense new developments were taking place in all spheres of life, and in amongst all the change, pre-echoes of his life and work in the years ahead can be perceived. The backdrop of change and innovation is in fact the context of the most intensely demanding and testing time of his descent from the state of God-Realisation back to normal

human consciousness; and likewise, for the unique and very brief days of the commencement of the earthly work of The Avatar during the time usually referred to as the period of ‘The Poona Jhopdi’. The important sources drawn on in researching and writing *The Poona Story* range from the wellspring of information of *Lord Meher Online* to the remarkable work *Pune, Queen of the Deccan*, (pub.2000, by Jaymala Diddie and Samita Gupta), and with frequent references also to both *Ramjoo’s Diaries* and the (unpublished) diaries of Meher Baba’s childhood friend, Baily. Two brief previews of the text, selected from Part I of the book, give a flavour of the earliest of those bygone days:

The Poona Story (Two extracts from Part I – The Advent)

... in the 1850s, when the Great Indian Peninsular Railway (GIPR) was extended from Bombay to Poona, a contractor by the name of Dorabji (Naigumwala), also a Parsi, was one of several contractors separately involved in masterminding the cutting and blasting of a way across, through and around the jagged rock-face of the Western Ghats; more than forty tunnels had to be dynamited and carved out; it was an ambitious feat of engineering, undertaken when the British Empire was at the height of its supremacy, ruling with scant regard for a workforce made up of countless numbers of Indian labourers doing the low-paid and recklessly dangerous work. Thousands died in the course of completing the immense project. Without any counting of the cost, the seemingly impossible was made to happen and by the end of 1857 the

track-laying was almost done. At the end of the line, one hundred miles away in Poona, local people were agog watching the railroad’s steady progress across the rocky landscape as it appeared from beyond a horizon to the north-west, and coming each day closer to their city. In 1858 they watched with wonder and curiosity as the long-awaited first train could at last be seen approaching the city, progressing smoothly along railway lines which ran from Khadki down past Bamburda village and then across a new bridge over the Sangam. It caused a sensation! A contemporary writer noted, “*For almost a month, people with nothing to do would go and stare at the train. ... some old ladies even greeted the train with a namaskar!*”

... The era of the birth and childhood of young Merwan Sheriar Irani heralded the arrival of many other significant transformational innovations in the city of Poona and its surroundings, not just for his own generation, but for those to come, innovations which spread rapidly throughout India and the rest of the world. Simultaneous with the rapid outreach of the railway network was the development of telegraphy as a new means of communication. Samuel Morse in the United States of America was a leader in this field. He is renowned for having sent a famous four-word message across two miles of wire in 1844: “WHAT HATH GOD WROUGHT”. And in Europe, the year 1894 marked the start made by a young Italian inventor, Giulielmo Marconi, on the first commercial, radio-based wireless telegraphy system. The rapid diversification of new means of communication

Continued on next page

continued throughout this period, reaching forward to undreamt of systems of instantaneous connectivity in the twenty-first century. Such developments bore the unmistakable mark of this Avataric period.

Also in 1894, another marvel of the new age was the production of moving pictures. In Europe that year, the Lumière brothers launched a fully developed version of a prototype developed in the United States by Thomas Edison. The astounding moving pictures were demonstrated to enrapt viewers in Paris that same year by means of the cinematograph, a device specially made by the Lumières for showing 'movies'. Two years later they brought their 'Cinematographe' to the Novelty Theatre in Bombay for 'cinematic exhibitions'. Their travelling theatre, which had only recently been opened by the Baliwala Parsi theatrical company, had such a success with motion pictures in Bombay that a Baliwala movie theatre soon toured cities all over India, including Poona.

Within ten years or so, young Merwan and his friends were going to the Baliwala theatre when it came to town, to watch silent movies. This early stage of film production is now alluded to as 'the silent era' when audiences would be held enrapt by the film actors' on-screen mime and gesture. Shows would customarily be accompanied by live music to create required atmospheric and dramatic effects such as galloping horses or the crash of thunder. And while the city of Bombay was eventually destined to become the Hollywood of India, and Poona itself renowned as a centre for training in cinematic techniques, the whole concept of the movie, with its illusory storyline, its actors and its director would be taken by the future

Avatar as a potent analogy in his own revelation of cosmic illusion.

Still portrait photographs were already an accepted and regular means used to record family groups but the emergence of motion pictures now offered undreamt of potential for experimentation which energised new, creative film production companies and ever more amazing special effects. The repercussions of this wondrous phenomenon were every bit as far-reaching in their impact on future generations as were steam engines and electric power. Similarly, across India, transport, communications and technology, influenced by global developments in the sciences and in the fields of aeronautics and engineering, were all moving fast forwards into the new century.

Even at the most basic level, the very concepts of what had been until then accepted ideas of perceived reality were being challenged and transformed by the work of physicists such as Max Planck, who opened up the new field of quantum mechanics in 1900, and Albert Einstein whose early, Special Theory of Relativity was published in 1915. Simultaneously, new theories challenging the spectrum of received knowledge about the human psyche and consciousness, were formulated and published by Sigmund Freud and Carl Jung. A change-making new era waited in the wings and all the while, in Poona, preparations were well underway for the city to become the crucible for an unimagined transformation of a very different order.

Collage on page 15: Left column from top

India Rail: *A passenger train crossing the Dapoorie Viaduct near Tannah, 1858. By Unknown Publisher: 'Vibart Collection of Views in South India'. Public Domain, Source: <https://commons.wikimedia.org/w/index.php?curid=17254697>*

Moving Pictures: *The world's first film poster, for 1895's L'Arroseur arrosé. By Marcellin Auzolle (1862-1942). Source: <https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?curid=17879355>*

Radio: *British Post Office engineers inspect Marconi's radio equipment during demonstration on Flat Holm Island, 13 May 1897. The transmitter is at center, the coherer receiver below it, the pole supporting the wire antenna is visible at top. By Cardiff Council Flat Holm Project, CC BY 3.0, Source: <https://commons.wikimedia.org/w/index.php?curid=4012156>*

Physics: *Albert Einstein and Max Planck at a dinner given by von Laue in Berlin on 11 November 1931. By Unknown, Public Domain. Source: <https://commons.wikimedia.org/w/index.php?curid=20429360>*

Centre column from top - Meher Baba's Five Perfect Masters Babajan

Sai Baba

Upasni Maharaj

Narayan Maharaj

Tajuddin Baba

Right column from top

India Rail: *Map 1870. Public Domain, Source: <https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/index.php?curid=356326>*

Radio: *Marconi demonstrating apparatus he used in his first long distance radio transmissions in the 1890s. The transmitter is at right, the receiver with paper tape recorder at left. By Published on LIFE © - Public Domain. Source: <https://commons.wikimedia.org/w/index.php?curid=6859297>*

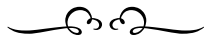
Telegraph: *Morse with his recorder, photograph taken by Mathew Brady in 1857. By Mathew Brady - Christies, Public Domain. Source: <https://commons.wikimedia.org/w/index.php?curid=38194372>*

Three discourses Meher Baba gave during His 1956 visit to Australia continued from page 11

was not in His power and miracles, but in His humility in being crucified. His humility was His true greatness. “

And finally, “Deny your false self and your Real-Self asserts itself. Ask for nothing and you get everything. Renounce everything to such an extent that you eventually renounce even renunciation”.

Meher Baba. Copyright AMBPPCT.



WORRY

Baba said, “Don’t worry. Worry accumulates and grows in strength, becomes a habit long after the original cause has ceased to be.” (After asking one his age), He said, “When you were young, this and that happened, you cried, you felt sad, and worry began, and after 50 years you still worry, although the time when worry began in you has gone. If another 50 years passes you could at the end of that time be still worrying about something which was happening now. It is crazy”.

“You worry now about some condition, yet you have experienced all conditions. You have been blind, sick, poor, old, young, beautiful, ugly. You worry about your children—you have had numberless children, and they have had numberless parents and children. You worry about your job—you have been in every sort of occupation. You worry about your wife—you have had so many wives. You have been everything and experienced all conditions, and yet you worry about the slightest thing that happens to you”.

“Everything emanates from Me but is not real. If you were dreaming and I appeared in your dream and told you that you were dreaming, it is not real, you would say, ‘Baba, I am enjoying these things, I know they are real.’ It is hard to understand. In your awake dream, I tell you now, nothing is real, so don’t worry. How to stop? Think of Me. Love Me. Christ said with divine authority, ‘Your sins are forgiven’; and I say with divine authority, “Love Me, and your worries will vanish”.

