

Meher Baba Australia

September – November 2019



Remember that embrace on your voyage home, lovers!
Remember it when you take up your jobs again
And you pause on the edge of a sudden vacancy
Between the typewriter keys, or the two tallest buildings,
Or that drops away behind the horizon in the evening.
Remember that God embraced you. Spit
Into the void, and watch the bubbles float, float
And then burst.

So much

Is the world and our hopes from it —
A wheel of bubbles like a snake with its tail in its mouth
Whirling, glistening.
Then remember that embrace. Remember
Those eyes that promised you eternal Reality
If you will but wait a little while.

*Excerpt from THE EAST-WEST GATHERING
by Francis Brabazon. p.44. 1963. © Avatar's Abode Trust.*

What solution I have brought

May 1932, Hollywood USA

Meher Baba

Since arriving in America, I have been asked many times what solution I have brought for the social problems now confronting you — what did I have to offer that would solve the problems of unemployment, prohibition and crime that would eliminate the strife between individuals and nations, and pour a healing balm of peace upon a troubled world?

The answer has been so simple that it has been difficult to grasp.

The root of all our difficulties, individual and social, is self-interest. It is self-interest, for example, which causes corruptible politicians to accept bribes and betray the interests of those whom they have been elected to serve; which causes bootleggers for their own profit to break a law designed, whether wisely or not, to help the nation as a whole; which causes people to connive for their own pleasure in the breaking of that law, thus causing disrespect for law in general and increasing crime tremendously; which causes the exploitation of the great masses of humanity by individuals or groups of individuals seeking personal gain; it is self-interest which impedes the progress of civilisation by shelving inventions which would contribute to the welfare of humanity at large, simply because their use would mean the scrapping of present inferior equipment; which, when people are starving, causes the wanton destruction of large quantities of food, simply in order to maintain the market prices; which causes the hoarding of large sums of gold when

the welfare of the world demands its circulation.

But the elimination of self-interest, even granting a sincere desire on the part of the individual to accomplish it, is not so easy and is never completely achieved except by the aid of a Perfect Master. For self-interest springs from a false idea of the true nature of the Self, and this idea must be eradicated and the Truth experienced before that elimination of self-interest is possible.

I intend, when I speak, to reveal the one supreme Self which is in all. This accomplished, the idea of the Self as a limited, separate entity will disappear, and with it will vanish self-interest. Cooperation will replace competition; certainty will replace fear; generosity will replace greed. Exploitation will disappear.

It has been repeatedly asked why I have remained silent for seven years, communicating only by means of an alphabet board, and why I intend to break my silence shortly. And it might well be asked, in view of what has just been said, what relation my speaking will have to the transformation of human consciousness.

Humanity, as constituted at present, uses three vehicles for the expression of thoughts, and experiences three states of consciousness. These three vehicles are: the mental body [the mind], in which thoughts arise as the result of impressions from past experiences. These thoughts may remain latent in the mental body as seeds, or they may be expressed.

