

Meher Baba Australia

September – November 2020



Meher Baba, circa 1932-1933. Location possibly Nasik. Photographer: Unknown.
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Today the urgent need of mankind is not sects or organised religions, but Love. Divine love will conquer hate and fear. It will not depend upon other justifications, but will justify itself.

I have come to awaken in man this divine love. It will restore to him the unfathomable richness of his own eternal being and will solve all of his problems.

LIFE AT ITS BEST, Meher Baba p 45.

Francis Brabazon as Disciple-Poet

From a talk given at the 2020 Anniversary of Meher Baba's visit to Avatar's Abode, 1958

Ross Keating

Before addressing the topic of Francis Brabazon as disciple-poet I would like to raise the question: "How do we as Baba lovers gather together." What do we do, for instance, when we come together to celebrate the anniversary of Meher Baba's visit to Avatar's Abode in 1958? The early Christians gathered together in followers homes and prayed and shared a meal together in remembrance of Christ. But what should we do in remembrance of Meher Baba?

For me, the answer to this is to be found in Eruch's more general question. He said that there's only one real question to be asked between Baba lovers: "How do you keep your Beloved present in your life?" Eruch's question is not: "How do we [as a group] keep the Beloved present in our lives?" For the relationship between the Beloved and the Lover is intimate, direct and personal as is the nature of love itself. The question is in the singular: "How do *you* ..."

If the question was "How do *we* ..." then the answer would eventually lead to dogma, ritual, codes of behaviour etc., things which everyone would have to follow; it would be impersonal and lead to conformity, and the spreading



Meher Baba, 15 November 1955, Meherabad.
Photographer: Panday. © Meher Nazar Publications.

of His name and message would look more like propaganda. These are outcomes which are obviously contrary to Baba's message.

But when the question is personal, one-to-one, then it implies a recognition of Baba as the in-dweller in each person; it acknowledges the freedom of each of His lovers and is built upon respect for individuality. It acknowledges Baba as an intimate and loving Beloved for each person. And the spreading of His name and message would look more like art. But an objection may be raised here that this could lead to all kinds of bizarre expressions.

The natural response to this objection is that each Baba lover needs to express and share their love, in whatever way they feel moved to do so.

For love does not demand conformity to some abstract idea of what is "correct" – otherwise it would not be love. Love has to find its own creative way. The *mandali* certainly put up with a lot of our "strange" offerings in the 70s and 80s and never said a word of criticism. If it came from a *heart* struggling to express itself, that was all that seemed to matter to them.

The idea of each person having their own individual expression of love is supported by Baba Himself. You only

have to look at the *mandali* who lived with Baba to see this. All were highly individual and had their own way of approaching Baba in their love for Him.

In Baba's writing also, individuality is supported. In His "Universal Message," Baba says, referring to the time after He breaks His silence: "the impact of my Love will be universal and all life in creation will know, feel, and receive of it. It will help *every individual to break himself free from his own bondage in his own way* [my emphasis]."

Then in November '55, at the *Sahas* held at Meherabad, Baba said: "Whatever brings you nearer to the path and suits you best, is best for you, provided you are able to put it into practice wholeheartedly and in harmony with *the natural bent of your mind*" [my emphasis] (*Listen Humanity* p. 41). And at the same gathering Baba commented: "I want you to *be your natural selves, putting aside all the superficial niceties one usually assumes in social life* [my emphasis]" (*LH* p. 242).

In 1967 at Guruprasad, Bal Natu recalls a time when Baba again stressed individuality. In his recollection of this time, Bal gives his own revealing commentary: "Baba referred to the Hindi saying, 'If the crow imitates a swan, it will never acquire a swan's traits and it will lose its own individuality also.' The crow cannot change its black feathers to white like those of a swan. It cannot move like a swan. In the same way, we must live out this life with the particular individuality that we have been given. Each person's qualities or attributes are given as a gift from God and can help to fulfil what we are to play out in life ... Whether crow or swan, one has to live out one's own natural path in life toward God" (Bal Natu, *Intimate Times with Meher Baba: Glimpses of the God-Man at Guru Prasad* p. 596.)

And by way of confirming this statement, Francis, in his Preface to *Stay With God*, writes, "What I have written may



Francis working at his desk at the back of Mandali Hall in Meherabad in the 1960s. Photographer not known. From the Avatar's Abode collection.

be of some value to others; but if not, not. That is their affair: mine was in the writing, and in the continuance of that course which "I" once set but which is now in the hands of my Beauty and Truth, Meher Baba" (*SWG* p. 8).

What follows is my response to the question "How do I keep my Beloved present in my life," but it is imbedded in my specific response to the topic of Francis as "disciple-poet."

Francis as Disciple-Poet

All the *mandali* were clearly defined individuals who knew their own minds and hearts, and this is what makes them so interesting. Francis is no exception. Part of what makes him interesting, particularly in the West, is the fact that he started off as an artist seeking Truth through beauty – an intriguing Western archetype that rarely gains

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Meher Baba, November 1955, Lower Meherabad Hall. Photographer: Panday. © Meher Nazar Publications.

expression. And from his writing it soon becomes clear that he himself was widely read, was a challenging poet, was interested in eastern spirituality and philosophy long before they were fashionable; all very interesting traits in their own right. But most of all, in his writings is to be found something of the quality of his love for and relationship with Meher Baba, which is deeply moving to read.

It is evident that Baba used the various natural talents of the *mandali* for His work. We know that Baba used Baidul's insatiable curiosity in His searching for masts. In my opinion, Baba used Francis's artistic temperament and insight to "revitalise" art and clear away the blockage that had clogged this natural divine spring. *Stay With God*, in many ways, can be seen as a guide to this revitalisation and unclogging.

Stay With God is remarkable in its scope, insight, and sheer freshness; it reads as if it was directly

inspired by Baba as the Avatar of this Age. It gives evidence to Baba's words: "Avataric periods are like the springtide of creation. They bring a new release of power, a new awakening of consciousness, a new experience of life ..." (*Discourses* 7th ed. p. 268). For in its pages the release of a new literary power is felt.

It reminds me of the words of Ramon Lull (who gets a mention in *Stay With God*): "I will have no art nor device in my words by reason of the greatness of my love" (*Blanquerna* chapter 7). For the pages of *Stay With God* are filled with Francis's direct and unadorned love for his Master, which will not tolerate any embellishment of any kind. But while Francis had a great understanding of the spiritual path as both a seeker and artist, as evident in *Stay With God*, a transformation occurred in his life when he came to live in India with Meher Baba. I would express this by saying that Francis, under Baba's guidance, changed from being a poet dedicated to Baba

into becoming Baba's disciple-poet, and this is a significant shift.

The beginning of this gradual change occurred soon after Francis arrived in India in late January 1959. About this time, Francis was beginning to feel that his work as a serious poet was starting to be recognised. Firstly by Baba Himself, who had highly praised *Stay With God* and who allowed him on 25th February to give an address as an Australian writer at the Bombay Press Conference. And then by the literary establishment itself, for in the same month that he arrived in India he had one of his poems, "There was a Humming," published in the *London Magazine*, a respected international literary journal. And then around March – when he was to travel to Guruprasad with Baba and the *mandali* to spend the summer – he gave his permission for another of his poems, "Death of a City," to be broadcast on the B.B.C. Third Programme as part of a presentation of Australian poetry.

Then in this same first year of Francis's arrival, before Baba left with the *mandali* for Guruprasad, it was arranged with Baba's approval, that Francis should have a quiet place to stay when in Pune, away from others, so he could write undisturbed. K. K. Ramakrishnan's house at Range Hill Estate, Kirkee was chosen as most suitable. It was also decided that each morning Francis would cycle in to meet Baba at Guruprasad at an arranged time. Francis was happy with this arrangement.

On one particular day during the summer months when Francis arrived at Guruprasad by cycle, Baba complained that He wanted to see him earlier than the prescribed time, and he wasn't around. As a result, Francis decided to come earlier the next day. But when Francis arrived earlier the following day, Baba again wanted to see him before he arrived and he wasn't present. And this pattern continued with the arrival time for Francis becoming progressively earlier and earlier. But no matter how early Francis got there, Baba was always waiting and annoyed that Francis was absent. It was a no-win situation for Francis and he was becoming anxious that he was displeasing Baba, besides feeling increasingly tired and exhausted due to his early starts and his nearly ten kilometre ride into Guruprasad.

It reached such a point that Francis broke down and wept before Baba; he was totally cornered, not knowing which way to turn. Baba then arranged that Francis was to stay in one of the staff quarters in the grounds of Guruprasad so he could come, immediately, at any time,

when Baba called him. It seemed that this whole episode was orchestrated by Baba to show Francis that, first and foremost, he was to be His disciple – that is, on call at any time – and a writer/poet second. He was to be a disciple-poet. I even remember Francis telling me once that while at Meherazad living with Baba, writing was his "pastime."

The Art of Love, Obedience and Surrender

Meher Baba has said: "To garland me, to bow down to me and to sing my praises are comparatively the three most unimportant things. The three most important things on the path to God-realisation are love, obedience and surrender. There is no possibility of compromise about these three" (*LH* p. 16). And yet all throughout Baba's life, garlanding Him, bowing down to Him and singing His praises took place at Baba gatherings. And Baba accepted all these things. However, what consistently comes through as most pleasing to Him was when these things were done with love, and in the aspiring spirit of obedience and surrender.

Poetry as a cry of the heart and as an avenue for the poet to praise the source and wonder of love is not a new occurrence in Western literature. It goes back to the troubadours in the twelfth century. But it lost its way, according to Francis, after Dante, who came after the troubadours. But poetry in the West, up until Francis's time, that specifically addresses *God in human form* as the very source of love, is only to be found in Christian religious poetry and church hymns which are confined in their scope by the belief system in which they are framed.

In 1956, Francis wrote a manifesto-type statement, "Art as Practice of Devotion," in which he first outlined his idea of art in praise of God in human form. In this work, he states that: "Art is a method of practicing devotion to the True Teacher, who is the Supreme Artist; the whole universe being His creation, and man His most finished work. To this Artist every true artist has ever bowed, knowing that without His help he is helpless, without His inspiration he is void of any creativeness" (*7 Stars to Morning* p. 77).