“Reality is impossible to describe—it is difficult to attain. One in a million becomes a lover of God and of a million lovers, one gets Realisation. It sounds impossible. Baba says, you have an opportunity because I am here with you and I say, ‘Love Me’.”

Meher Baba. Copyright AMBPPCT.



Di Holmes (the rabbit) and John Isaacs-Young (the horse) performing THE TALE OF THE HORSE AND THE RABBIT by Francis Brabazon, part of an item at this year’s Anniversary by Raine & Friends – “Musical presentation about Francis Brabazon in Australia after 1969”. Photos by Mehera Moroney. This skit was performed for the mandali by Bill and Michael Le Page, Roy Hayes, and George McGabey in Guruprasad, Pune, India on 16th May, 1969.

Avatar's Abode 59th Anniversary

Friday 9th – Monday 12th June 2017

Welcome talk given by Mehera Moroney

For those of you who don't know, my name is Mehera Moroney and I am very privileged to welcome you all to this year's Anniversary of Beloved Meher Baba's visit to this property 59 years ago.

I am lucky enough to have attended around 40 Anniversaries (possibly more) my first one in 1971 when I was just 6 months old and each and every time the Anniversary nears, I can feel the excitement and anticipation building.

It may be the thought of seeing all of my wonderful

friends again...

It may be the longing for some time spent at this peaceful and beautiful property...

It may be the desire to step away from the busy and bustling world for a weekend...

There is always that something that draws us in... Something special... not always tangible BUT ALWAYS there... The Grace of Beloved Meher Baba...

I have so many wonderful memories and feelings from Anniversaries past... I have compiled a bit of a list...

Avatar's Abode	Anniversaries	Arti	Angels	
Baba	Bunk House	Blacksmith	Badminton	Brufords
Children	Craft	Cushions	Coffee	
Dinner	Dhuni	Difficult Journeys	Dancing	Darshan
Entertainers	Entertainment	Evolution		
Francis	Flowers	Films	Flag	Fellowship & Friendship
Garlands	God (Speaks)	God is Love Guitars	Ghazals	Guests
Hugs	The Hobbit	Hay Rides	Hospitals	Humour
Indians Visiting	Invitations	Involution	Impressions	Impersonators
Jai Baba	Joy	Johanna's Childrens Time		June
Ki Jai	Kerosene Heaters	Knitting	Kiel Mountain	
Love	Lunches Shared	Laughter	Lingering Longer	
Music	Mud	Monkey Magic	Memories	Mandali
Night Walks	Nightingale	Nursery Rhymes	New Life	
O Pravardigar	O Glorious Eternal	Ancient One	Ocean of Love	Outdoor Stage
Prasad	Pardon Me Boys	Picnic Lunches	the Program	Plays
Queensland	Queen's Birthday	Quizzes	Questions	Quiet
Roses	Remove Shoes	Raine Richard Lockwood & Thompson	Registration	Roy & Ros
Singing	Saris	Spotlight in the Dark	Supper	Sam Saunders
Thriller	Talks	Tents	Time	Silence
Umbrellas	Unbelievable	Uniqueness	Unequal	Tile Painting
Volleyball	Videos	Visitors	the View	
Welcoming	Warming Up	Washing Up	Woombye	Walks
eXcellence	eXcitement	eXhuberant	eXperiences	boXes
Monsior Yvan	Youthful Energy	Yogis & Yugas		Workshops
Zoroaster	Ghazals	Zany	Zombies...Thriller reference	Zero Ego Required!!

Although our paths may differ our purpose is the same... to be here at Avatar's Abode to keep company with The Beloved. Avatar Meher Baba Ki Jai!

Regarding Pilgrimage

Eruch Jessawala
19 August 1994

We His lovers, must not forget why we come to Meherabad in the first place. Meherabad is a place of Holy Pilgrimage. It is not a vacation spot, resort or retreat. It behooves each pilgrim blessed to cross His Threshold, to accept all conditions of their pilgrimage as the *prasad* given to them by their Beloved Lord.

To have one's pilgrimage accepted by the Lord is no easy task, for it means more than to merely bow down at His Samadhi. We must accept wholeheartedly any and all trials and tribulations that may beset us during our pilgrimage, knowing full well, that these very difficulties when happily accepted without reservation or expectation mark His acceptance of our pilgrimage.

Doubly blessed is the pilgrim who, in spite of all hardships, remains cheerfully resigned to the conditions of his pilgrimage.

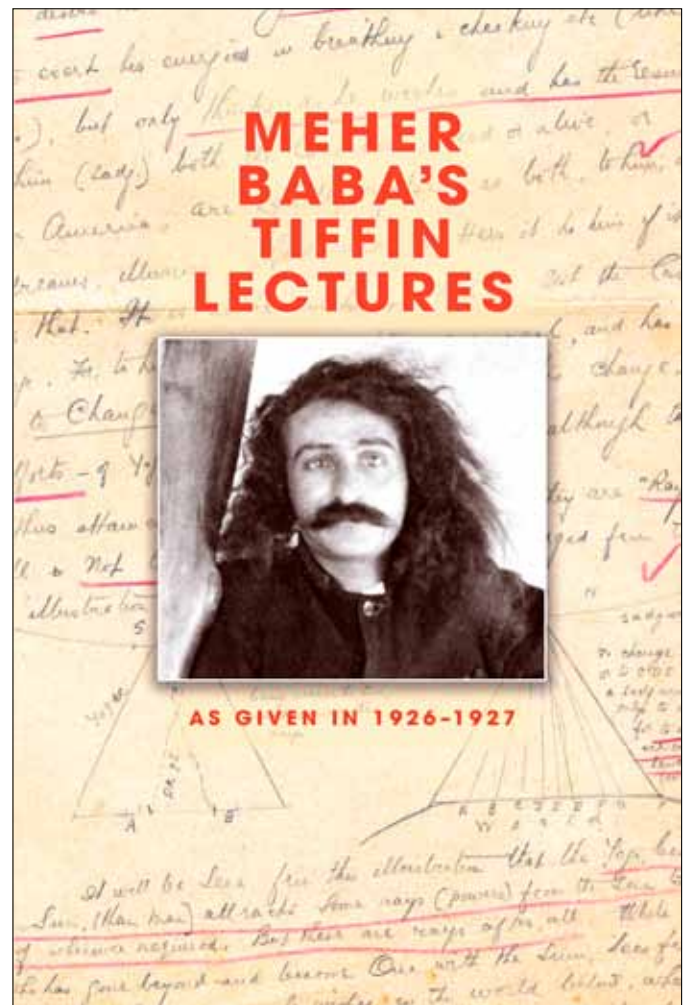
And yet, Beloved Avatar Meher Baba, in His Infinite Compassion and Benevolence, has made our pilgrimage so comfortable and easy that we have forgotten all that He Himself, as Man amongst men, suffered throughout His Ministry to awaken His love in our hearts.

Dear brothers and sisters, we have been blessed to receive His gift of love, now it is time for us to return that love by dissolving all expectations, reservations and desires in total gratitude and resignation to His Will.

With warm regards in Love and Service of our Beloved Lord Avatar Meher Baba.

Yours lovingly,
Eruch

Source: <http://www.avatarmeherbaba.org/erics/regpilg.html>



Avatar's Abode Bookstore

The long-anticipated *Meher Baba's Tiffin Lectures* has now become available. More than twenty years in the making, *Meher Baba's Tiffin Lectures* is a record of dictations given over a seventeen-month period, from April 1926 through August 1927.

This beautiful 690-page hardcover edition includes more than sixty photographs, as well as introductory anecdotes that give context to each lecture.

More than thirty full-color illustrations based on diagrams given at the time by Baba are accompanied by reproductions of the original diagrams from the manuscript. *Meher Baba's Tiffin Lectures* also includes an extensive Glossary and an Index.

Avatar's Abode Bookstore (non profit) retail price is AUD \$110 (plus your choice of postage)

Email: avatarsabodebookstore@gmail.com

Winter 2017 - archives update

David Bowling – Archive Committee Convenor

Over the winter further progress has been made in managing the large and priceless collection of archival documents, publications, photos, film, records, artworks and audio tapes at Avatar's Abode in preparation for making the collection more widely available to the Baba family worldwide. In reviewing the past 12 months much has been achieved:

- Over a dozen volunteers have been trained to assist with the many different areas of work.
- Approximately 80% of Francis' document collection (approximately 11,000 documents) has been rehoused into 21 archival boxes.
- With the use of a high end digital scanner donated to the archives, scanning has commenced to digitise the collection into pdf format including into a searchable pdf format where the original has typed content.
- A transcription team have developed a comprehensive style manual and commenced transcribing Francis' handwritten letters.
- The small archive room of the library has been completely sorted with a 4 bay compactus storage unit installed and this is now nearly full.
- 750 books, 10 sets of periodicals, 42 sets of periodicals, and 342 pamphlets have been archived and sorted.