If they are expressed, they take the

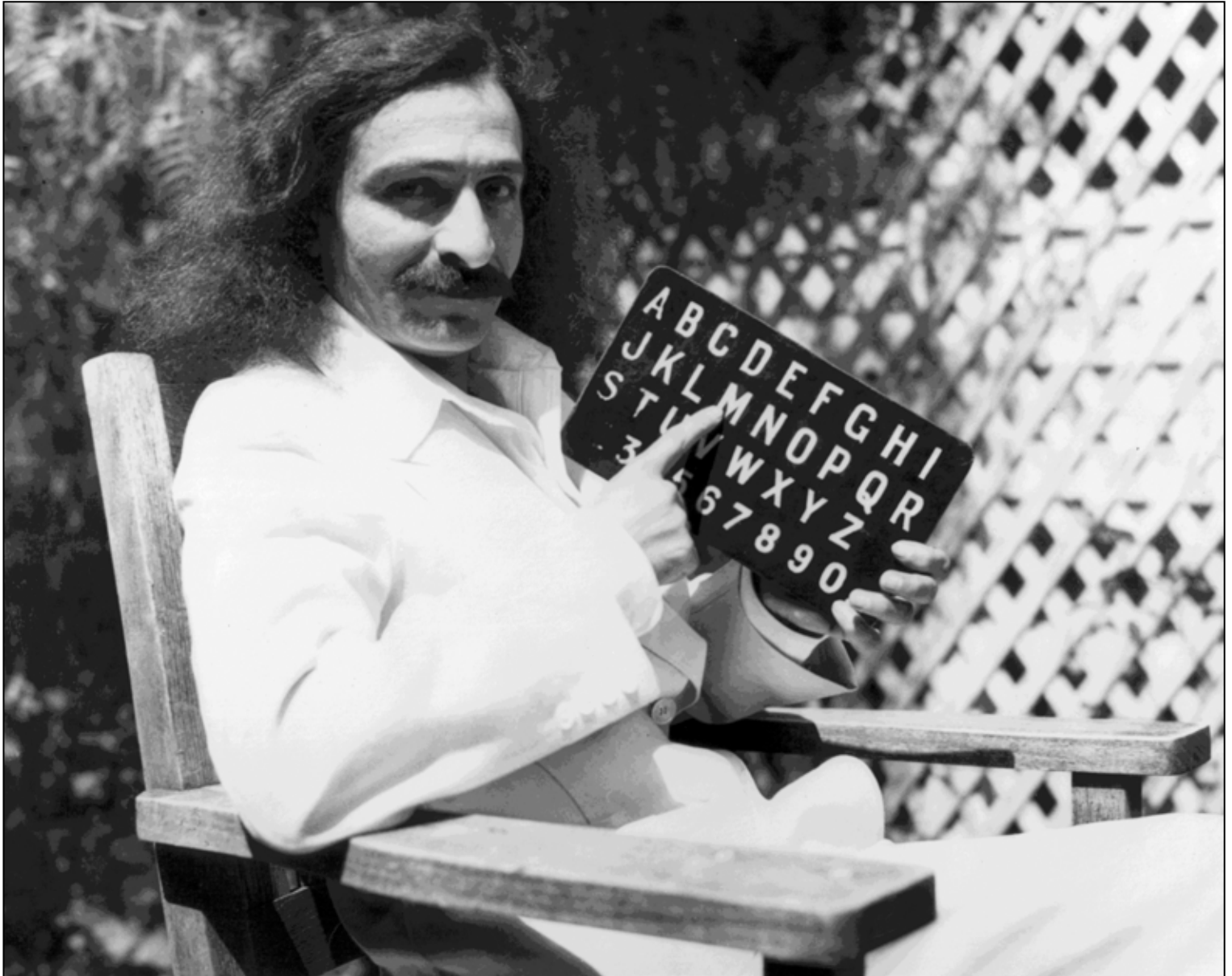
first forms of desire, and first pass through the subtle or the desire body, which is composed of the five psychic senses. They may rest there, as in the case of dreams or unfulfilled desire, or they may be further expressed in action through the physical body, with five physical senses.

The three states of consciousness corresponding to the three vehicles mentioned are: unconsciousness (mental body) as in deep, dreamless sleep; sub-consciousness (subtle body) as in dreams or obscured, unformed and unfulfilled desires; waking consciousness (physical body) as in active daily life.

The process by which thought passes from the mental through the subtle into physical expression may be called the expression of human will.

In order that thought may be expressed effectively, all three of the vehicles used in its expression must be perfectly clear, and the interaction between them must be harmonious. The head and the heart must be united, intellect and feeling must be balanced, and material expression must be understood to be the fruit of spiritual realisation.