But then, possibly in 1958, Baba gave out a statement that re-defines devotion and contrasts it with love: "Love burns the lover. Devotion burns the Beloved. Love seeks happiness for the Beloved. Devotion seeks for blessing from the

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Beloved. Love seeks to shoulder the burden of the Beloved. Love gives. Devotion asks ..." (*The God-Man* pp. 313-314). The clarity of this statement would have challenged Francis to re-think his position on art and devotion.

In the poem that Francis had published in the *London Magazine* in January, 1959, "There was a Humming," we can see a movement away from art as a practice of devotion. In actual fact, we can see Francis questioning, in an implied manner, the very purpose of art itself. Although this poem is written for a general, poetry-reading audience the idea of personal sacrifice, as an act of love for God the Beloved, is highlighted as having greater importance than the practice of art:

It takes much patient labour to polish a piece of glass
To catch the light of a star –
It takes more to polish your heart till it
Reflects the light of God.
It takes time to fix the image of yourself
on a piece of canvas –
It takes more to paint the image of the Beloved
in your own flesh
(*Francis Brabazon: Poet of the Silent Word* p. 167).

A further and more complete expression of this idea is in the Coda section of *Stay With God*:

The real art of modelling their flesh
upon the pattern of His Manhood,
dreaming His loveliness and truth, and delineating
in work and works the dreamed Image of His Reality.
(*SWG* p. 154)

In the opening line of this quote, the word "modelling" points to the sacrifice of the disciple; while the word "delineating" to the act of the artist. The sacrifice of modelling, of discipleship, comes before the act of delineating, the act of the artist.

And yet during the period of Francis living with Baba (1959-1969) it was a time that was more than "modelling ... upon the pattern of His Manhood." It is better described as a time of Baba actively shaping Francis into His disciple-poet. It is a time of his obeying and surrendering to Baba in love – becoming like dust at His feet.

Baba has said that "Love is a gift from God to man. Obedience is a gift from Master to man. And surrender is a gift from man to Master" (*The Everything and the Nothing*, 6th printing published in India, 1976 p. 5). It is this play between these two gifts, obedience and surrender, that

Francis, I think, was undergoing at Meherabad. Baba had bestowed upon him the gift of obedience in allowing him to become his disciple; and Francis in turn was presenting Baba with the gift of himself, his gift of surrender, which was reflected in his writings for his Beloved.

This is seen in his Preface to *The Word at World's End* (published in 1971): "In fact, most writers – whether avant-garde or pop – only have to satisfy a public which has been carefully conditioned by every gimmick the genius of publicity can invent; but for years now I have had to satisfy God. And not the God who is dead or who changed his face according to theological expediency and political necessity, but the God who is God-Man – the beautiful Person who is the Beloved of all who do not live for bread alone; who is so alive that all other persons are shadows emerging from the limbo of consciousness for the moment of a gesture or cry."

What we can sense of this love-play of obedience and surrender between Baba and Francis is best conveyed in his ghazals, which were written during this time and encouraged and deeply appreciated by Baba. They are the poems of a disciple-poet. They are poems of love, obedience and surrender *par excellence*. The very title of his first book of ghazals, *In Dust I Sing*, conveys what they are about. They are entirely new and open up a whole new world that will, as Francis suggests, become "the ideal vehicle for the new dialogue of the Lover and the Beloved which will be the New Humanity" (*In Dust I Sing* p. iv). They are a gift to us for they open a door into a world that Baba has created through Francis, a world filled with the savour of love, in which we can enter and draw closer to our Beloved.

If a Baba lover ever asked Francis, "How do you keep your Beloved present in your life?" he could respond with one of his ghazals. It would express his own individuality, reflect his own voice as a disciple-poet, and convey something of his own love-relationship with his Beloved.

I think we all have to find our own individual ghazal-expression; it may be in the form of dance, or dramatic performance or whatever flowers out of a life dedicated to Baba and then shaped into an offering to Him like a kind of bouquet. And no doubt, new and wonderful forms of expression will be found. But when we find our right individual expression, then I think we too can then answer the question, "How do you keep your Beloved present in your life?" in such a way that Baba will be smilingly present in our midst when we come together in His Love.

The story of the archival display cases at Avatar's Abode

Jeanette (Isaacs) Young

Since the premature (for us!) arrival in mid-March of the purpose built archival standard museum display cases, life has been quite different from what any of us expected. The story is so bizarre that it became fairly clear that some things were about to change and that Meher Baba wanted those cabinets here: quickly.

Late last year, after receiving a grant from the Sunshine Coast Council, funding from the Avatar's Abode Trust and generous donations from Baba lovers around Australia, we were ready to purchase the museum standard archival display cabinets. We submitted our request and detailed our specifications for one horizontal and one vertical display cabinet. The company in Victoria required at least three months lead time for fabricating an order, and then there was delivery time and the need for an experienced industry qualified tradesperson to assist with installation. All this seemed to be likely to fit in with the proposed May dates for a visit to Avatar's Abode from Meherabad's Jessica Mednick as a consultant for our archiving and conservation work, and to oversee the implementation of a display in time for the June Anniversary of Meher Baba's visit to Avatar's Abode.

While I was in Meherabad there was an email from the company offering a larger mannequin display cabinet for the same price, and a short time later an opportunity for a cancelled/delayed/postponed order



The large cabinet display. Ongoing work is planned on the presentation of the coat.
Photo by Jeanette Young.

for two horizontal display cases to be taken as part of our order, at a reduced price, and with no additional charge for delivery. They needed the space in the showroom. All this

seemed so generous and reduced the time required for preparation and fabrication of our order. Saying "Yes, thank you" seemed an obvious thing

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A view of one of the small archival display cabinets. Photo by Jeanette Young.

to do. Trusting Baba sufficiently to just say yes immediately seemed a 'logical' response in the context of being at Meherabad.

But now the delivery needed to be earlier. Jessica's visa situation had evolved to require her to come in April. Things were in place for a delivery as part of a back load (and therefore cheaper) so the next step was to see if we could get the cabinets earlier. It was possibly going to cost more than a business class return air fare between India and Australia to get the cabinets in time. An arrangement was made for them to arrive just after the inaugural Women's Sahavas in March, and for the women who could remain afterwards to assist with the unpacking and storing of the previous display. Carla de Sousa, an archivist from Meherabad, was arriving in Australia in April, so there'd be a team to work solely on the re-housing and display preparation.

Meher Baba seemed to be in charge with His Timing, however, and while we wondered whether we could somehow absorb or find the additional delivery expense COVID-19 began to have an impact around the world.

I returned from Meherabad on Saturday 29th February and had an email on 2nd March asking if we could accept delivery of the cabinets to be sent with another customer's order on 16th March. At the original low delivery cost, and because of a special deal, two horizontal cabinets instead of one.

"Ok Baba. Yes." Again.

By now Jessica's travel notions had slid around: plans moved from May, to later April, to early April for a unique chance to attend the end of March Women's Sahavas, and the latest challenge ... could she even come at all, given the rising concerns of COVID-19, border closures, and her young family in Meherabad?

As the delivery day approached there was a flurry of phone calls with various players, and all manner of preparations on the property. All the previous display items had to be packed and re-housed, and the room emptied and cleaned. Trees along the access road were trimmed of any overhanging branches which might have been damaged, or create damage, with a larger than usual truck arriving. Crush mats were hired to protect the grassed areas for access of a heavy load. Early reconnaissance

with the local installation delegate ascertained the features of the likely approach road, and various locals offered opinions and advice as to which way might be best. We had three local strong, healthy blokes with good backs to assist the two delivery chaps, and the installation expert - all to be available for the morning. We had been advised that it would require at least six men for the lifting and shifting to be safely executed.

When the truck driver called to say he was outside Meher Clinic we went down to meet and bring him along the proposed access to review the plan. The truck was BIG!! Even the installation guy swore softly under his breath when its big 'ugly' bulk (his description) loomed into view. After some discussion, and waiting for the delivery team to reassess the situation, the realisation began to dawn on them that there was no delivery dock to drive up and load onto. We went back to the truck and it began the journey along Meher Road where people were having their breakfast, and then onto Avatar's Abode at the open green space where the reception centre stands. Then they stopped. No way would they proceed any further up the hill. They would become bogged,

and they didn't want either the delay, or the desecration of the beautiful and obviously well-tended grounds.

Sooo. We had the challenge of unloading first onto a ute tray, driving the large cabinet balanced thereon up to Baba's Square, and then onto rolling 'dollies' for subsequent shifting into Baba's House. For those who have not been to Avatar's Abode, there is no loading dock at Baba's House, and the approaches are grass or small dirt unsealed roads. This could have been quite a smooth operation in some ways, except that by the time we had the larger cabinet up in Baba's Square the driver announced that they had to leave, and could we first quickly unload the other horizontal cabinets so they could depart.

Where to find two replacement strong men to assist with the final delicate delivery section?

David Hobson happened to be there, since it was a Monday and he and Glenda were doing the Monday morning reading. His offer to be a strong man was eagerly accepted. And then suddenly Georgio [a local young man] appeared, having had a spontaneous impulse to come up to Baba's House on his way in to University classes. Thank you Baba!

Through all the herculean efforts of the actual lifting team, and the, at times, intense discussions about how and where to hold, support, lean, lift or shift, there was a supportive audience on standby offering reminders about protecting backs (and hands and heads!) and quietly repeating His Name. Somehow - and only by Beloved Baba's Grace - no one sustained any permanent injury during the whole operation and no damage was done to the grassed areas or the various surfaces in transit. It

felt like nothing short of a miracle.

The successful installation had also depended on work at a distance around whether and how we were going to be able to turn the cabinet upright once it was in the rather small space of the Baba's House Archive Room. Nad Wolinska in Meherabad had agreed to do 3D digital drawings for us after the pilgrim season ended, and then when the pace accelerated and the need became suddenly urgent, Paul Morris, who was by now back in Perth, willingly and promptly completed these most important auxiliary items. It was possible. There was little margin for error. And it worked.

Within a week or so of this amazing day of installation we heard of the cancellation of the Women's Sahavas, and then followed the closing of all buildings on Avatar's Abode and restrictions on physical proximity and the number of people who could meet and carry on activity of any sort outside of their homes. Our usual ways of working needed serious review. And plans for what we were thinking we might 'do' have since changed, and changed, and changed again. All in His Mystery and Marvellous Divine Plan, and a way for us to keep trying to hold ever more firmly to His Daaman apparently.

Slowly as initial lockdown restrictions were eased in Queensland we began to be able to discuss some options for fabrication and display preparations on site. Two people at a time. Working on projects in the back of the bookstore became a more easily 'negotiated' option, since all meetings were cancelled and the bookstore itself was closed.