Carolyn Montague (at right) trying out the new scanner with Eve Plant (left) and Glenda Hobson (far left) working on rehousing documents from the Avatar's Abode Trust collection. Photo by David Bowling.

- A small team have learnt how to make archival support boards to better display our extensive collection of artefacts.
- 95 films have been catalogued and double bagged ready for freezing.
- Over 1000 hours of volunteer time has been logged on archives work.
- Scanning and database entry of photos in the Avatar's Abode collection has continued and now totals over 1600 and photos are being prepared for uploading to the Avatar's Abode website.
- The vinyl record collection has been cleaned and re-sleeved and cataloguing of a significant part of the collection has been completed.
- Volunteers continue to capably manage the Francis Brabazon library with over 5000 titles.

This has been an excellent start to a more intensive phase of work as we seek to preserve and make this priceless collection accessible to Baba lovers throughout Australia and overseas. Receipt of an unexpected significant donation from overseas will be used to support the preservation and sharing of the collection.

Would you like to help?

We are looking for volunteers who could assist with rehousing, scanning, assessing scanned documents, transcription and detailed cataloguing of documents. The rehousing and scanning work is done in the bookstore with a small group of 2 to 4 people. Assessment of scanned documents and transcribing can be done from home. If you would like to volunteer please **contact David Bowling on 0414 739 640 or email: avatarsabodearchives@gmail.com**

Marijuana and Meher Baba: Secular considerations with a spiritual twist

Allan Y. Cohen, Ph.D

[Biographical Note: Allan Cohen was one of the first of several young Baba-lovers in the mid-1960s to be asked by Meher Baba to teach others that drug use is not an authentic path to spirituality. In the course of carrying out Baba's directives, Allan began a four-decade career in substance abuse prevention, as a clinical psychologist, author, researcher-evaluator, theoretician, university professor, administrator, and media spokesman. He is a nationally recognised expert on substance abuse prevention and treatment, specialising in issues involving "psychedelic" or "hallucinogenic" drugs.]



Dr. Allan Y. Cohen.

Introduction for Australian Companions in Baba

It was my great privilege to join the Spring Sahavas at Avatar's Abode in 2014, delightfully implemented by talented volunteers. Videographers and editors have worked diligently to produce and edit video versions of those talks, which can now be accessed through the Internet on YouTube.

During that visit to Australia, I was also hosted in Sydney and Melbourne by gracious Baba-lovers. On the "drug education" front: In Queensland, Charmaine Foley arranged a radio interview and newspaper article, focusing mostly on the drug issue with a mention of Baba.

Charmaine also connected me with the National ABC radio program: "The Spirit of Things". Presented from Sydney by Dr Rachael Kohn, the interview focused on my experiences of the psychedelic past. It went so well

that she invited me back the next day to complete an entire hour, just as I was leaving for New Zealand. That national broadcast, "After Psychedelics, Faith", included sections about Meher Baba and about marijuana etc. It is accessible for download on the Internet at <http://www.abc.net.au/radionational/programs/spiritofthings/after-psychedelics2c--faith/5848054>

Whilst in Sydney, I also visited the Director of Australia's National Cannabis Prevention and Information Centre (NCPIC) at the University of NSW. We had an excellent chat about the situation in Australia and strategies for cannabis education and abuse prevention. As an aside, the Australian effort is much more advanced than that in the US.

The essay below was developed in response to questions on marijuana posed by American Baba-lovers and was edited further for *Meher Baba Australia* in July 2017.

Interest in the Marijuana Issue

Baba-lovers have shown an increasing interest in the "marijuana" issue, for themselves, their children, and society as a whole. Here are some sample communications I received recently.

Question: *With marijuana slowly but surely becoming a legal recreational drug (in several USA states and internationally), what message are young (and some older) Baba people given as its use becomes mainstream?*

Question: *Outside of Meher Baba saying so, what is your main argument against legalisation? I do not support it, but I have a difficult time when others (non-Meher Baba folks) ask me about this, which they actually do often. My argument often breaks down on economic/cartel diminishment/libertarian rationales.*

Question: *What about medical marijuana. Wouldn't that be OK for Baba-lovers?*



I found myself writing and speaking more about the marijuana issue, sometimes to Baba-lovers and sometimes to the general public. For this brief essay, I hoped it might be useful to respond to frequent questions and to integrate Meher Baba's messages on the subject with the latest credible research. Needless

to say, along with its spiritual implications, this is a complex issue, for both public health and criminal justice policy.

Readers will not be surprised to know that Meher Baba's statements about drugs anticipated some 50+ years of scientific and clinical research. He knew that drug abuse would continue to be a problem. As we explore below, Meher Baba articulated specific harms emanating from psychoactive drugs, especially relevant now for the issue of recreational and medical use. His unprecedented direct and public intervention in the 1960s successfully ended most of the fantasy that psychedelic drugs (LSD, mescaline, psilocybin, and cannabis extracts) could generate spiritual advancement.

He was also very concerned about the mental and physical damage that drugs could cause, especially psychedelics and cannabis derivatives (marijuana, hashish, etc.).

Confusion about Cannabis

The case of marijuana is particularly timely. The implications of marijuana legalisation for recreational and medical use require us to cover a critical piece of the science of the matter. Neither secular policymakers nor 95% of the so-called drug experts understand the real nature of the issue. *Laws, policies, or opinions on "marijuana" or "cannabis" cannot be rational without taking into consideration its primary active ingredients.*

The term "marijuana" is actually very imprecise. Marijuana is a very crudely prepared substance comprised of the dried leaves, small stems, and flowers of the Cannabis Sativa plant.

Cannabis in all of its forms contains unique chemicals, among which are substances called cannabinoids. Cannabinoids have biological activity and have been the subject of thousands of research studies since the 1970s. Of greatest relevance is one particular chemical—delta-9 tetrahydrocannabinol, better known as **THC**. THC is the active psychedelic (hallucinogenic) chemical in cannabis plants and their extracts (e.g., hashish, "wax", and "shatter"). As a psychedelic drug, THC is reasonably powerful. For example, measured by the gram, although less potent than LSD, THC is more potent than mescaline. From a clinical point of view, **THC is equivalent to LSD-25, mescaline, and psilocybin**. In other words, depending on dosage, the effects of these drugs on consciousness are quite similar. Most users of marijuana have not experienced the dramatic effects of the other psychedelics because the content of THC has been relatively low. That has been changing—"old-time" marijuana contained perhaps 5% THC; the newer cannabis products can contain upward of 50% THC. It is already well documented that, for example, marijuana overdoses create "bad trips" that appear to differ little from LSD ("acid") bad trips.

The Effects of THC in Cannabis Products

Hundreds of scientific studies have shown a wide range of health problems stemming from long-term cannabis use, the impact likely being primarily from its THC content — including the increased probability of psychosis; brain, lung, and cardiovascular damage; cognitive deterioration; and a host of other

physical and mental disorders. Of additional concern is the danger of THC ingestion during pregnancy. All of these studies, primarily of marijuana use, would have been even more powerful if they could have precisely accounted for the amount of THC ingested.

One unique but particularly nasty characteristic of THC is that it binds to fat cells and stays in the body, with traces measurable for up to a year after last use. Thus, a seemingly moderate amount of regular recreational use of marijuana can build up a substantial presence of THC and THC metabolites in body tissues, increasing actual amounts in the body over time. Some studies suggest that stress can bring about the release of these stored chemicals and produce LSD-like "flashbacks."

An important agreement among researchers and clinicians (even if they support marijuana legalisation) is the estimate that 9% to 11% of marijuana users will become chemically and/or psychologically dependent upon THC, including the tendency to develop "tolerance," requiring either higher doses or more frequent use.

Chemically dependent users will swear they are fine. Indeed, cannabis (THC) "addicts" tend to be more in denial of their dependency than alcoholics or heroin addicts. THC actually inhibits the feedback function of the brain, exemplified by the difficulty cannabis users have in perceiving their dependency or excessive craving. Cannabis is well known for producing an "*a-motivational syndrome*", sometimes interpreted by users as simply being "mellow" about life.

Trying to justify the legalisation of

Continued on next page

recreational use, proponents argue that “marijuana” is not very harmful. Because they do not understand the differential effects of the chemicals in cannabis, they mislead the public.