The God-Man neither thinks nor desires. Through him, the Divine Will flows inevitably into perfect manifestation, passing directly from the spiritual body, which in the ordinary human being is undeveloped, into physical expression. For him, the superconscious state is the normal state of consciousness. From him, there continuously flows infinite love



Meher Baba, 3 June 1932, Hollywood, Los Angeles USA. Photographer: LA Times. © Meher Nazar Publications. Photo supplied by Bill and Diana Le Page.

and wisdom, infinite joy and peace and power.

When he speaks, Truth is more powerfully manifested than when he uses either sight or touch to convey it. For that reason, Avatars usually observe a period of silence lasting several years, breaking it only when they wish to manifest the Truth to the entire universe. So, when I speak, I shall manifest the Divine Will, and worldwide transformation of consciousness will take place.

LORD MEHER Online Edition
– p.p.1427 - 1432. © AMBPPCT.

God Is

God is everywhere and does everything.

God is within us and knows everything.

God is without us and sees everything.

God is beyond us and IS everything.

God alone IS.

Excerpt from GOD SPEAKS by Meher Baba, p. 298.
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The root of all our difficulties

January 1939, Jabalpur India

Meher Baba

When suffering leads to real, eternal happiness, we should not attach importance to this suffering. It is to eliminate suffering that suffering has to be. People suffer because they are not satisfied. They want more and

more. Ignorance gives rise to greed and vanity. If you want nothing, would you then suffer? But you do want. If you did not want anything, you would not suffer even in the jaws of a lion.

The widespread dissatisfaction in modern life is due to the gulf between theory and practice, between the ideal and its realisation on earth. The spiritual and material aspects of life are widely separated instead of being closely united. There is no fundamental opposition between spirit and matter or, if you like, between life and form. The apparent opposition is due to wrong thinking — to ignorance.

The best and also the easiest way of overcoming the ego and attaining Divine Consciousness is to develop love and render selfless service to all humanity in whatever circumstances we may be placed. All ethics and religious practices lead to this. The more we live for others, the less we live for ourselves and the more lower desires are eliminated. This in turn reacts upon the ego, suppressing it and transforming it proportionately.

The root of all our difficulties, individual and social, is self-interest. Eliminate self-interest and you will solve all your problems — individual and social.

The world will soon realise that neither cults, creeds, dogmas, religious ceremonies, lectures and sermons on the one hand, nor on the other hand ardent seeking for material or physical pleasures, can ever bring about real happiness. Only selfless love and universal brotherhood can bring happiness.



Meher Baba, Jabalpur, 8 January 1939. Photographer: Hedi Mertens.
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LORD MEHER Online Edition
— p.p.1976. © AMBPPCT.