By another miracle of sorts, and as a result of slow and steady efforts

of several loyal folk, including John Parry and his family, Jethro Hitchens, Daniel and Carolyn Montague, Ananda Cross, and Sue Jamison, there was the first display ready by Silence Day. Many details were yet to be resolved, and signage was lacking altogether. But pilgrims on that day could visit some of the important items associated with Meher Baba's 1958 visit.

Also on Silence Day the sandals, which since 1988 had been on display in Baba's Room in a small wooden and glass case, were placed on His Bed resting simply on a cushion as they had been in decades past. This could only be done because folk were kept at a distance from the furnishings. Those sandals worn by Beloved Baba will now be kept mostly in the new archival display storage and only brought out for special events and occasions, due to the observed deterioration in recent years at regular inspections and the threat from decades of UV eventually impacting the life of the leather itself. It is anticipated that the Archives Room at Baba's House will be open during events, supervised access hours, and by arrangement, so that the sandals can still be visited.

For now we have so very much for which to be grateful. And there's plenty of work to get on with in these unusual times ... as the sun shines and the flowers bloom after a night's rain at Avatar's Abode.

Jai Meher Baba!

Avatar's Abode archives update

*David Bowling – Archives
Committee Convenor*

Archival work has been continuing during the Avatar's Abode shutdown caused by the COVID-19 situation. We have begun to upload scans of original documents from the collection, many of them handwritten, to a searchable online archival documents database. Some of these have been transcribed to help with readability. These can be viewed via a link on the Avatar's Abode Trust website at https://avatarsabode.com.au/avatars_abode_trust_archives.html.

The Avatar's Abode photographic collection now totals over 2,300 photos. Gusi Carpenter continues to work on the photographic database scanning new images and negatives and adding and/or updating information connected to each image. This year we started sharing these images with the worldwide Baba family on Zenfolio and they can be viewed at <https://avatarsabodecollection.zenfolio.com/> or from a link on the Avatar's Abode Trust website at https://avatarsabode.com.au/avatars_abode_trust_archives.html.

All of this is a work in progress and more items will be added as they are completed.

The opportunity to work on the archives is a rare privilege. It brings us into intimate contact with those items in the collection that bear the fragrance of Baba's visit to Avatar's Abode and the love of His Australian lovers.

Would you like to become involved? At present we need a small team of volunteers who are comfortable working from home in an online environment to begin the very large job of detailed cataloguing of the collection documents.

Contact us on avatarsabodearchives@gmail.com for more information.

News from Meher House

Jennifer Keating



Photo by Jennifer Keating.

This photo of Baba's room at Meher House doesn't show how it is usually arranged during lockdown.

All the photos touched by Baba and given for Meher House are undergoing archival treatment, restoration and re-framing. For example the main photo we have above the chair has been removed and in its place is one that has been archivally treated and returned.

Sit With Your Heart

Sit with your heart for a few moments.
Just quiet mind chatter briefly and let silence be.

You may find something rather amazing
Beneath everyday anxiety and worries and busy-ness.

You may find a pool,
A deep spring of gratitude –
Of gratefulness in the acceptance
Of all the opportunities
Everything that happens to each of us
Offers us.

Ah, but you may also find
This pool is only accessible
In this moment, in this day.
One can drink from it
Only out of cupped hands.

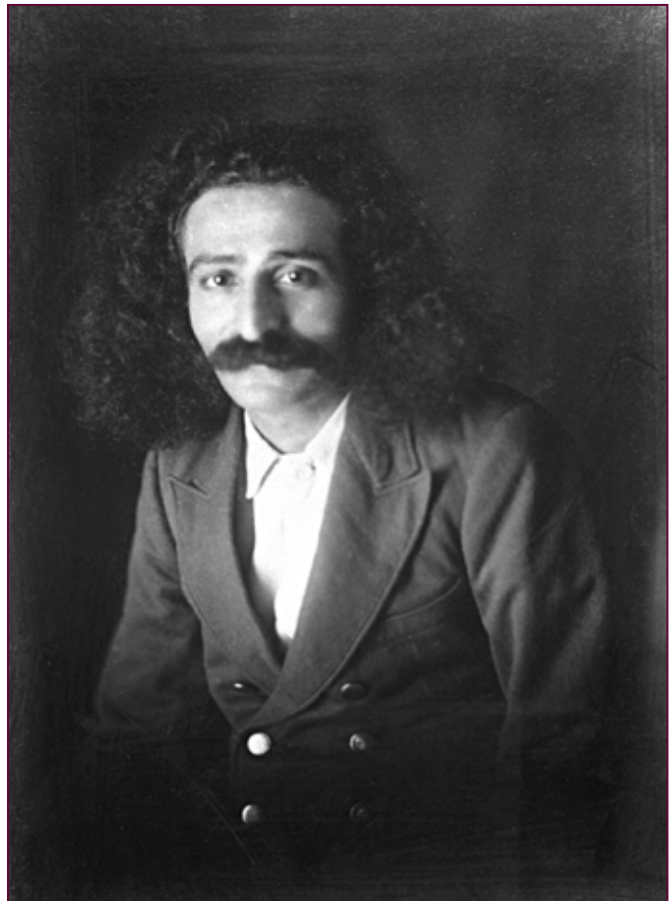
Can you bring buckets? Huge containers?
Can you hoard this life-sustaining water?
Store it up against shortages in the future,
Future droughts?
Not in my experience.

You might find you can only come to this pool
When you need it
And drink from cupped hands
Enough to quench your current thirst,
Supply your current needs.

Trust
This pool is not prone to drought –
Unless

Mind forgets gratitude
Holds onto thoughts of entitlement
Becomes resentful
Judges all around by measures of expectations
Shitting 'shoulds' on all it sees and hears
Poisoning the pool.

Now what to do?
Try letting mind open once again to trust,
To acceptance,
Rooting out resentments
Refusing to entertain thoughts of entitlement
Jettisoning judgements
Emptying itself of expectations.



Meher Baba, 11 March 1930, Bijapur India. Photographer:
Narayanrao Kulkarni. © Meher Nazar Publications.

Approach the pool again.
Watch the waters clear
Cup your hands
And stoop once more to drink
And taste the sweetness of the purity of gratitude,
Its graciousness.

Drink deep
And be sustained through all times
Even times of terrible darkness
And sometimes seeming overwhelming challenge.

It seems the waters of Heart's pool,
The spring of hope and healing,
Always renews itself
If we but give it the chance –
And remember to trust,
To accept,
To appreciate.

*Lorraine Brown,
April 2020*

Seemingly True

Seemingly lost
 seemingly found
 seeming feet on solid ground
 until buried six feet down

round, round the merry-go-round.

Seemingly right
 seemingly wrong
 seeming judge with law headstrong
 bangs his gavel all day long

pay, pay the price goes his song.

Seemingly Jack
 seemingly Jill
 seeming pail ready to fill
 all with darkness deeper still

down, down the tumbling hill.

Seemingly fast
 seemingly slow
 seeming days perform their show
 burning winds and falling snow

time, time stops where mind can't go.

Seemingly joy
 seemingly pain
 seeming sense that makes life sane
 weaving threads of form and name

wine, wine spills in Lover's Lane
 wine, wine spills in Lover's Lane.

Ross Keating

Trust

Being held in the arms of your mother
 Baby trust.
 Holding the hands of mother and
 father
 Walking still a challenging adventure
 Toddler trust.
 Body moving and growing
 Movement trust.
 Then changes, dangers, fears,
 Insecurities taking root in mind
 Teenage doubts permeating
 Simple trust.
 Trust assumed to be a state
 And disappointment
 As if something foundational
 Started giving way beneath you.
 Growing awareness of vulnerability,
 Impermanence, fragility,
 Disease, injury, war, age,
 Grieving for trust, the state of trust,
 Lost.
 Grief, anger, suspicion, anxiety.
 And where is trust?
 The state of trust has vanished.
 Now begins the gradual discovery
 Of the discipline of trust,
 The practice of trust,
 The slow dawning realization
 That the only sense of security
 possible
 Is finding an on-going relationship
 To the Mystery of Life –
 Scenting the essence of Love
 Flowing through all life's aspects,
 Beautiful and seeming ugly,
 Learning to lean
 On this relationship
 Without expectation.
 Practising the discipline of trust
 Involves learning to accept
 All
 That happens in life
 As part of life
 And ultimately, worthwhile
 experiencing
 To uncover what is lasting
 What is Real
 In the ever-changing manifestations
 Of Life.

The certainty of awakened Heart's
 Recognition of the Beloved
 The sacred relationship
 That underpins, permeates,
 Flows through all creation
 Infinite and One
 At the same moment.
 The Beloved Companion
 One's own Self
 Lord of all hearts and one's own heart
 Separate and yet not –
 Words cannot encompass it –
 This trust is deeper than words can
 plumb.
 Like all disciplines,
 Like all art,
 It is better to practice
 Than to preach.

*Lorraine Brown
 May 2020*

News from Meherabad

Wendy Borthwick, July 2020

Meherabad is intensely green and lush. It's been raining off and on for about five weeks now and the rain has been generous and steady. The parched brown fields and sad gardens have transformed into a tropical, technicolour paradise. Lakes have sprung into existence, trees are flowering, the wells are full and a bright emerald carpet now covers the rocky wasteland. Goats and cows graze happily. Healthy crops of grains and vegetables flourish everywhere. It's slightly surreal and entirely magical. Locals



Meher Baba's Samadhi, Upper Meherabad, July 2020.
Photo by Samarpan Hattendorf.

say they haven't seen a monsoon like this for twenty years. In fact, the farmers say they don't want any more rain at present or the crops will be ruined. Nonetheless, there was a deluge last night, all night. Reliable sources say six inches fell.

The Samadhi is closed. Totally closed with even the threshold barred with a half screen. The police have ordered that no one should linger or sit in the vicinity and security guards are on duty to enforce this at all times. You can walk past or around, pausing briefly as you do so. No flowers or garlands can be offered, the entire outer area including the ladies' graves and covered portico is fenced off. There is no attendant on duty; the place is deserted except for guards and the odd passing pilgrim. It is mysterious and bemusing. What exactly does this mean? We don't know; we surmise that Baba has gone into seclusion.