Cannabis plants can be bred to maximise THC content, especially for edible use (candy bars, cookies, etc.). In states that have legalised marijuana, cannabis “edibles” comprise a large proportion of sales. With edibles, overdoses are much more likely to occur and considerably more likely to be mistakenly consumed by young kids.

The black market is busy extracting THC and converting it into other forms (e.g., “shatter” and other products delivering extremely high amounts of THC). From a clinical perspective, of particular concern is the capacity of THC to hide its effects from the user.

The few public health experts who understand the science, object strongly to the legalisation of “marijuana” for recreational use, particularly because of the serious threats to mental and physical health, especially for children and teenagers. The American Academy of Pediatrics just released a report (February 2017) warning of the harm to teens’ developing brains and opposing use by youth. Research is very clear about the greater side effects of THC on kids with developing brains, through both second-hand smoke and access to edible products.

Relevant to the possible impact of “second-hand smoke,” a very recent study of children admitted to the hospital for bronchial problems showed THC residue in all of the children with parents who smoked marijuana. (In parallel, while visiting Australia, I chatted with a Baba-lover high up in the national organisation

responsible for training service dogs for the blind. He told me that the effect of second-hand marijuana smoke was seriously disorienting the dogs and mitigating their performance.)

In general, the legalisation of marijuana for recreational use, by enhancing availability and suggesting it is safe, tends to increase use by kids, whether through smoking, “vaping,” or consuming edibles. Regarding smoke, I might mention also that marijuana smoke produces more carcinogens (including pesticides) than tobacco smoke.

“Medical Marijuana” – Pluses and Minuses

First, let’s look at the issues involving legalised medical marijuana. It is true that Meher Baba stated that psychedelic drugs could be used appropriately for certain medical conditions, including depression and alcoholism, combined with (competent) medical supervision (see *God in a Pill?*). Indeed, you may have read about recent experimentation with psilocybin for depression and post-traumatic stress disorder. Also, the American Food and Drug Administration have licensed some synthetic cannabinoids (e.g., Marinol and Nabilone) for specific medical conditions. So, you might think that legalising marijuana for legitimate medical reasons under competent medical supervision is not a problem. However, again, most advocates and detractors of legalised medical marijuana also miss the central distinction between the harmful effects of THC and the possible beneficial effects of another constituent of the cannabis plant.

Another of the many chemicals in

the cannabis plant is an extractable cannabinoid, known popularly as “CBD.” This chemical is not hallucinogenic. You may be familiar with promising research that showed CBD as helpful for certain medical conditions, importantly without the mental/emotional side effects of THC. Unfortunately, most policymakers don’t understand the difference between THC and CBD.

Thus, medical marijuana laws allow prescribers to send their patients to purchase ordinary marijuana (containing THC and other undesirable chemicals). Some patients swear that ordinary marijuana helps them with physical symptoms, but getting high from THC is likely not what’s helping them. The CBD is more likely the positive factor. Fortunately, increasingly available are low-THC cannabis plants, as well as CBD oil, virtually free of THC. As one expert (Carlton Turner, former USA Drug Czar) phrased it, “To argue that the ‘natural’ plant form of marijuana should be used in preference to FDA-approved marijuana derivatives is like telling a mother whose child is suffering from a bacterial infection that she should offer her child moldy bread instead of penicillin.” Israeli scientists, who have done a great deal of research with cannabis, are horrified that American medical use has no standards for dosage, quality, or protocols to prevent misuse and dependence.

The lesson here is that Baba-lovers or their friends who are validly prescribed cannabis for a known condition will be able to avoid the harmful THC by insisting on a prescription for CBD. If a cannabis extract has been demonstrated scientifically for their specific medical

condition, and pure CBD is not available, they might best select cannabis with the lowest possible THC content. Obviously, it is wise to beware of uneducated physicians and greedy marijuana retailers who are not well schooled in the science and may be interested mostly in economic gain.

Meher Baba and the Significance of the Drug Issue

Meher Baba's attention to drug abuse and the importance of its prevention is quite remarkable. Indeed, it appears to be the only social-political intervention that Meher Baba publicly sponsored, certainly from 1964 through late 1968. There is not space here to summarise all the statements that Meher Baba made about the impacts of psychedelic drugs (including marijuana), their disadvantages for his followers, seekers in general, and their implications for society. A comprehensive source of Meher Baba's statements about drugs can be found in the small paperback *A Mirage Will Never Quench Your Thirst: A Source of Wisdom about Drugs*, edited by Laurent Weichberger, with prefaces by Rick Chapman, Allan Cohen, and Robert Dreyfuss (available through Amazon and some Meher Baba bookstores). Relevant statements appear also in the broader Meher Baba literature: e.g., *Lord Meher; God in a Pill?; Glow International* (Summer 2017); in videos of Baba (e.g., *Beyond Words*, 1997, filmed in 1967); as well as in Baba's personal communications to individual lovers. They all contain warnings to his lovers about drug misuse in general and psychedelic drugs in particular, including specific mention of cannabis products (marijuana, ganja, and hashish).

Beyond the Physical

Baba's statements articulated the spiritual harmfulness of psychedelic-type drugs, especially the false nature of so-called spiritual experiences they generate. And we know from Meher Baba's specific statements that the misuse of psychedelic substances can produce significant physical, emotional, and cognitive harm. Even more, there are hints in his statements that the drugs have dangers beyond their mere gross-world consequences. One such problem is highlighted in Meher Baba's *Discourses*, from material discussing the phenomenon of attempted "possession" by frustrated discarnate souls (commonly called "spirits") who seek physical sensations driven by sanskaras of craving remaining after their physical death. Baba uses this illustration: *Thus the soul may want so much to drink wine that it takes to unnatural methods of gratifying the craving. It awaits its opportunity. When it finds some person drinking wine in the gross world it satisfies its own desire through that person by possessing his physical body.* (*Discourses*, vol. 3, p. 56). Consistent with my own and colleagues' clinical observation of certain patients, we have reason to speculate that THC and other psychedelics generate an increased openness to spirits seeking to re-experience sensations through a living person's body, at the least urging them to drink more or use more drugs.

Obviously, Meher Baba knew the full nature of drug effects on the more astral and subtle aspects of users' consciousness. Stimulated by what Baba wrote, in the late 1960s, while I was at UC Berkeley, I and professional colleagues helped

coordinate a confidential scientific study, with the informal cooperation of a regional office of the federal Drug Enforcement Agency (DEA). Results from the study suggested that apparently skilled "psychics" or 'clairvoyants' could distinguish marijuana users from non-users simply by observing the existence of "holes in their auric fields." (Needless to say, a DEA pharmacologist, who was watching one particularly dramatic demonstration, was extremely surprised.) From the esoteric literature, we know that when the boundaries between gross and astral consciousness are blown open prematurely, considerable damage can be done, manifesting in loss of both emotional and mental control. It may be many years, perhaps decades, before these non-gross impacts are taken seriously by academics in the substance-abuse field. But they were no secret to Meher Baba.

Meher Baba's Guidance on Marijuana Predicts Current Science

To make it very simple, from both a scientific and a spiritual view, aspirants following Meher Baba can consider the THC in marijuana as essentially equivalent to LSD, mescaline, and psilocybin. In the same way that postage stamps can be a delivery system for LSD, that peyote cactus can be a delivery system for mescaline, and that the psilocybe mushroom can be a delivery system for psilocybin, so is marijuana a delivery system for THC. Meher Baba's analysis of the dangers of the psychoactive ingredient in marijuana is totally consistent with his warnings about LSD and other psychedelics, as well as with

Continued on next page

his specifications of exceptions for legitimate medical applications.

Policy Implications: Public Health and the Criminal Justice System

Turning back to questions and comments from Baba-lovers cited in the beginning of this essay, let's briefly discuss policy. Given the confusion in the general population and medical fields, you won't be surprised to learn that national, state and provincial policies and laws involving cannabis are universally flawed; they don't account for the difference between the cannabis plant and its extractable chemicals.

Analogically, we know that it would be nearsighted to try to regulate opiate use by criminalising or legalising the growing of poppies without focusing on heroin as the extractable product. So, the real public health policy question is not whether "marijuana" should be available for adult recreational use, but whether THC should be so easily obtained. Would it be wise to make LSD, mescaline, and psilocybin available recreationally? Whatever one's opinion, THC deserves to be part of that mix.