BOOK REVIEW

The Silent Messenger

by Tom & Dorothy Hopkinson

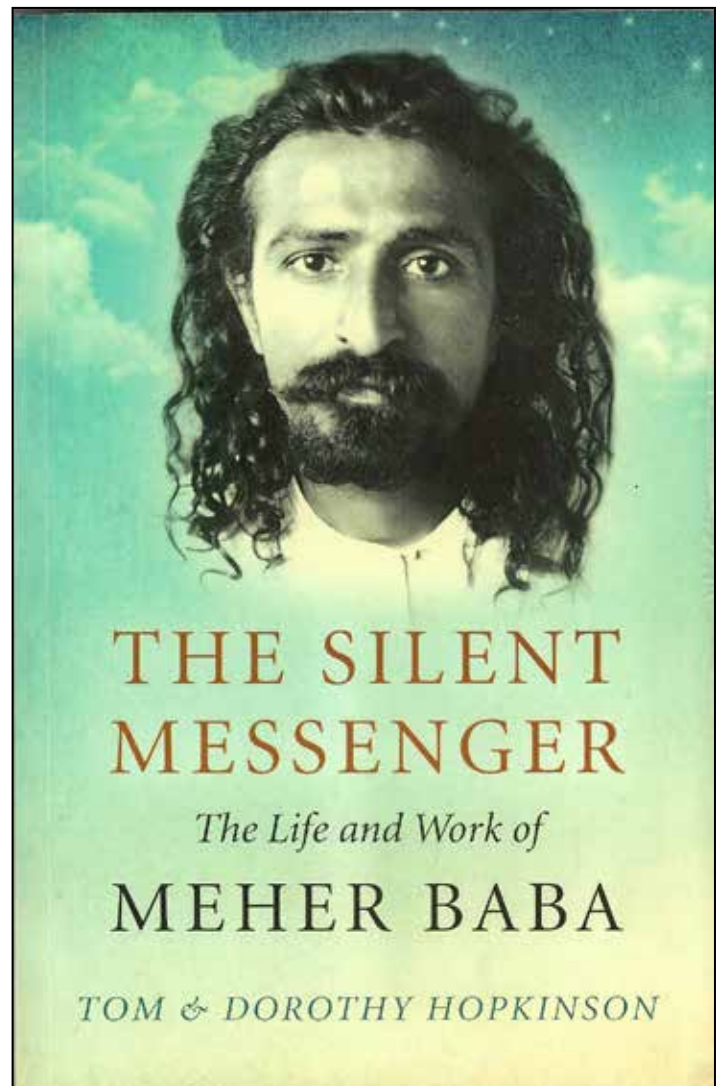
Sarah McNeill, July 2019

Soon to be published in the UK by the Meher Baba Association, 'The Silent Messenger' by the late Tom and Dorothy Hopkinson, follows their 1974 book, 'Much Silence' which focused on the life and message of Avatar Meher Baba. With this new title they write afresh and enrich the earlier work with the insights and matured knowledge of their later years and also include quotes from the writings of mandali members and other companions who published books in the years following its appearance. Editor of the new work, Shelagh Rowling, writes "*The Silent Messenger is different in terms of the emphasis on Love, and the commentary, quotes and sources which combine to make it a thought-provoking contemporary work as well as being suitable as an introduction to Meher Baba.*"

When Tom died in 1990, he left a completed, typed-up manuscript having spent the last seven years of his life working on it, writing sections and then reading them out to Dorothy for her comments. In Dorothy's own declining years, it was Sheila Rowling who helped, reading to Dorothy and making notes for her onto the manuscript. Details of their collaboration are found in the book's Foreword. In the years since Dorothy's own passing in 1993, Shelagh Rowling spent further time on the invaluable work of reading and annotating all references and citing sources, a considerable task she completed in 2017.

Of their personal commitment Tom and Dorothy write: "*...if we are to recognise and accept them, lasting truths must come in contemporary dress, restated in the light of our expanding knowledge of ourselves and of the universe... such a re-statement of deepest truths in terms of the contemporary world, has been made in our own day by Meher Baba.*"

Sir Thomas and Lady Dorothy Hopkinson (to give them their full titles) were among the second wave of early English devotees who met Baba at the Charing Cross Hotel



in London in 1952. Dorothy, who had already been in contact with Baba for some years, describes how at that meeting, not only did she find herself unable to speak when Baba addressed her, but how even Tom, an esteemed journalist, was himself apparently also at a loss for words in answer to Baba's smiling question to him. Such anecdotes are part of much incidental biographical detail included in describing their experience of spending time with Meher Baba, after their meeting in London, in India and elsewhere.

In the decades after Baba dropped his body in 1969, many new books appeared written not only by his close mandali themselves (Mani, Eruch, Bal Natu, Ghani and others) but also by many of the westerners who had come into direct contact with the Avatar of the Age (such as Kitty Davy, Charles Purdom, Francis Brabazon, Don Stevens, for example), books which provided an increasing readership with a wealth of new information. Hence the decision made by the Hopkinsons to augment their original book.

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Meher Baba, Ahmednagar, late 1952. Photo supplied by Bill and Diana Le Page.