We like to visit there from time to time, not with any fixed routine but just when we feel like it at different times of the day or evening. We walk around the Samadhi, offer a silent greeting or prayer, wonder at the total absence of people, marvel at the enchanted green landscape, gaze at the beauty of the white dome glowing with sunset colours. This complete, forced abandonment of the Samadhi (except for cleaning which is carried out each morning) is new. Earlier in the lockdown, people would gather around in a social distancing way especially at arti times. It felt strange but was also comforting. My mind has nothing to say about this new state of affairs; it is confounded.

The entire area surrounding Meherabad is in hard lockdown. Essential shopping such as food and medicines is available during restricted hours. Senior citizens are not allowed to go out at all. The nearby city of Ahmednagar is closed off for most people and purposes. Travel to Pune is only allowed with a special pass. These are not easy to get and are basically issued only for medical emergencies. COVID-19 has still not come to the neighbouring village of Arangaon but it has crept further down the road in our direction from Ahmednagar. Hence the strict lockdown.

But life, of course, goes on. Apparently there are one hundred or so foreigners living in or around Meherabad

Continued on next page

at present. Americans, Iranians, Australians, Chinese, Europeans, French, South Americans, Canadians and British are all here, and there may be more I've missed. It's hard to believe as you don't see them much. There are no artis or meetings. The Dhuni is still lit each month according to Baba's instructions, but it is carefully controlled by the Trust and people are asked not to go. Two Iranian stalwarts have taken up baking bread in David Bowling's New Life Bakery. Last week they filled one hundred orders for the delicious sourdough. You're most likely to spot foreign pilgrims out walking in ones or twos, masked up, relaxing in the cool of the evening; or else bump into them at Jalu's little grocery store (open for restricted hours). Actually, in the early morning or

late afternoon, Upper Meherabad has become a sought after recreation zone for locals and others seeking fresh air, greenery and now smooth bitumen roads. Jogging, running, picnicking, even car lessons have become popular pastimes around the gentle hills.

The dogs don't much like this weather. They are used to their nice, dry desert and they find this muddy wet environment disturbing. Dogs are a big part of Meherabad life, for better or for worse. There are lots of them around. Baba's Mandali member Mansari, who was the caretaker of the Samadhi for decades until her death in 1997, set this scene. Her dogs were her devoted companions during her solitary life at Upper Meherabad. She called them her children and she always had several around her. She



Samadhi in the rain. Photo by Samarpan Hattendorf..



Samadhi showing the screen closing the entrance. Photo by Samarpan Hattendorf.

was a brave and spirited lady, tiny in stature but big in heart and personality. I always remember the first words she spoke to me as I approached the Samadhi for the first time in the early seventies. Chuckling, she regarded me with twinkling eyes and said, “Baba’s at His work, grinding ego!” What did that mean? I was disconcerted but also slightly thrilled. Certainly not a clichéd greeting.

Our dog child is a five month old young lady now. We found her by the side of the road as a four week old puppy. She was so pretty with her four white socks and white tipped tail, we couldn’t just leave her. We were given practical help and support by two wonderful women who do a great job here helping the dog world in all sorts of ways. They have a serious commitment to ongoing feeding of stray dogs, a desexing program, housing dogs in trouble, providing veterinary help, finding homes for dogs. As one of them said, “It’s all about helping dogs, one dog at a time.” Many others in this community help out with the problem of unwanted dogs (common to most Indian villages) and slowly but surely the picture is improving. I think Mansari would be happy.

The Avatar Meher Baba Trust has its hands full monitoring and managing things. The Trust is keen to open the Samadhi and the Meher Pilgrim Retreat for His lovers but the laws of the land and safety concerns must come first. The time of this anxiously awaited re-opening is known only to Him. Meanwhile, the Trust supports all the staff and workers as well as handing out food supplies to more than a thousand poor people. The free hospital and clinic provided by the Trust remain open and busy; full safety and hygiene measures are in place to protect both the staff and patients. The Trust has also provided food and accommodation for stranded pilgrims and helped where necessary with travel costs. They have donated to government bodies committed to fighting COVID-19 and



The East Room, Upper Meherabad. Photo by Wendy Borthwick.

its effects on vulnerable people. It is a difficult time for the Trust members as there are many conflicting pressures and demands and no certainty as to what each day will bring as the virus continues to escalate in India.

One day, Meherose (our daughter) and I asked Janet Judson if we could visit the East Room with her. For me, it is one of the most beautiful places on earth. Originally built by the British as a water tank it has thick rock walls and was dug into the ground. In the late nineteen twenties Baba used the east side of the tank for the Meher Ashram, Baba’s school for boys. In 1933 the East Room became home to Baba’s close eastern women mandali including Mehera, Mani and four others. Their seclusion was strict; at this time Mehera was not allowed to hear a man’s voice

Continued on next page

or even hear a man's name. All six ladies lived a life of obedience, purity and poverty sequestered in this stone room. In recent years, Janet has led a team of people in meticulously and sensitively restoring the East Room to reflect these sacred days. To enter it is to pass into another realm. It feels like the embodiment of feminine, spiritual beauty in its purest and highest form. Certainly, for us, this visit has been a highlight of our time here in Meherabad.

John (my husband), Meherose and I discussed one evening this incredible closure of the Samadhi a bit more than fifty years after Baba dropped His physical body and was buried in the crypt. John and I have been coming here for almost those fifty-odd years and Meherose since 1981. All that time, the Samadhi has been for us, as for most of His lovers, the Holiest of Holies. Meher Baba Himself said in the thirties, "In the future Meherabad will

be like Jerusalem. For my spiritual work it is the best place. It will always be the centre of My work." And in 1938, while strolling on the Hill He said, "This whole Universe is Mine, but this place is especially Mine." We lovers fortunate enough to visit here over the years, have been privileged to enter His tomb shrine and place our heads and hearts at His feet. Bal Natu, one of His close disciples, described it as, "A journey to His Universal heart." Now Baba has clearly indicated we must seek Him elsewhere; and as He has said, there is nowhere to find Him but asleep within our own hearts.

"Once I am awake in your heart, you too would awake and remain awake for all time. Therefore, repeat My name constantly and awaken Me in your hearts so that you become awake for all time."



The Tin Shed and entrance to the Museum at Upper Meherabad, July 2020. Photo by Samarpan Hattendorf.



Lakes have sprung up around Meherabad. Photo by Samarpan Hattendorf, July 2020.

Liminal Space

A report. A narrative. An essay. A poem.

Jake Horsey

It is a curious thing, those pieces of life that stick out. The little fragments of early childhood, the vague memories of school, perhaps a word someone said, a particular old building or room; I recall the smell of the Nambour Book exchange and of footballs, I loved the smell of tobacco in my father's empty cigarette packets, I remember being totally unafraid of the dark on a few wild occasions, and I remember hearing Bach's Toccata by a friend's brother learning from Sam Saunders, and falling in love with the guitar. I remember my father's strong hands from working with steel and being carried to bed from the car on late nights.

There are scenes, words, silences, moments, exchanges that seem to echo; they just echo – like they weren't stored in the memory but became the very fabric of the mind, the walls, or the body of it, like you can almost run your fingers along them. Sometimes, unexpectedly, they just resurface, or you bump into them on your way somewhere else in your mind and you say, "Oh it's you, hello, anyhow I have other stuff to do. I will surely see you again later."

Since coming to Meher Baba I have been continually moving, changing, uprooting and transplanting, dying and being reborn, but never fully either. My 'previous address' list for my teaching registration is very, very long and it doesn't include all the in-between places, the waiting to move, the moving, and the restless never arriving places, the here I am but

there I am too places. Sometimes all a hobbit wants is his pipe and an old guitar to string some lovely tunes on the breeze for his Muse, and along comes another road to cross, another bridge, an errand, and Gandalf whistling a little melody that becomes a thousand new tunes scintillating along the dusty road. I remember finishing a cracker of a night waiting tables in Brisbane City Hall and at night's end being the last dead man standing; packing chairs and wiping tables, pouring half empty wine bottles into each other to make "new" bottles for Brisbane's elite, and then hearing somebody whistling "don't worry, be happy" from somewhere in the great hall – and it just echoed and echoed.

One thing that has echoed over the years for me is a little presentation a teacher in training did when I was at University studying teaching. We had to have a go in front of the class teaching for our assessment. This young girl's first little lesson to kickstart her teaching career involved corn starch. She mixed the corn starch with water till it was runny then she pressed it with her fingers and the mixture appeared solid and hard. One moment it was fluid and then with a little pressure it was solid. Her lesson wasn't on corn starch or non-Newtonian liquids though. She was teaching us about "liminal space". Liminal space is the transitional space, the threshold in a rite of passage, where two different states meet but neither of them could really be said

to exist truly. Our class coordinator turned to us all after the girl had finished her lesson and said, "You are all in liminal space."

We seem to rush through the liminal spaces of life, they scare us like the dark night, we don't like the way they seem to shift and metamorphose unexpectedly. I think it's the uncertainty that gets to us. Yet our Beloved Master doesn't like us rushing, and so he suspends us in these spaces, holds us there as long as we can hold our breath, then he lifts our heads up lovingly to gasp for air again before dunking us back in the liminal. When "To go on or not to go on" equally spells disaster, as Francis says, at this point one is ready for the Perfect Master. One day perhaps we will die, neither here nor there, but somewhere along the lines of the liminal.

This word liminal doesn't just echo though, this year it started calling me, it was singing up from the deeps. It kind of started when I wrote a silly little poem and sent it to Paul Lee Morris for approval.