Even without the understanding of the THC/CBD issue, there are very few advocates on any side of the issue who believe persons should be jailed simply for the personal use of cannabis products. The strategy of deterrence may have had some impact, but the damage created by earning a criminal record for personal private use is arguably disproportional. Absent a clear differentiation between THC and other constituents, many responsible opponents of full legalisation recommend that "marijuana" be *decriminalised*, with

personal use in public and minor possession treated as a civil, not criminal, infraction, much like a serious traffic ticket.

Why *any* infraction? They argue that, without some civil sanction (even a mere \$25 fine) and potential judicial oversight, there is no leverage to get vulnerable users into educational programs or assessment, counseling, or treatment. For more serious drug-related offenses, the growing deployment of "drug courts" appears to be quite successful, featuring compassionate judges who are able to exonerate offenders of serious drug-related crimes if the offender goes through comprehensive rehabilitation. (Obviously, illegal sales or misuse of any hallucinogen in impaired driving, drug-induced violence, sexual assault, etc., would likely remain under the current criminal justice system.)

In general, societies in the Western world are moving toward seeing drug abuse (and alcohol abuse) as a public health rather than a criminal justice problem. The public health approach features education and prevention, early intervention, and access to treatment, simultaneously making the environment less conducive to use and abuse.

Economics and the Cartels

Returning to a specific concern expressed by one of the questioners above, it is tempting to think that full legalisation of recreational marijuana frustrates the black market and necessarily reduces the influence of the Latin American (or other international) drug cartels. But even now, cartel surrogates are likely to become hidden investors in the burgeoning marijuana industry.

True, the cartels are becoming less interested in cross-border marijuana smuggling. On the other hand, they are expanding the sponsoring of illicit US-based cannabis farmers to grow cheaper marijuana for the black market. Also, look for criminal influences behind the trafficking of newer high-THC edibles and "synthetic marijuana."

Proponents of outright legalisation also boast about the great "tax benefit" to governments. Well, tax revenues may seem robust at first, but they will be eventually exhausted due to the need for more resources down the road — emergency room admissions, treatment facilities, the loss of productivity in the workforce, co-occurring mental disorders, and higher medical costs.

I should mention also that I haven't forgotten the Libertarian concern raised by one of my correspondents. Ah yes, if only we could assure all that drug-induced deficits would *ONLY* affect the individual user and not harm anyone else. Not so — chemical dependency is bad news for spouses, families, employers, and health care providers.

The Vulnerability of the Young

I must report with some sadness an alarming increase in marijuana and opioid use among young Baba-lovers and children of Baba-lovers. I have talked with too many parents in severe pain and helplessness over their late-adolescent and early-adult children caught in the mire of addiction. Predictably, many Baba-lover parents had no knowledge of what was happening until the progression of dependency in their children passed a critical point. Histories are similar —

experimental use of cannabis, alcohol, and prescription pills; smoking heroin (cheaper than prescription opioids); and ultimately injecting heroin. Contrary to the fashionable mantras, marijuana (THC) has proven to be a “gateway drug.” The relationship is not inevitable but there is new research suggesting that neurochemical changes caused by THC can predispose consequent craving for other psychoactive drugs. Of course, psychologically, when the THC high becomes less and less satisfying, looking for a better high can be a serious temptation.

In his statements about drugs, Meher Baba showed particular empathy for youth and “the student world,” and implied a special effort to educate them (e.g. in *‘God in a Pill?’*). Current data already suggest that laws legalising the recreational use of “marijuana” reduce the perception of risk among the young, even if underage use is still considered illegal. From a more optimistic perspective, the emergent evidence of harmful effects on the young will undoubtedly highlight the importance of the problem and force intelligent education and treatment for those who might be afflicted. As a society, we will not be able to ignore the problem.

Meher Baba’s Compassion

For Baba-lovers, it may help to remember that Meher Baba is not being “judgmental” on this issue. A history of drug use or dope smoking never disqualified anyone from retaining their essential divinity nor from following Meher Baba’s path. Still, in his universal compassion, Avatar Meher Baba gave

us extraordinarily relevant guidance about drug-related problems in the 1960s, offering prescient and sophisticated information for the future decades. His guidance and wisdom gifted us not only with a cosmic perspective on how to think about this issue but also suggested ways of to be of loving service whenever possible. Kudos to all of you in Australia and New Zealand for helping Baba’s campaign, whether through your personal experience or by helping others. Jai Baba!

Allan Cohen

P.S. I apologise for the limitations of this mini-discussion, If readers or their friends have further questions or wish to pursue links to the scientific literature that supports my statements, I am happy to try to respond and/or direct you to some very compelling sources. (aycohen@aol.com)

P.S. *The Spirit of Things*, presented by Dr Rachael Kohn, explores contemporary values and beliefs focusing on the nature of spiritual meaning in our lives.

<http://www.abc.net.au/radionational/programs/spiritofthings/>

Once you arrive at the Spirit of Things page, type *After Psychedelics, Faith* into the search box and hit enter. Once you arrive at the After Psychedelics Faith listing, you can download the audio as an MP3 (24.87 MB)

P.S. Patricia Arora lovingly transcribed that program and we plan to make a transcript available with appropriate credits to ABC.

P.S. ‘Vaping’ is not safe either – <https://www.sciencenewsforstudents.org/article/concerns-explode-over-new-health-risks-vaping>

A Mirage Will Never Quench Your Thirst



A SOURCE
OF WISDOM
ABOUT DRUGS

Compiled & Edited by Laurent Weichberger

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A Source of Wisdom about Drugs

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Paperback 170 pp

Available from
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This pocket-size format of a compilation of all Meher Baba’s quotes on the spiritual implications of using drugs of any kind includes the full collection of quotes by Baba from the original *God in a Pill?*.

With several first person accounts by former users as well as sources of additional information, this new booklet will be an invaluable source of inspiration for those who seek help in understanding the spiritual truth about the effects of using drugs.

A Hindu archetype

Peter Rowan

As there are no antecedents on which to base judgement, it is difficult for the Western mind to conceptualise a figure such as the Hindu deity Dattatreya, let alone understand his role and function in the vast mazes of India's spiritual archetypes.

To my knowledge, Avatar Meher Baba never mentioned Dattatreya by name, but there was a wonderful occasion in 1949 when Beloved Baba did associate Himself with this ancient figure of manifestation, and as the Perfect Masters Narayan Maharaj and Upasni Maharaj were very closely associated with Dattatreya during their lifetimes, I will attempt to explore the significance of this enigmatic deity and place him in a context of understanding.

Those who have studied the lives of the five Perfect Masters may be aware that Narayan Maharaj received Realisation through Dattatreya and not a living Master, but I believe it will surprise many, that Sadguru Upasni Maharaj built a temple dedicated to Dattatreya at Sakori in 1925.

During my extensive travels throughout India, I have found that Dattatreya is not a prominent figure, and is more likely to be found in obscure places associated with saints



Dattatreya, Sakori Ashram, Maharashtra, India. Sakori Ashram and Ek Mukhi Datta Temple in Narayanpur are two places in the world where you can find a Dattatreya Idol with single face unlike other places where you will find Dattatreya idol with three faces. Sakori ashram is also the only place where poojas, homas are performed by ladies which is not the practice in other parts of the world.

Image source: <http://www.saiamrithadhara.com/sakori.html>

and ashrams, rather than in temples in general where such figures as Shiva or Vishnu or Shakti preponderate. Nevertheless, though not common, Dattatreya can be observed in many places if one takes the trouble to find him.

Initially I was a puzzled by his feminine countenance, coiffured hair,

petite stature and young age suggestive of eternal youth, and generally I found him to be portrayed in white marble with pastel colour embellishments, with three identical heads and six arms holding symbolic objects not unlike Vishnu.

It is probable that Dattatreya is the most misunderstood deity in the Hindu pantheon, even though he may embody the attributes of Brahma Vishnu and Shiva as the pandits tell us, I believe this equation confuses rather than amplifies his true nature and function.

When we consider that the God-Realisation of Narayan Maharaj was through Dattatreya and not a living master¹, we must ask ourselves how this came about, and even though the answer cannot be told simply, we must surmise Dattatreya does in fact manifest and become the living guru for the devotee who is in total circumspection toward him.

Possibly this hypothesis is not readily acceptable to many Meher Baba devotees, as we have been told by Avatar Meher Baba that generally one must have a living master for Realisation, yet, also according to our Beloved, there are exceptions to the rule.



Dattatreya Temple on the topmost peak, Girnar Hills Saurashtra, Gujarat India. Photo by Sachinvenga. Source: Wikipedia.