The major development they made in the contents of 'The Silent Messenger' is not only in the inclusion of additional material from more recent accounts and memoirs but also in their personal, widely informed and experienced commentary on the tremendous events taking place during Baba's lifetime.

The format of the later book is set out in two parts, the first (The Life of Meher Baba) being the numbered chapters of Baba's life history, much of which is left as in their original book; and the second part, (The Message of Meher Baba), organised as numbered sections in the new Table of Contents, being their insightful commentary on the structure and key points of Baba's work.

What makes this book such a good read is not only the range and depth of information made accessible to the reader, it is also the clarity of the narration which (in Part 1) juxtaposes events in a flowing sequence and, (in Part 2) places the important themes of Baba's message within the global context. His themes remain as relevant to us today as they were then.

The first part encompasses much of the history of Baba's life, including his travels in the East and in the West; his work with masts; the New Life; his years of seclusion; and the last sahavas – of which the authors write: "... *at these Sahavas he made a series of statements plain enough for a child to understand, but with a power and authority unheard for two thousand years, covering the whole field of human life and of our relationship with God.*"

Chapter 12 gives insights into recurring themes such as Ego and the false self; the true meaning of Love; Baba's demand for honesty and obedience; the role of the Avatar; all leading up to the Final Declaration at Dehra Dun in 1953 and culminating in the Free Life, the Fiery Free Life and the Complicated Free Life.

In Part 2 the authors look back on some of the effects of Baba's message citing world events and showing how these themes remain as important to us today as they were then. "*Barriers which divided East and West have dissolved.*

Whole nations ... have demanded and secured their freedom. ... In different continents and countries there is a growing sense that all mankind is one. ... Secondly, an awareness has sprung up and is growing of the need actively to protect our common heritage – the earth and seas ... and even the atmosphere itself – against pollution and destruction. (p.302) ... these changes have been accompanied and supported by a range of practical and material developments, serving to unite the peoples of the world in ways which seemed inconceivable only half a century ago."

Technical advances we tend to take for granted in our present lives evidence the kind of changes the Hopkinsons refer to here. And for extra 'added value' this new book, unlike its predecessor, is illustrated with photographs as well as a map. Pictures of Baba are always a joy to behold – and the excellent reproduction of a very striking image of Baba's face on the front cover of 'The Silent Messenger' is particularly effective in attracting attention – making this a great book to read on the train! Or anywhere.

The Excellent Means, Or 21 Aids Towards Shedding The First Coat Of Confusion

Francis Brabazon. Date: July 1951.

Francis Brabazon sent letters to his sufi-pupils before he gave up being a Sheikh / Teacher and handed his charges over directly to Meher Baba ...

I gather that Baba's sister Mani shared later that Baba was quite pleased that Francis abandoned his post as Sufi intermediary (Ed.)

Francis wrote,

My dear fellow Baba-Sufi Aspirants in Sydney and Melbourne ...

Since I considered it was not in order for me to write a second letter to BABA thanking Him for replying to my question-letter, I wrote to Dr. Donkin thanking him for his part in the matter, and asking him, if it was opportune, to give my thanks to BABA, and to tell BABA that I had complete faith that He, in His own time, and in His own way, would plant such a Spiritual seed in this country, that would cause a perfect tree of Sufism to shed its blossom over the whole continent.