The poem went,

*Hurrah for the lover's saddle, hurrah
for the Beloved's call
Hurrah for the night road travel, son,
to carry me westward ho
To carry me westward ho, my son,
that's where the seekers stray
The air is sweet where oceans meet a
thousand mile away*

*Then give your horses rein, across the
open plain*

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*We'll crack the dawn with hoof and
saddle into the fledgling day
And a runnin' we'll attend the song
sung from Beloved's lips
The air is sweet where oceans meet a
thousand mile away*

*And through deserts empty and nights
forlorn
Through troubles thick and heart's
great storm
Carry me westward ho, my lord, that's
where the lovers stray
The air is sweet where oceans meet a
thousand mile away*

*Hear the swagman's cry, the broken
singer's pain
Across the great divide beyond the
dusty plain
Hurrah for the star trod traveler,
westward he did stray
The air is sweet where oceans meet a
thousand mile away*

*If you hear the windswept cries of love's
lone traveller on the night
Beneath the fragrant blossoms of the
stars in westward flight
Sing hurrah for that one for whom
under night road drifts astray
Where air is sweet and oceans meet a
thousand mile away*

Paul asked what I meant by the line “where oceans meet”. I suppose I thought it sounded poetic, I was thinking the ocean of illusion and the Ocean of Truth, the lover and the Beloved, but I was also just thinking of Augusta the town here where the Indian and Southern Oceans meet, but actually I didn't really know what I meant, and in a stroke of honesty told Paul that I didn't quite know. Then a funny thing happened. The harder I thought about it the more I felt at a loss to knowing what I meant by the line. I focused and focused on it, but my clarity just slipped more and more until I was completely

lost as to why I had written such a thing in the first place. At this point it seemed important, like a detective mystery that I had stepped into. I was genuinely surprised at the way something so simple had suddenly displaced me mentally in such a big way, like I could no longer add 1 and 1. I knew the answer but I couldn't find it. It seemed insane. It was. It continues to be.

Coincidentally around this same time it was lock down in Western Australia. For us, living 25 minutes from an already isolated Margaret River township meant that lock down hardly changed things, but rather gave credence to our already quite isolated existence. I was listening to podcasts each day while cycling to an old church, my beard was getting long and I was drinking Scotch and Whisky at night like Father Christmas. Nobody ever stopped me from entering the church because, well, there was no one in sight for miles. I was reading a little Nietzsche, obsessively listening to podcasts on history, I was a family man, a teacher on holidays, a try hard poet, I took the dog for walks through the bush, I played board games with my children, I talked to my wife about the French Revolution, and she drank coffee and wine and chatted all in one swirl. The stock markets were crashing and people were freaking out about the virus that was coming.

And somewhere in this gawping liminality a couple of days after writing the poem and forgetting how to add one and one together, I read something by Ibn Arabi, the great Andalusian Perfect Master. It was about the Barzakh, an Arabic word and he was mysteriously referring to the line in the Quran: He released

the two seas, meeting [side by side]; between them is a barrier [so] neither of them transgresses. This barrier referred to in the Quran is the Barzakh and Ibn Arabi develops this term and its mystical references immensely in his work, bringing the opposites together, contrasting them, developing them, delineating them, and then somehow leading one to the Barzakh; the limit between them, a straight line untainted by either. In a strange way, I had found the answer. That is what I meant in my poem, even though I didn't know it at the time of writing. Of course I have no idea what Barzakh really means.

These terms are helpful though. There is so much talk about the opposites now in society; men and women, black and white, gay and straight, left and right, the rich and poor, religious and atheist, freedom and oppression. Each seems to be narrowing down on their particular cause or identification for better or worse. The news daily serves up fresh presentations of this Olympic competition of ideas and opinions, definitions of right and wrong – it's all over Facebook, Instagram, Youtube. The tug of war is beautiful, it is dangerous, don't fall in it, don't get swept up, let the friction grind you, let it touch your heart, but don't bind your soul to it. It is directing you to the liminal – the Barzakh. Children are being raised in it. Society is walking blindfolded straight into it. Civilisation is going to collapse in it. Look at America. She's suffocating. Baba lovers circulated an email about the good times being over in America. They are. But the God times are ahead. We are at the threshold.

Baba has said that a great spiritual rebirth would start in America.

Don't be fooled by the gloom. Hang on tight. We are entering the great liminality of the Avataric period. The age of Intuition is dawning, Man will no longer be governed by reason, as Neitzche noted God is dead. We killed him with our egg headedness, our obsession with technology, science, gadgets. We crucified him on the rusted frame of the autocar twice. We lauded space exploration, replaced the old men in white robes with new men in ... well white lab coats. It's the same old business. Yet we didn't quite kill Him. Our Beloved loves humour and in His benevolence, He quietly whispers from our chasmal ignorance, "I'm not dead yet."

For our Beloved has crucified Himself so that we might let Him drive us from within. Everyone is driven but who knows the driver? Amidst the buckling metal of this machine age in ruins sounds the Beloved's Call. We stand at the threshold of a new age. The dawning of a new cycle in time, the ushering in of a fresh spiritual dispensation. The place where two oceans meet. The Barzakh. Our Beloved leans out across the broken machinery with a glass of that wine of love. A tear of

compassion. A wink of mischief. A look of Knowing. Another errand perhaps?

2 Months Later...

...We moved ... again. Closer to my school. Away from Margaret River, close to Augusta. Elizabeth found a better place to call home. It is new, different, the same. The ocean is closer, the wind and forest sounds outside the windows make me feel like I'm at the bottom of a deep ocean. I look out, it is dark. It isn't dawn but it could be. A new term starts tomorrow. I need to update my address list for my teacher registration. I can feel the two oceans breathing out off the coastline where the Indian and Southern oceans meet in perfect symmetry. I brush up against something, perhaps it's their waters coursing along the shoreline of my being, an old memory perhaps, or more of that fabric used to weave the walls of our droplet-selves. I pause and run my fingers through it. Somewhere between the inbreath and the outbreak is a line. Someday, when the Master whims it so, I will follow that line. I will follow it home.

Raising the Flag at Avatar's Abode

Once when a king
had conquered a new land
he would raise his flag
on the highest hill
as a sign of victory.

When the King of kings,
the Ancient One,
arrived on Kiels Mountain
His seven-coloured flag
was raised to signal His arrival.

*Here is the King, said the flag,
Who is not a conqueror,
Who does not take by force,
but who allows Himself
to be captured and
suffer for our sake.*

*Here is the King, said the flag,
Who does not take up arms
on our behalf
but gives us the courage
to fight the battle
against our own complacency.*

Let us welcome our true King
once more onto His Abode.
May the beauty of His Presence
unfurl Itself
like a seven-coloured flag
across the blue sky of our hearts.

Ross Keating



This photo was taken of the big storm that was barreling towards WA on the 23/05/2020. The day before the anniversary of His car accident in Prague Oklahoma, in 1952.

Meher Baba and the ‘Old Northern Road’

Ray Kerkhove

These are days of ‘lock down’. Perhaps the coronavirus pandemic impels us to ‘localise’ pilgrimage? Doubtless Baba foresaw this predicament? Through relentless travel, He kindly provided us more ‘local Baba places’ than any previous Advent.

I’ve long been a fan of appreciating sites ‘already at my feet’, on account of what Baba said:

“Whenever I visit a place ... however short a time, its spiritual atmosphere becomes greatly elevated” (*Lord Meher* Vol. 4: 1350).

During the Middle Ages, all over the globe, pilgrims gouged out ‘sacred ways’ between saints’ shrines. Some even created sacred walks between important churches and temples. How much more fortunate are we, to have paths the Avatar Himself created and used.

Here follow a few ‘highlights’ concerning routes Baba took between Avatar’s Abode to Brisbane. For those unfamiliar with the journey, it’s the ‘back road’ once called the ‘Old Northern Road’ – originally an ancient track Aboriginal people used to journey to and from the sacred bunya lands. This ‘back road’ offers a delightful trip through mountains, forests and a string of towns including Beerburrum, Caboolture, Morayfield, and Burpengary, till it becomes Gympie Road from Petrie into Brisbane. After Brisbane, Baba took Kingsford Smith Drive out to the airport.

It’s a road I’ve gotten very used to As a historian, I’ve had to provide texts for public signs, heritage themes for new developments and other research for local Councils and

Indigenous groups. Coincidentally, this is often along parts of Baba’s route.

Beerburrum

This is a favourite of mine, being the only place Baba stopped in Queensland between Brisbane and Avatar’s Abode. Worth visiting is the old petrol station where Baba halted and the men refreshed themselves. To this day, it maintains as a type of ‘mechanics museum’ of heritage photos and antique items.

The staff have been active in promoting Beerburrum as Australia’s first and largest ANZAC soldier settlement. Thus Baba here entered the heart of the Australian ANZAC tradition. In fact, the war cemetery is a short walk from where He stopped.

Beerburrum in the 1910s-1920s was quite larger than today, being central to the numerous tiny ANZAC soldier farms stretching from Elimbah to Bribie Passage to Glasshouse Mountains. Though the movement started the Coast’s pineapple industry, most of the farms were abandoned. Suffering poverty, and physical and mental ailments, quite a few war heroes lived and died here.

Beerburrum was the ‘entrance’ to Glasshouse Mountains Dreaming pathways. Mt Beerburrum (Green Leek Parrot) is the ‘Old Grannie’ of the Ancestral Dreaming family.

Josephite Church, Caboolture

Still precisely on the road Baba was driven, at Caboolture, sits Mary McKillop Hall – part of St Peter’s church and school – built just 7 years before He travelled here (1951). It was run by nuns of the only distinctly

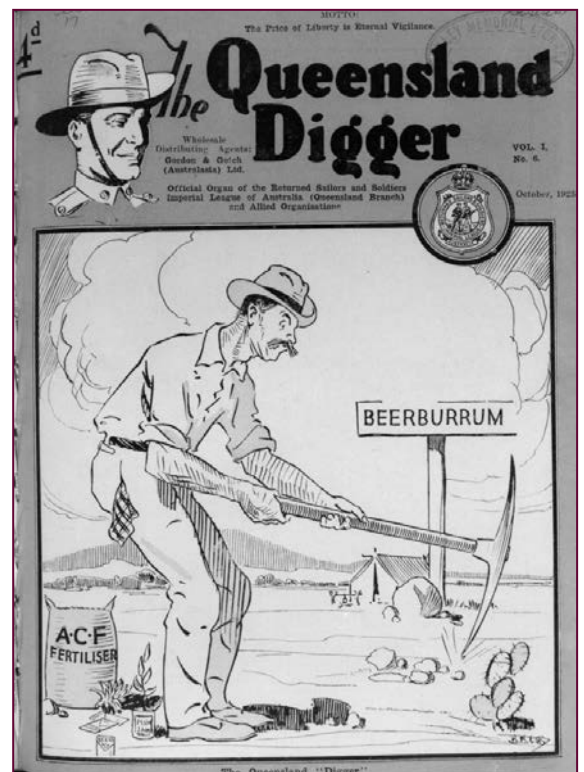


Illustration of a farmer working in the field at Beerburrum, 1925. Source: John Oxley Library, State Library of Queensland. https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Beerburrum_Soldier_Settlement

Australian Catholic Order: the Josephites or ‘Brown Joeys.’ More about them later...