As a perfect example of this, the phenomena of manifestation by Khizr comes to mind from Islamic cosmology, Avatar Meher Baba has told us clearly that it was Khizr who gave Francis of Assisi full gnosis of Realisation, even though Francis did not have a living Master.² Also, we could ponder on the details which Baba has given us concerning the Realisation of Sai Baba, whom Beloved Baba said was given the seed of Realisation seven hundred years before his birth as Sai by Zarzari Zar Baksh.³ These examples demonstrate most succinctly that exceptions do take place, dependant on the circumstances.

In my view, Dattatreya for the Hindu, plays the same role and function as a means of Realisation or illumination as Khizr does for the Sufi, but he is not necessarily synonymous with Khizr, and has his own archetypal identity.

In Hindu esotericism Dattatreya is termed, 'the first yogi' and 'spiritual father of all yogis', and ultimately

the 'Lord of Yoga'. Whereas Khizr, in the tradition of the Sufis, is known as the Eternal Life Prophet taught by Archangel Gabriel.

When Upasni Maharaj built a temple at Sakori to honour Dattatreya in 1925, he immediately installed framed images of Sai Baba and himself, and then, also in the main sanctum, he installed an impression of the feet of Sai Baba, Upasni then stood on the feet. It would therefore appear clear, that symbolically, Upasni was conveying there was no difference between Dattatreya, Sai Baba and himself.

Sometime later a marble image of Dattatreya was also placed in the sanctum, which while being carved had been supervised by Upasni. This most unusual representation of Dattatreya has six arms and one head, and is dressed in gunnysack exactly as Upasni used to wear. It therefore appears obvious once again, that Upasni was clearly demonstrating that Dattatreya and he were synonymous.⁴

Manifestation by deities such as Shiva or Vishnu, has a long history in India, but unlike these figures who have endless names and attributes and function in both male and female forms, Dattatreya remains singularly himself, and functions primarily in the context of being available as the loving guru to his bhakta.

In relatively recent times I can cite two unquestionably truthful occasions where Dattatreya has manifested to earnest devotees.

In a very wonderful book titled *The Holy Mountain*,⁵ we read of a genuine sanyasin named Bhagwan Shri Hamsa in 1908 receiving initiation and illumination from Dattatreya on holy Mount Kailash. Francis Brabazon quotes directly from Shri Hamsa's book of this glorious occasion, in *Stay With God*.⁶

Another very beautiful book, titled *An Indian Monk*,⁷ is once again a perfectly realised occasion for another devotee of Dattatreya, Purohit Swami, who gives a sublime soul

stirring account of his life in search of Dattatreya, and its wonderful consummation on Datta Mount in the Girnar hills of Saurashtra.

Shri Purohit Swami also tells very movingly, in the same book, about a darshan he had with Narayan Maharaj in Bombay.⁸

The name Dattatreya has a more than interesting etymology; Datta means 'that which is given' and Atreya means 'the son of Atri', who it is said is one of the original seven Rishis of the Vedas, and born of Brahma's mind.⁹

I mentioned earlier that Khizr and Dattatreya can hold a similar if not the same function, and this was born out a few years ago, when I visited the shrine of a Sufi saint named Baba Buden on a Mount of the same name in Karnataka in South India. Avatar Meher Baba had been to the cave dargah of this saint twice, in 1936 and 1940.¹⁰

My surprise at its somewhat inhospitable terrain was further enhanced, when going down to the dargah I saw an old sign in the local language, and another rustic sign in English which read 'Dattatreya Baba Buden Giri'.

Like Dattatreya, 'Giri' is Hindu in every respect, and means 'he who is like a mountain' and refers to an order of initiates of Dattatreya. Even though Baba Buden was a Muslim Sufi it would appear he belonged to this order of Dattatreya.

I have made mention of Datta Mount in the Girnar Hills of Saurashtra, where the main object of pilgrimage in these rambling hills is Dattatreya's Temple perched splendidly on a sharply defined peak.

To get to this isolated peak of Datta, one must climb about 10,000 stone cut steps up hill and down valley.

A few years back Ananda and I

managed about 6,000 of the steps, but not having the necessary urgency of the Hindu pilgrim to make the complete journey, we satisfied ourselves with a perfect view of the temple from a small Devi temple across a valley to the holiest site in India for devotees and initiates of their Lord Dattatreya, to where it is said he holds court and is most accessible to the ardent devotee.¹¹

Without doubt, the most memorable event in Datta Mount's long history, took place in November 1949 when Avatar Meher Baba made the extremely arduous climb with four disciples and a mast, and went into seclusion for two days fasting on water and hand feeding the majzoob-like mast.

Beloved Baba was full of praise for the devotees living at this site of Dattatreya, and commented, "I have never seen aspirants living a life of such exemplary simplicity consisting solely of spiritual aspiration", and as Prasad, Baba lovingly gave seven rupees each to eighteen of the aspirants, then washed and laid His head on their feet.

A comment Baba made about the sanctity of the Girnar hills to His mandali at the time was, "Every Avatar born in India has visited Girnar during their lifetime"¹² which of course tells us a great deal, not just about its spiritual antiquity, but its spiritual importance.

A tale of great interest that took place on Datta Mount some centuries ago, is of a God-Realised soul named Bapu Jamal Shah, who took jivan-samadhi in a cave there, i.e. had himself buried alive. He was known widely as 'Datta'¹³ even though his name is obviously Islamic. Once again, in this story one may observe a parallel between Khizr and Dattatreya, so it can readily be seen that these archetypal figures may easily be confounded.

In telling a little of Dattatreya, I have

attempted to fathom a not well known side of spiritual functioning, and its relative ambiguity, when it comes to placing these functions in relation to Avatar Meher Baba.

Perhaps one may consider, that as Head of the Spiritual Hierarchy, the Saheb-e-Zaman, Avatar Meher Baba directs universally all these disparate functions, which occur naturally dependant on the various needs of humanity for liberation.

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Loneliness

Don't expect
the one you love
to suddenly
take away
your loneliness.

Loneliness is our
way of being
in the world.
To think or feel
is a lonely act.

My Beloved told me
to be cheerful in my
loneliness for it is
a door that opens
into His Presence.

Only divine love
can hollow out our
loneliness and shape
it into a wine glass
to offer a toast to love.

Ross Keating

Meher House Sydney

This hill where
He walked in silence
will never again
be just a hill.

This house where
He lived and worked
will never again
be just a house.

This room where
He left His Presence
will never again
be just a room.

They are destined
to become
one of the world's
great landmarks

A guiding beacon
for all striving
to reach their
Eternal Beloved.

Ross Keating

If, every moment,
whatever you are doing,
you are desperately
calling out to God,
you will be saved.
If, every moment,
whatever you are doing,
you are secretly
glorifying His existence,
you will be saved.
If, every moment,
despite your intent
to praise Him, or call out to
Him,
you are actually
only being self indulgent
and hypocritical,
you will be saved ...
but it will take a little longer.

*Steve Klein,
Fire and Smoke, page 7.*

Silence Day

A soft sudden sun shower
sweeps across the eucalyptus
trees in my suburban backyard.

From my window looking down
I can see it move like a ballerina's
hand gestures over the branches.

Stopping then swirling about in
a timeless dance. Sparkling rain --
sounding just beyond silence.

The rain is ceaseless; it keeps falling
and swirling, falling about me,
through me, soaking cleansing rain.

The rain is my Beloved breaking
His silence. Each drop is a pure word
from the ancient ocean of His Word.

Each drop is searching for a golden dye
to print my Beloved's name in bold
calligraphy across the canvas of the sky.

Ross Keating

Attar, Rumi, Hafiz — go ahead and read each and every
Persian poet,
But you won't find anything that pertains to spirit life as we
have come to know it.

Roses, nightingales, taverns, wine, the Friend — that's all
very well,
But they're as irrelevant to our life as a Buddhist heaven or
Dante's hell.

What do we have to do with the agony of separation or any
other sublime exalted state?
Arguments over whose turn it is to do the dishes sums up
the high level of our metaphysical debate.

Go ahead, write poems about what you consider spirituality
if you really think you must,
But let them only chronicle petty irritations, anger,
frustrations, greed, jealousy and lust.

For these are the emotions we are familiar with — forget
about the lover's pain;
When it comes to being driven mad with longing we are,
unfortunately, eminently sane.

In our life there are no unusual experiences, only mundane
happenings, nothing odd;
The most you can say about us is that every now and then,
when we're not too busy, we remember God.

But that remembrance gives our lives a meaning no
conscious effort could attain.
The poets, seeing God's pleasure with us, are baffled and
unable to explain.

Steve Klein, Fire and Smoke, page 5.