Dalapi’s Forest and Bora, Petrie

I was recently requested to write the official national (*Australian Dictionary of Biography*) biography of Dalaipi – southern Queensland’s most famous and most celebrated Aboriginal rain-maker (medicine man). He died in the mid-1860s and was remembered as a remarkable orator and negotiator, unusually wise, moderate and insightful. His *Indictments* (1858-1859) form some of the earliest written Aboriginal response to Christian theology.

It ‘just so happens’ that Dalaipi’s home, bora (ceremonial ground) and favourite ceremonial (rain-making) site all lay on the route Baba took through Petrie. One ring of the bora (which is a set of circular mounds) now lies under the Petrie Roundabout. Every traveller goes past this when journeying through Petrie.

So Baba must have gone round and round the roundabout – the ancient bora ring ...

The old homestead Dalaipi helped build – Murrumba – was home to the Petrie family – Queensland’s most respected pioneers. It is now Our Lady of the Way Catholic School, but they have a ‘Dalaipi Hall’ and ‘Dalaipi Way’ (footpath) in his honour. The forest Dalaipi planted can still be seen.

‘Cinderella City’ and ‘Ekka’ (Exhibition Grounds)

Baba passed right through what is now Victoria Park and the Exhibition (Ekka) Grounds.

Victoria Park was once a huge Aboriginal camp (York’s Hollow) – centre of disputes with settlers – and later (even in the 1950s) a large ‘squatter camp’ for all the City’s migrants and unemployed. It has recently been expanded and will become the City’s biggest and most important green space.

One part of Victoria Park was carved off in 1876 as ‘the Ekka Grounds’ by ceremonially ‘dethroning’ Brisbane’s Aboriginal headman (King Sandy). The area then became Queensland’s ‘Mecca.’ Here Queensland’s country folk, sportsmen and Brisbaneites journeyed each August for Queensland’s biggest country fair – competing for prizes or spending all their money on festival rides. Well into the 1980s, Brisbane schools were virtually closed due to massive attendance of ‘Ekka Week.’

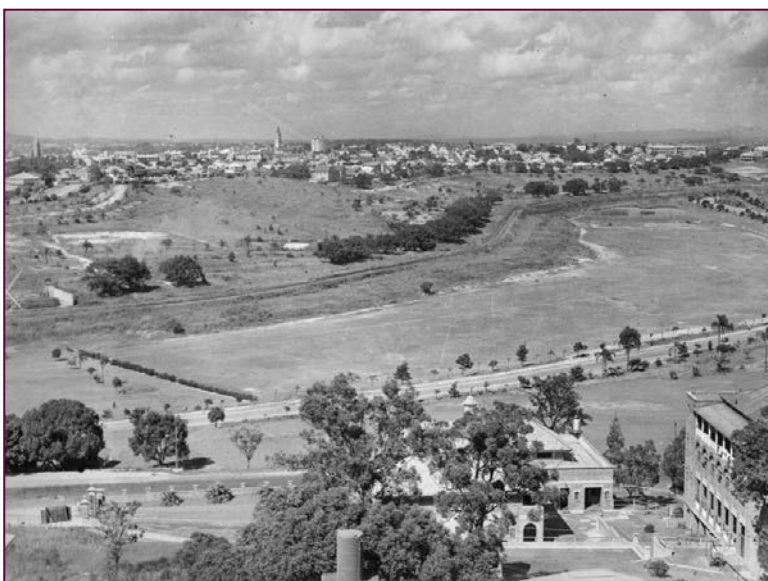
This ‘Ekka mania’ and the equally frivolous, passing nature of entertainments at Fortitude Valley earned Brisbane the title ‘Cinderella City’ – meaning, much show and but little substance.

Baba was driven the principal streets of Fortitude Valley. The Valley was and is the city’s most notorious, downtrodden region, but also its oldest Chinatown. It was typical of Baba to move around or visit areas of impoverishment and ethnic enclaves.

Baba’s Brisbane

Any movement around a CBD allows the Avatar to grace the oldest, most historic heart of a city. This was certainly the case for Brisbane, where Baba was driven along Queen Street and William Street – the oldest commercial, administrative and residential district of Queensland. This was where convicts and soldiers were barracked during Queensland’s Penal Era (1825-1842).

In terms of Baba ‘pre-history’ this is also where – at Portland Bridge Lounge on Queen Street – Rabia Martin and Baron von Frankenberg informally met others, in 1939, to



View from Herston to Brisbane CBD across Victoria Park, looking south, circa 1936. State Library Qld. Source: John Oxley Library, State Library of Queensland.

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Victoria_Park,_Brisbane

Continued on next page

promote Sufism for the first time in Queensland. The pair stayed at the Lyceum Club (now the Courier Building, opposite the GPO).

Thus it is significant that Baba passed right in front of the GPO. Also, to this day, the GPO is a very significant spot for Aboriginal people, being in 1855, where the dramatic hanging of one of their greatest resistance leaders, Dundalli, occurred. A monument is being planned for this location.

Just behind the GPO lies the Mary MacKillop Shrine-Chapel, honouring Australia's only 'recognised' Catholic saint, Mary McKillop (1842-1914), foundress of the 'Brown Joes' (Josephites) mentioned earlier. Her pragmatic Order worked wonders with 'bush children' at a time when education was completely neglected in rural Australia.

The little Chapel – beside Brisbane's oldest Catholic Church (St Stephens) – was where she worshipped 1869-1871 during her Queensland work. Her mentor, Father Julian Tenison

Woods (1832-1889) ran several retreats from here. Woods was an unusual person for Australia at his time, being both a mystic and a scientist-explorer. Today, this is one of Australia's main Josephite shrines.

Baba also passed near the Brisbane Synagogue (98 Margaret Street). This 1880s building is a rare Brisbane memorial to Jewish people who died in the Second World War. Many of its stained glass windows were donated by local families who had lost members in the Holocaust. It is now mostly used by Jewish Hasidic (mystical orthodox) groups.

River Road: Kingsford Smith Drive and Newstead House

Baba's route to and from Brisbane Airport was Kingsford Smith Drive. Named after the famous aviator, this is the same road all persons leaving or arriving in Brisbane by air take, to this very day.

The Drive is one of the most scenic

in Brisbane, offering sweeping views of the river. It is also practically unchanged for thousands of years – a much-used Aboriginal pathway broadened by the labour of convict women in the 1820s-1830s.

The road has recently been upgraded, with significant archaeological work and the addition of the Loes Bonney Riverwalk, honouring all Queensland women but especially Indigenous women. I was involved with both projects and their associated public artworks. We found an 1860s gun, a convict bridge, and tiles from one of the first Aboriginal hostels. All these testify to the rich and often bloody story of the road, which saw passionate horse-racing, intense Aboriginal-settler conflict, and much of the US Navy (during World War II).

At one end, Baba would have passed Newstead House. This – still the oldest intact residence in Brisbane – was host in the 19th Century to elite balls, policing Captains, Governors and powerful settlers. It was the scene of many of the decisions and conflicts that shaped early Queensland. In fact, it was here in 1824 that Oxley decided to place a penal colony (right here – when it was just a knoll in the bush – but the spot was moved to the current CBD) and it was here in 1859 that the cause for Separation (Queensland becoming a separate Colony) was decided.

Thus whether coincidentally or purposefully, Baba tactfully traversed many of the key locations that define Brisbane and Queensland historically, culturally and spiritually.



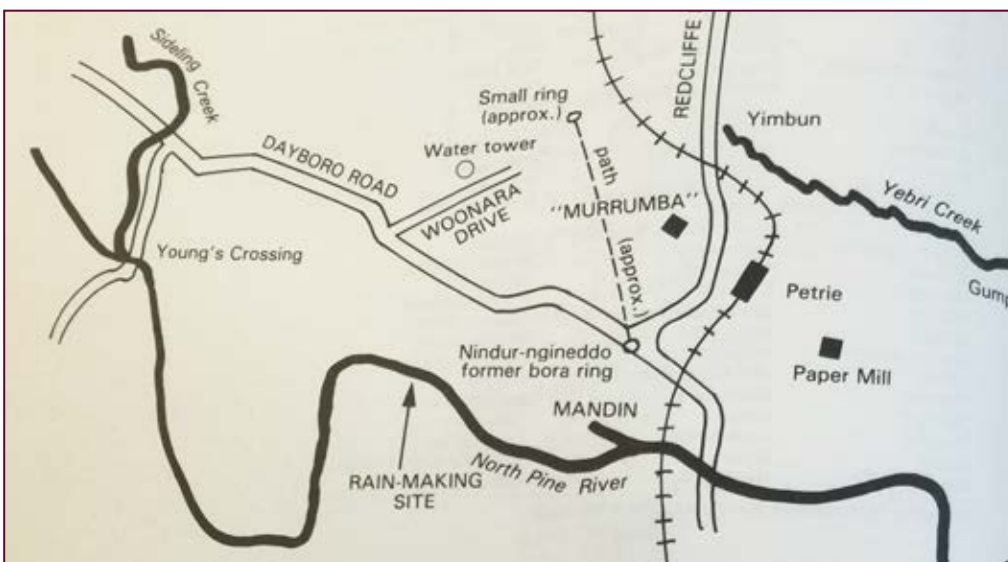
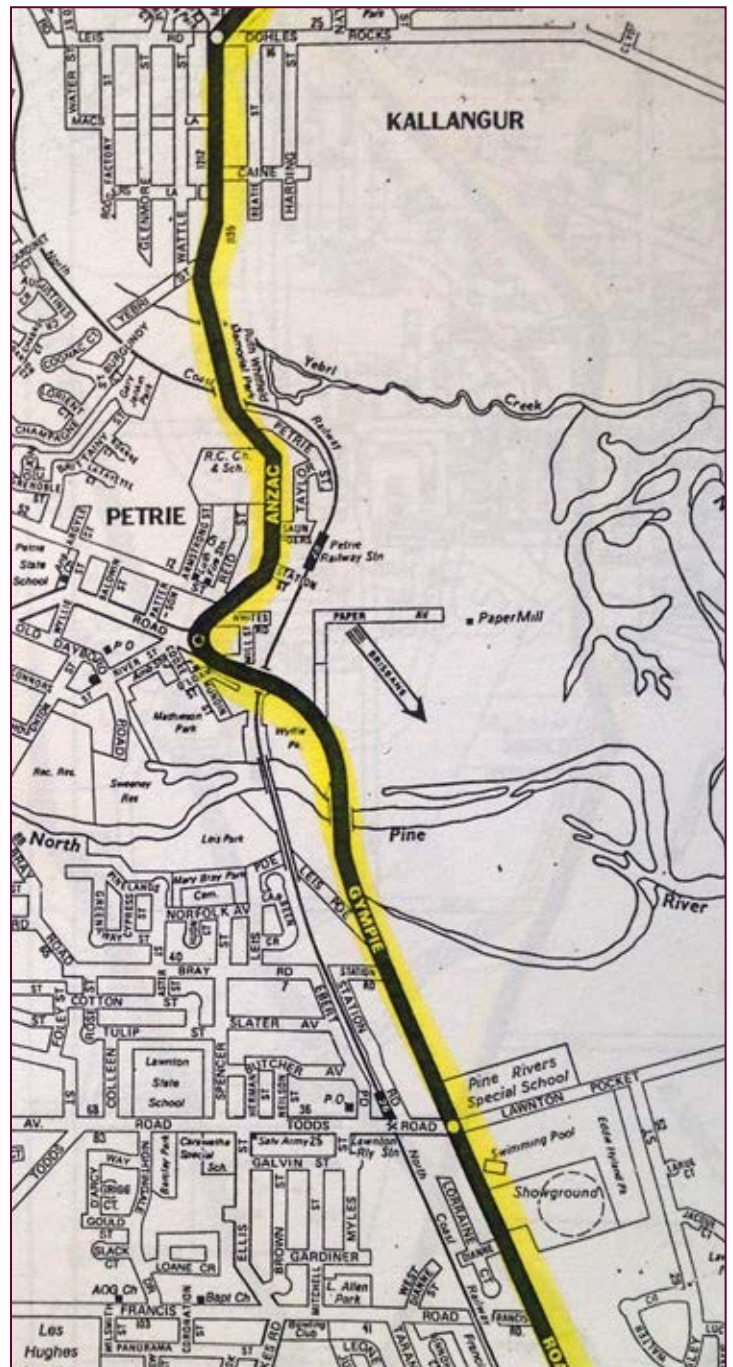
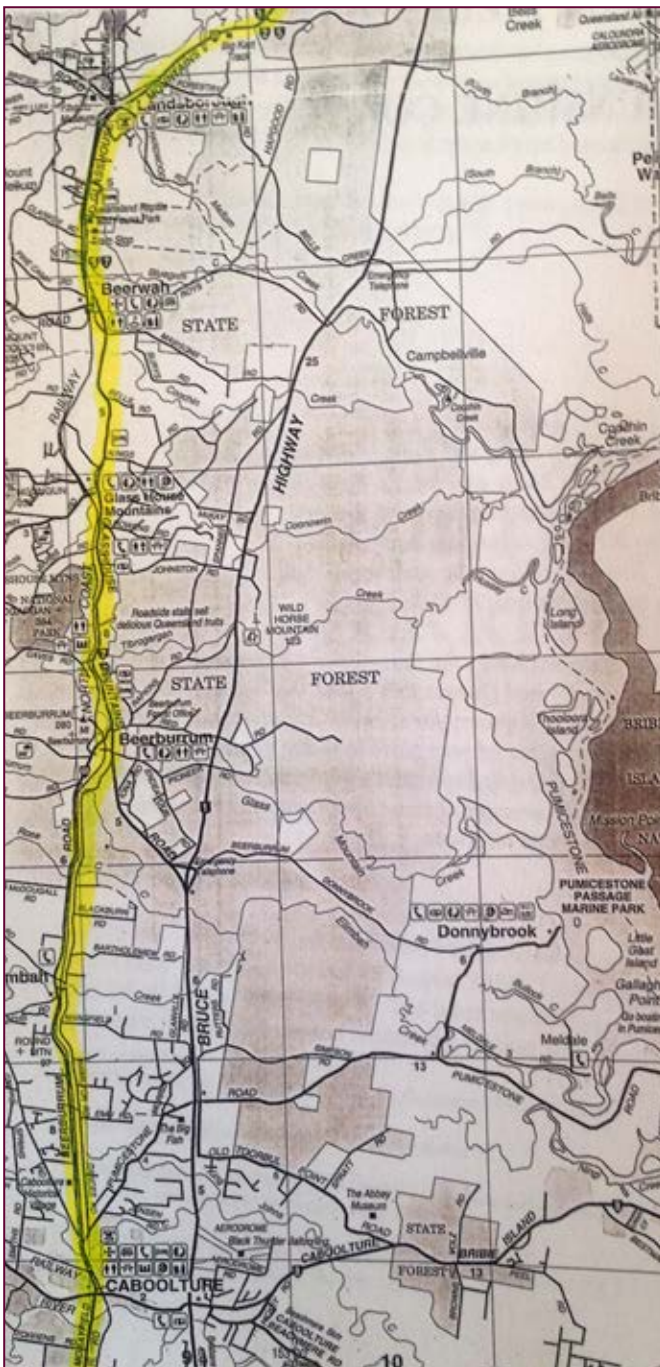
Rabia Martin.

Source: <https://sufipedia.org/en/personenregister/amerika/>



Sister Mary MacKillop.

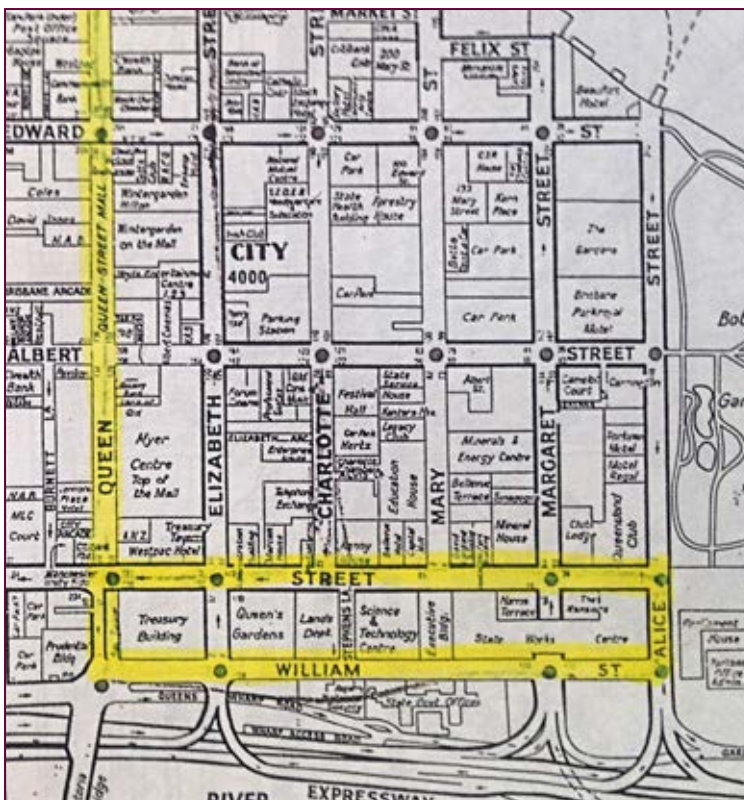
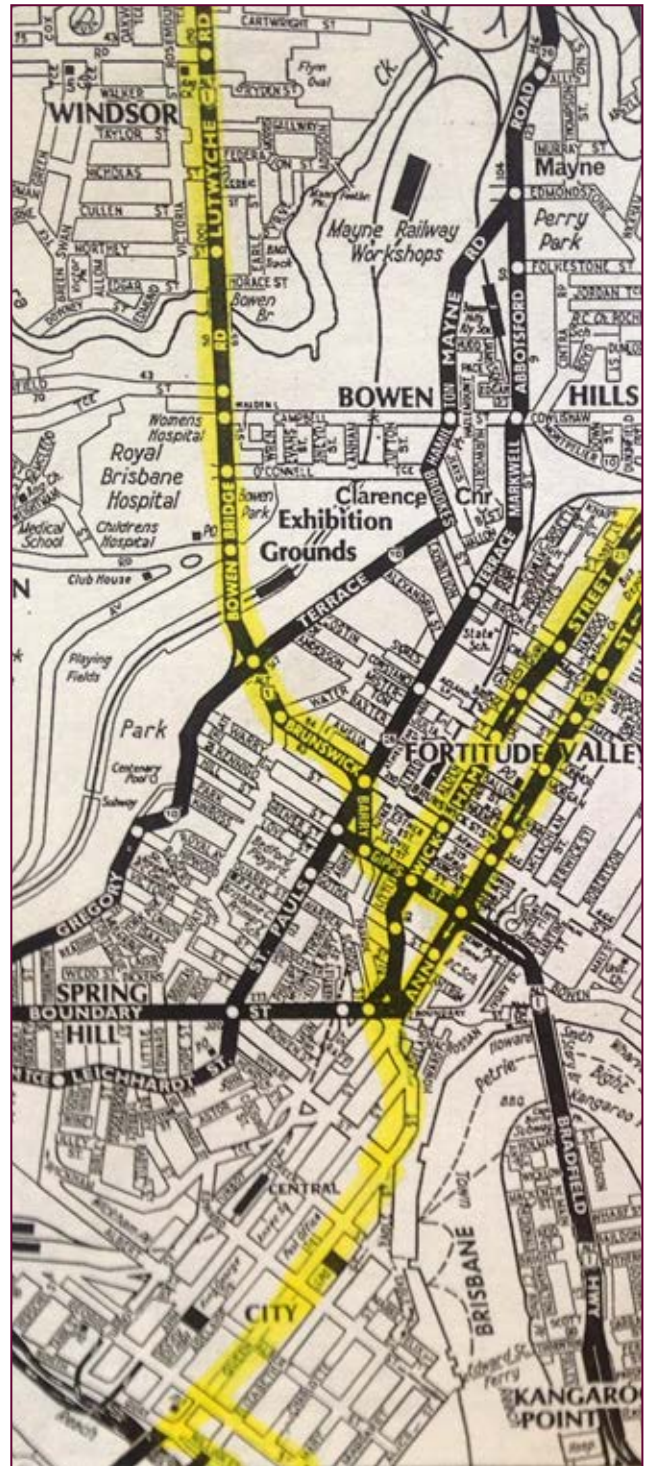
Source: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mary_MacKillop



Top left: The Old Northern Road through Landsborough, Beerwah, Beerburum and Caboolture.

Top Right: The Petrie area - ANZAC Road and Gympie Road roundabout.