Who makes these changes?

Who makes these changes?
I shoot an arrow right.
It lands left.
I ride after a deer and find myself
chased by a hog.
I plot to get what I want
and end up in prison.
I dig pits to trap others
and fall in.

I should be suspicious
of what I want.

*Rumi
[Translated by Coleman Barks]*

Avatar's Abode 60th Anniversary June 2018

Call for Expressions of Interest from Possible Overseas Visitors

On June 5 to 11 (Tuesday to Monday) of 2018 we will gather to celebrate and commemorate the sixtieth anniversary of the 4 day visit in 1958 of Beloved Avatar Meher Baba to the property which He named Avatar's Abode.

For 2018 we have extended the usual 4 day celebration to 7 days.

To assist us with our early planning, the Anniversary Planning Committee is calling for expressions of interest from Baba Lovers around the world who may be wishing to attend.

Your possible interest in attending can be conveyed by clicking this link <http://avatarsabode.com.au/surveys/aaa2018eoi> and answering some questions. This form also provides some additional information. (Access the link to the online form via avatarsabode.com.au Home page, Events column).

Your expression of interest will of course be in no way binding, but will help us to foresee the infrastructure requirements, as we anticipate significantly larger numbers from overseas. To those who respond we look forward to being in continuing closer contact.

The website <http://www.avatarsabode.com.au> is worth exploring for information about Avatar's Abode. (Updates for the 2018 anniversary will appear progressively.)

Please share this with your local Baba Family.

Bernard Bruford and Denis Carmody

8 August 2017

On behalf of the 2018 Anniversary Planning Committee of the Avatar's Abode Trust.

Allan Y Cohen Australia 2014

Videos of his 7 talks on YouTube

In 2014 Dr. Allan Y Cohen gave 7 talks at Avatar's Abode during the Spring Sahavas. These talks are all on YouTube now, you can watch them as and when you like. There are various ways of accessing the talks – the path we list below is the least complicated. Put this link into your browser's search section ... and hit enter <https://www.youtube.com/user/anthonyrfoley> That will take you to the Anthony Foley page. Scroll down that page a bit ... till you see a category called '**Created Playlists**' A picture of Allan and a caption below that picture will state: *Allan Y Cohen Australia 2014*. Click on that caption and... "Ta-Daa" ...you will be on a page that lists the 7 talks.

Suggest you save the link so that you can go back there whenever you want to continue watching.

Another way to reach the 7 talks ... is to copy and paste the link below into your browser's search window and hit enter.

That will also take you to the 7 talks Dr. Allan Cohen gave in Australia

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6UPsvZp7-0o&feature=youtu.be&list=PLJRG4OCdysaaN6x8sjlwmtPXcwYXXAab>

Allan Y Cohen 2104 AUSTRALIA Talk 1 of 7

Allan Y Cohen 2014 AUSTRALIA Talk 2 of 7

Allan Y Cohen 2014 AUSTRALIA Talk 3 of 7

Allan Y Cohen 2014 AUSTRALIA Talk 4 of 7

Allan Y Cohen AUSTRALIA 2014 Talk 5 of 7

Allan Y Cohen 2014 AUSTRALIA Talk 6 of 7

Allan Y Cohen 2014 AUSTRALIA Talk 7 of 7

Spring Sahavas at Avatar's Abode

Saturday 30th September – Monday 2nd October 2017

David Hobson

We are all in for a treat with the acceptance by **Jeff Wolverton and Nan Wicker to be our guests** at this year's Spring Sahavas. Many of us have met Jeff and Nan in India or at the Meher Spiritual Center, South Carolina, where individually or as a duo they regularly entertain pilgrims with their beautiful songs and music.

Growing up in a non-religious, although fun-loving family, Jeff was unexpectedly smitten with Baba during a Baba meeting in New York City in January, 1968. This happened during a three minute silence at the end of the meeting when Baba appeared to him and quickly rearranged the itinerary of his life. This was during his college days, and needless to say, only then did his higher education begin.

In the following years Jeff was fortunate to live near Dr. Harry Kenmore and later Darwin and Jeanne Shaw, three close followers of Baba, absorbing as much of their experiences as possible. Of particular influence on Jeff was Darwin and Jeanne's intimate companionship with Baba and their invaluable approaches to cultivating the inner life.

Further enriching Jeff's deep connection to Baba has been his more than forty years of annual pilgrimages to Meherabad and Meherazad where he has heard many first-hand accounts from Baba's mandali of what it was like to live with the Godman.

In 1972, Kitty Davy arranged for Jeff to move to Myrtle Beach, and in the



JEFF WOLVERTON

Photo of Jeff taken by Anthony Zois.

mid-70s he became a caretaker at the Meher Center where he has worked for the last 40 years.

The Sahavas will provide a valuable opportunity for interactive discussions with Jeff on a range of topics including: cultivating the inner life with Baba, forgiveness, self-acceptance ... Baba's work with His Western women disciples etc.

Nan grew up on the east coast of the United States in a politically active, kind, non-religious, musical Unitarian family. From a young age, she was drawn to Buddhism and intentional communities, and the Far East.

Nan was a seeker, reading and visiting intentional communities, taking part in encounter groups, helping to start alternative schools, and attending a Buddhist University. She lived and worked in a wonderful Vipassana meditation community in England for several years and spent



NAN WICKER

Photo of Nan taken by John Poag.

time in monasteries in Asia in 1972 and 1979-80.

Amongst other things, Nan has worked as a housepainter, baker, health food store clerk, and a psychologist with disturbed teenagers and mentally ill patients.

She heard a wee bit of Meher Baba in 1970 and 1975, and then in 1991 she finally made it to the Meher Spiritual Center where she had a deep inner experience of Meher Baba. Nan had come "home"!

From 1993 to 2005, she lived in Myrtle Beach for half the year and then in Meherabad the other half, volunteering in both places. In India Nan helped with editing, library work, and the reorganising and typing of song books.

Nan began singing with guitar as a teen but it wasn't till finding the kind of spiritual songs she had always

Continued on next page

looked for that she got really serious about music. She found them at a Course in Miracle Church, a Sufi center, and more than anywhere, at the Meher Baba Center. She continues to explore and find songs about the psychological and spiritual life that have special meaning.

Nan and Jeff began to perform bi-monthly at the Meher Spiritual Center in 1995 and have since performed together and separately at Baba gatherings in Colorado, Minnesota, DC, New York, California, Georgia, Oregon, Chicago, Illinois and India.

After 20 years of requests for a CD, Nan decided not to wait any longer for Jeff to be willing and has made 2 solo CDs in the last 2 years. Jeff accompanied her on the choruses of some of the songs on the 2nd CD. Nan is now working on a third solo CD and a duet CD. In the process she discovered a new art of bringing together a variety of instruments and musicians and rhythms to bring to life the words that mean so much to her.

This year's Sahavas will be refreshing in its informality and inclusiveness, and amidst the bonhomie and laughter (*Jeff's fantastic sense of humour) and the music, there will be plenty of meaty discussions on tap!

Following the Spring Sahavas Jeff and Nan will be visiting the Sydney Baba family.



News from Avatar's Abode

Mehera Moroney on behalf of the Avatar's Abode Trust

To update you all on some of the projects that have been completed recently on and around Avatar's Abode:

- Realignment of the driveway to the Farmhouse and Judith's Cottage, including extensions to the lookout
- A new photo of Meher Baba placed in the Meeting Hall
- Updates to repair and replace items in pilgrim and volunteer workers accommodation
- A beautiful new rock stairway to the circuit track below the Pilgrim Quarters (PQ)
- New curtains in Baba's Room
- Some alterations have been made to the PQ – 3 bedrooms created, kitchen updated
- Progress is underway in reinstating the storage room and the bathroom / laundry under the Kitchen
- The regular work groups and meetings keep Avatar's Abode such a wonderful place to visit.

The Avatar's Abode website has lots of information about events and ways to get involved at Avatar's Abode <http://avatarsabode.com.au>.



The new curtains in Baba's Room, Avatar's Abode. All photos in this article by Mehera Moroney.



*Above: the new photo of Meher Baba in the Meeting Hall.
Below: the new rock stairway to the circuit track near the PQ.*



*Above: the lookout has been extended.
Below: the PQ kitchen has been renovated and updated.*



How Meher Baba's flag came about

April, 1924

April is an extremely hot month at Meherabad. That year there was a lot of hard work being done during the building of Baba's Jhopdi (hut). Due to the hard work required and in the extreme heat, the mandali's tempers flared. Many arguments began and Baba had to guide the mandali to gain control of themselves ...

To prevent stray cows and goats from destroying the jasmine saplings planted near the Jhopdi, a barbed-wire fence was erected on all four sides.

It had been proposed among the mandali that a symbolic flag be flown near the Jhopdi and soon a heated debate ensued about it.

The Hindus said the colour of the flag should be red, but Ramjoo objected, saying that red reflected only Vedanta, and that green was better.

Then the Hindus objected, arguing that green was typically a Mohammedan colour.

The Parsis and Iranis disapproved of both colours, and to bring about accord, Baba proposed, "the flag should be of seven colours."

Dina prepared a flag accordingly and, after it was sewn, it was hoisted near the Master's Jhopdi on the evening of 23 April 1924.

As the flag stirred, Baba remarked, "Do you know why I suggested a seven-coloured flag? The seven colours represent the seven planes of consciousness."



Meher Baba's flag at Upper Meherabad, India. Photo by Liz Gaskin.

Baba had specified the positioning of two colours: "Red should be at the bottom of the flag and sky blue at the top. Arrangement of the other five colours is your decision."

He later added: "Besides representing the seven planes of consciousness, these colours also represent sanskaras. The colours in the flag signify man's

rise from the grossest of impressions of lust and anger — symbolised by red — to the culmination in the highest state of spirituality and oneness with God — symbolised by sky blue."

*Extracted from LORD MEHER
Online Version pp 495 to 505.
Copyright AMBPPCT.*

Meher Baba Australia

Steven Hein, MBA Editor

What is 'Meher Baba Australia'?

It is a volunteer run, non-profit initiative that publishes a newsletter that aims to connect the community of lovers of Beloved Meher Baba. Interested in participating? Contact Steven Hein, Editor.

Frequency - four issues a year

March, June, September, December.

Cost?

There is no charge as such. We do ask readers to subscribe, to actively choose to receive / keep receiving the journal.

How do we cover printing & postage costs?

We welcome donations. Occasionally, if costs go up and funds run low, we even invite and encourage donations.

Actual costs of a hardcopy issue?

To produce, print and post within Australia, each issue costs us approx \$7.50 AU. For the 4 issues that's about \$30 AU a year. International postage costs a bit more.

The digital email PDF version?

We also have the low cost PDF version we distribute by email. Many of our subscribers receive both email and hardcopy versions.

How do we ask you to renew each year?

It will be an email request or a coloured slip inside your MBA hardcopy. Your response helps us keep your (confidential) info and address on our mailing list up to date.

Editorial policy

The MBA editorial policy is pretty simple – MBA will not publish content that is divisive, political, disruptive and disrespectful. The editor reserves the right to edit all articles for length and content prior to publication.

MBA contacts

Editor: stevenhein101@gmail.com
Mailing List / Subscriptions: David Bowling
meherbabaustralia@gmail.com

Donations can be made via PayPal at
avatarsabode.com.au/donations.html



Avatar Meher Baba, 1954 Andhra, India.

Or by direct bank deposit or Electronic Funds Transfer to

Account name: Meher Baba Australia
BSB: 064424

Account number: 10379525

Please include your initial and last name for reference.

Suggested annual donation

Digital PDF via email (Annual) – Global
\$5.00 AU

Hardcopy (Annual) – Australia \$30 AU

Hardcopy (Annual) – Overseas \$40 AU.



The roster for arranging roses in Baba's room is seeking more volunteers. Here is a short history to stir your interest and enthusiasm.

In December 1987 Tony Oakhill gave Maria a large number of small roses – over 100 stems. She was surprised and discovered that he had met the new neighbours (Heather and Darcy) and learned they were starting up a hydroponic rose farm in Eudlo.

That night Maria didn't sleep much

as her heart and mind were racing with ideas and possibilities. Due to Lorna Rouse' ill health, Maria had noticed that the flowers in Baba's room didn't look as good as they used to. After asking the new neighbour Heather if she would be willing to sell roses regularly for the Abode she asked a few residents of Meher Road (three others) if they would be willing to take turns paying for the roses and arranging them in Baba's Room.

Maria asked Lorna and Robert Rouse their opinion of the idea – they were encouraging and supportive but kindly and gently expressed their surprise as Maria had never seemed a practical or useful person at the Abode to them.

Maria agreed and said she was also

surprised and shocked at her idea.

The neighbour Heather is a devout Christian who uses the roses to support various charities including Cittamani Hospice run by Buddhists.

If you would like to be on the rose roster please ring **Maria** on **5442 2548** and let her know how often you would be willing to do so, such as monthly, quarterly, yearly.

The roses are arranged each Tuesday and Saturday morning and collected from the front door of Quentin and Nadia's residence at 35 Meher Rd.

The price has remained the same since 1987 - \$12.50 each time for 2-3 bunches depending on availability.

- Maria Oakhill

Rose roster Baba's Room

Tajuddin Baba called Meher Baba The Heavenly Rose

Meher Baba Australia

September to November 2017

Editor: Steven Hein

Design, Layout and Digital Image Cleanup: Liz Gaskin

Proof Reading: Steven Hein. Contact editor if you can help too stevenhein101@gmail.com.

Mailing List and Subscriptions: David Bowling. Email meherbabaustralia@gmail.com for information.

Front Cover: Meher Baba photographed in the doorway of Meher House in Beacon Hill during the Public Day on Saturday 11th August 1956. Photo by Aubrey Rouse. From Robert Rouse's Collection.

Next Issue: Please email submissions for the next *Meher Baba Australia* to stevenhein101@gmail.com or mail to MBA, PO Box 335, Woombye, QLD 4559, Australia.

Deadline Next Issue: 11th October 2017.

Photos to be minimum of 1MB, preferably over 2MB. *PLEASE NOTE that the editor reserves the right to edit all published articles for length and content prior to publication.*

Sydney Meher Baba Community

(Please note that all dates and details below are subject to change, however all effort will be made to ensure late-breaking updates are provided by email and/or Facebook)

Monthly Meetings at Meher House held on the last Sunday of every month. Prayers and Arti, open discussions about Baba, occasional guests, vegetarian potluck meal. Contact: Kevin Mossberger M: 0412 559 402.

Kirtan Singing at Meher House – Devotional Kirtan singing held on 16 September and 11 November. Coordinator: Sage Andreasen. M: 0401 456 839
E: sagerepeti@hotmail.com

Monday Night Discourse Meetings – Each Monday except 2/9/16 October and 18/25 December. For enquiries please contact Kris Wyld mobile 0407 481 323 or truestories@ozemail.com.au.

Jeff Wolverton and Nan Wicker visit from Myrtle Beach 3-6 October. Details to be provided via email and/or Facebook. For enquiries contact Kevin Mossberger on 0412 559 402.

The Meher Baba Sydney community is always searching for volunteers to serve in Baba's cause and love and in a variety of ways. A wonderful opportunity for old-timers, newcomers, young and old! For further information contact Kevin Mossberger on 0412 559 402.

What's on at Avatar's Abode

Spring Sahavas

Saturday 30th September to Monday 2nd October 2017

Jeff Wolverton and Nan Wicker will be our guests for an informal and inclusive *Sahavas*, featuring stories and insights from Jeff's long association with Baba's Eastern and Western mandali.

We'll also enjoy interactive discussions and lots of musical interludes from Jeff and Nan and our own local musicians. For more information visit www.avatarsabode.com.au.



Monday Morning Meetings at Avatar's Abode

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

Wednesday Meher Baba's Works Reading

Group Now at 4.30pm - in the Bookstore. Contact Wilma Pearson phone 0404 775 789 or (07) 5473 9947, email wilmapearson@aapt.net.au or Bill Le Page (07) 5442 1248.

Friday Mornings 10:30am in the Bookstore

The explorers of God's words continue to study and discuss Meher Baba's revelations of who and what we all are. The Bookstore is located behind the Reception Centre at Avatar's Abode. Coordinators are Geoff Gunther (07) 5442 2467 or Steven Hein 0412 080 424.

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

Melbourne Meetings

Various Melbourne meetings contact persons are presently travelling hither and yon. So, at present the best contact for Melbourne activities and meetings is Jasmine Ilas. Give her a call on her mobile 0438 300 193. Please leave voicemail if she can't take your call.

Meher Baba Gatherings in WA

Phone Paul Morris 0429 310 169 or Julie Morris 0428 250 294.

New Zealand

Travellers to New Zealand who want to meet Baba lovers there are invited to contact Jill Hobbs, 19 Brassey Rd, Wanganui. Ph (06) 347 2974, email jillhobbs1954@gmail.com