Left: "Murrumba" and Aboriginal Pathways in the Petrie area.



Top left: Gypie Road to Lutwyche Road.

Top Right: Lutwyche Road to Fortitude Valley and Queen Street, Brisbane.

Left: Queen Street, William Street, Alice Street, George Street, Brisbane.



Beloved CD

A CD produced by the Meher Baba Association UK 2020

Reviewed by Kris Hines July 2020

An offering of love in words and music to mark the 50th anniversary of Beloved Avatar Meher Baba dropping His physical form

This newly released, beautiful and varied compilation by Baba lovers from the UK brings to us the gentle touch of the Beloved through the artists' love and gratitude for Him. It was conceived when the group, some of whom had attended the '69 Great Darshan, wanted to honour that event and to present Baba's message at this time in the world.

There is a mixture of poetry and music, and each item has been produced individually in studios around the UK but it flows well together. The project was supported by Pete Townshend and singer-songwriter Billy Nicholls, amongst others.

The overall feeling is of the kind of peace that comes from experiencing Baba's love and it has been offered with much care – including the beauty of the art work by Dudley Edwards and the quality of the Baba photos in the CD booklet. There is a sense of the artists' appreciation for Meher Baba's presence in their lives and, it would seem, the desire to offer here their respectful best in His honour.

I particularly loved *Under One Banner* by Billy Nicholls, the lyric and cello in *Seasons* by Marlais Pritchard and Bo Holden's sweet, harmonic *My Love, My Lord, My Life*. You can also enjoy the deep resonance of Biddu singing *The Path of Love*, written by him and Susie Biddu.

Baba lovers who will be familiar to many are part of the mix. Poems by Delia De Leon and Sarah McNeill are read by Paul Birchard, Rosie Jackson reads her *Letter to Mehera*, and Paul Smith, Lol Benbow, David Lee, Michael Da Costa and Simon and Carla Reece de Sousa also offer poems and songs. *Begin the Beguine*, Baba's 'farewell' song from the One who never leaves, is sung by Malcolm Harrison and Billy Nicholls. A treat at the end is the traditional Zoroastrian prayer, *The 101 names of God*, read by Havovi Mahaluxmiwala with Meher Baba's own translation provided.

As they write inside the CD cover, "An unprecedented year is unfolding worldwide. We hope that Meher Baba's message of love and unity in the midst of diversity prevails. Beloved Baba, may all discover your Divine Presence." You may find, as I did, that the perfume of this CD evokes that presence for you.

Reg Love is now coordinating the Avatar's Abode Bookstore. For information contact him on 0421 853 716 or email abodebookstore@gmail.com. It is expected that the CD will be arriving soon. Ed.

Who is this woman?

Gusi Carpenter

Recently while working on a collection of images I came across a familiar image of a woman on a ship who has at times been named Christine McNaughton. Christine was a young English woman who went to India in April 1933 with the Western women. Quentin Tod was included in the group to act as chaperone. Baba took them on a journey from Bombay to Kashmir. Christine appears in many of the photos and as I'm now familiar with her face, I knew that the woman mentioned above was definitely not her.

I have come across photos of this unknown woman in the collections of Bal Natu, Dr Goher and Elizabeth Patterson. All are taken mid ocean. In one she is alone, in another she is arm in arm with Baba, and then also with a family group and Baba and Kaka. It's unusual to find pictures of Baba arm in arm with people we don't know and I wondered why her photo would have been kept by Elizabeth, Goher and Bal Natu. I searched *Lord Meher* online for 'ship', to try and work out which journey Baba was on with Quentin Tod and Kaka, and came across the following:

'On Monday, 2 January 1933, Baba left for Port Said, setting sail the next day at 4:00 P.M. on the S. S. Baloran bound for Ceylon.

'During the voyage, Baba asked Tod if he had noticed anything unusual about a Dutch girl who was traveling with her family. Quentin at first noticed nothing out of the ordinary, but he then saw that she walked with a limp. Baba explained, "Many, many years ago in India, she was a yogi. She was then in a male form. While attempting to attain a higher state of consciousness through fasting and meditation, he had a stroke and died. In every incarnation since, he or she has limped. In order to free her from this affliction, it will be necessary for me to win her affection."

'Baba proceeded to gradually draw the girl toward him. She spent more and more time with him each day, playing



These photos were most likely taken in January 1933 when Meher Baba travelled from Port Said to Ceylon. Baba with the 'mystery' woman on her own in the top image and with a family group and Kaka on the right in the lower image. Copyright?

Ping-Pong and draughts (checkers). By the end of the voyage, a marked improvement in her health was noted.' *Lord Meher* online Edition Page 1502.

If the photos are of the young Dutch woman Baba clearly won her affection and it does seem that the story and the photos are connected.

‘The years of 1952-1953 were the period of what Baba termed the “Complicated Free Life”, the “Full Free Life”, and the “Fiery Free Life”. We really didn’t know what Baba meant by all these different types of lives He planned to lead – we just accepted what Baba said, and for us, Baba was just Baba, from the beginning to the end, one Baba in whatever “life” He decided to live.

‘There was some external indication of what was happening during those various phases. In the “New Life”, all of the “old life” connections were apparently severed, and Baba went out wandering, totally helpless and without any hope of seeing the “old life” people or allowing us to see Him. He then entered into the *Manonash* phase, in which Baba worked in the utmost seclusion, bringing great strain upon Himself to accomplish work we knew nothing about, really: but He said that He had succeeded in annihilating the mind. He declared that in doing this He was helping all of humanity to achieve this inevitable goal in the future and making it easier for them. I suppose He was referring to something to do with the whole of Creation in time to come. Annihilation of the mind is the only way to God-realisation, the realisation of one’s True Self.’

*MY LIFE WITH MEHER BABA, THE AVATAR OF
THE AGE by Meherwan B. Jessawala p229.*

Meher Baba Australia

What is ‘Meher Baba Australia’?

It is a volunteer run, non-profit initiative. We publish a newsletter that aims to connect the community of lovers of Beloved Meher Baba.

Frequency - four issues a year

March, June, September, December.

Cost?

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

How do we cover printing and 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 choose to subscribe to 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 any content that is divisive, political, disruptive or disrespectful. The editors reserve the right to accept or decline any submitted articles. Editors also reserve the right to edit any or all accepted articles for length and content prior to publication.

MBA contact

For all newsletter enquiries including subscriptions please email meherbabaaustralia@gmail.com

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

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

\$8 AU Email PDF (Global) – 1 year, 4 issues.

\$30 AU Hardcopy (Australia) – 1 year, 4 issues.

\$40 AU Hardcopy (Overseas) – 1 year, 4 issues.



Avatar Meher Baba, 1954 Andhra, India.

Meher Baba Australia

September – November 2020

Guest Editor: Gusi Carpenter.

Design, Layout & Digital Image Cleanup: Liz Gaskin.

Proof Reading: Alison Spark.

Mailing List and Subscriptions: David Bowling.

Email meherbabaustralia@gmail.com for information.

Next Issue: Please email submissions for the next *Meher Baba Australia* to meherbabaustralia@gmail.com **Photos** to be minimum of 1MB, preferably over 2MB.

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

Deadline Next Issue:

NO LATER THAN 15th October 2020.

Sydney Meher Baba Community

Sydney meetings are limited while COVID-19 is active:

Monday Night Discourse Meetings

continue at the home of Kristine Wyld. 5:45 for 6pm start; potluck meal from 7–8:30pm. COVID-19 guidelines apply. Contact Kris for street address details: truestories@ozemail.com.au.

Meher House

is open by appointment for visits of 30 minutes duration with strict COVID-19 guidelines in place. Please contact Yvan to arrange a time to visit: yvand@westnet.com.au For up to date information and/or to join the Meher Baba Sydney Noticeboard list please contact Jenny and Ross Keating: jkeating@tpg.com.au.

Melbourne Meher Baba Community

All get togethers are on hold due to COVID-19. Contact people for future meetings are Cynthia on 0409 880 005 or Jasmine on 0438 300 193.

WA Meher Baba Community

No current meetings are planned due to COVID-19. For information call Paul Morris 0429 310 169 or Julie Lee-Morris on 0428 250 294.

New Zealand

Contact Jill Hobbs on (06) 347 2974, or email jillhobbs1954@gmail.com

The **Anniversary online presentations** are still available on the Avatar's Abode website at https://avatarsabode.com.au/anniversary_at_avatars_abode.html

Thanks to Meher Mount for giving permission to share this link to a recording of Open Up The Door – just in case you haven't seen it ... https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wR5_3Sh10Ms&feature=youtu.be

Avatar's Abode Meher Baba Community

We are monitoring the current COVID-19 situation closely and are making plans to restart some of our weekly activities. We will use similar protocols to those being used for visitors to Baba's House; hand washing & sanitising, cleaning of frequent touch surfaces, record taking for the purpose of contact tracing if required, limiting numbers of visitors and social distancing. We ask that no one who is feeling unwell visits Avatar's Abode. For further information please contact:

info@avatarsabode.com.au or ring Roy Hayes on 07 5442 1544.

Mehera Moroney, Chairperson, Avatar's Abode Trust

Spring Sahavas

The Spring Sahavas at Avatar's Abode is scheduled for the Queen's Birthday long weekend:

Saturday 3rd - Monday 5th October 2020.

It will be a different format to previous years, perhaps a combination of some in-person socially distanced gatherings (a picnic or a walk ... ?) and virtual programs.

For more information contact gd.hobson56@gmail.com or ring David and Glenda on 07 5442 1220 or 0401 035 083.

News from the Avatar's Abode Library

Please note the Library remains closed at Avatar's Abode. This short review is included in case it reopens by the time the newsletter is received. Ed

A Golden Treasure

At the Young Adult Sahavas of 2018 a book was distributed. It is an anthology of sayings from Baba and some of His nearest ones.

Its title: DON'T WORRY, BE HAPPY!

Perhaps like me you may not be all that thrilled at this news. After all we all think we have heard all this many times before.

But it turns out to be a wonderful gift from the Master.

It radiates the happiness and joy it describes. Every page is decorated with cheerful drawings or wonderful photos. The layout is professional and immaculate. Its cover is a radiant yellow (some may recall Joanna Bruford's little car) that makes it glow and stand out even on the crowded shelves of the Abode Library. Its pages carry an upbeat charge which is such a blessing in these stressful times. Several copies have been donated to the library but be quick not to miss out.

Geoff Gunther