Dr. Donkin replied:

Dear Francis,

Many thanks for your letter about the last instalment of the Baja fund, and as many or more apologies to you that no reply was sent to you

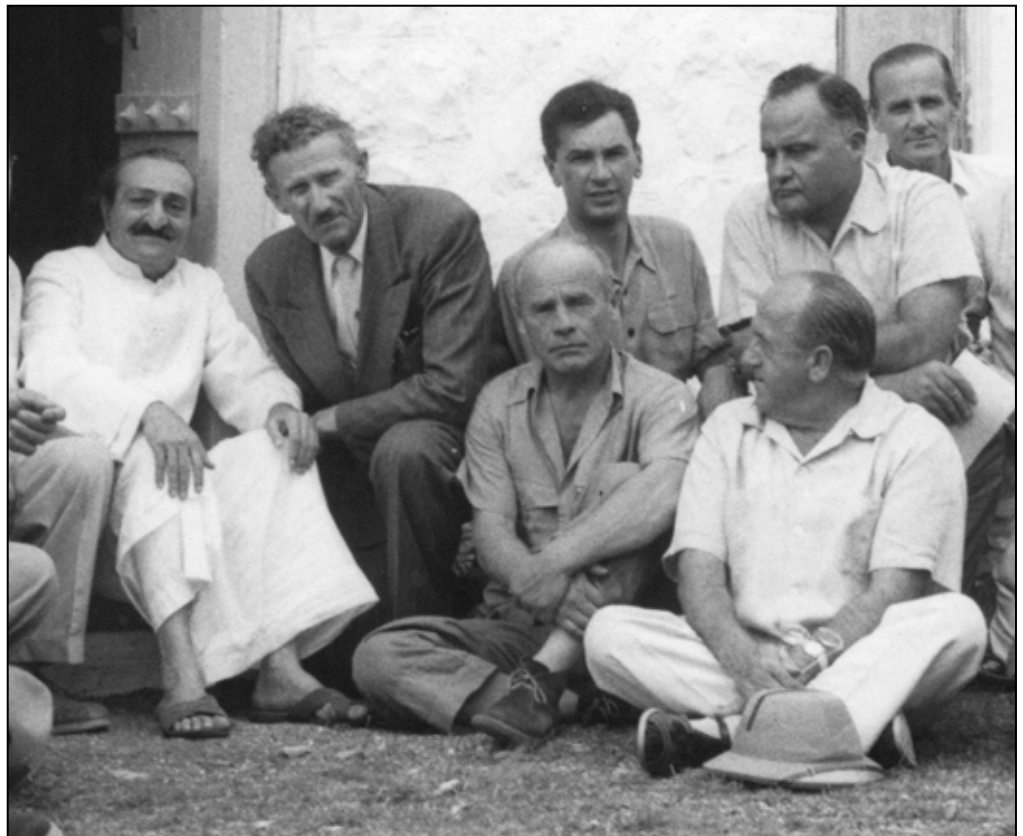
immediately. There was a big meeting on when your letter came, and it was not possible to reply until to-day. Your letter, however, was read over to BABA. It was opened in His presence, because all of my letters go via BABA'S house first, and He hands me all my letters daily, and He was very happy indeed on all that you wrote.

He often now refers to the devotion and enthusiasm of the "Australian Group," and the response that has been made by so many people who have never seen BABA is really very touching. BABA told me to send you His love, and also all those who have

helped for this Baja fund should be given His love once again. You asked (that was in my letter to him) what "Baja" means. It is simply the Indian word for "burden" and is particularly used in connection with invisible burdens – non-material ones as it were. You will probably hear in due course something about the meeting held last week.

Kindest regards,
Yours,
(signed)
William Donkin

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Meher Baba sitting outside His Tomb with Western men during Three Incredible Weeks. Upper Meherabad, 24 September 1954. Baba, Frank Hendrick, Francis Brabazon, Bill Le Page, Fred Winterfeldt, Fred Frey, William Donkin. Photographer: Panday. Photo supplied by Bill and Diana Le Page.

... Now I think it is extraordinary that Dr. Donkin refers to the fact that BABA often mentions the “Australian Group.” I hope all of you really realize what such a statement means. But to me, it is just the same as if Dr. Donkin calmly sat down and said, “God often refers to the “Australian Group”. I have frequently mentioned that blessing only arises when God’s heart is touched. And so I consider, that the mere fact that BABA has thought of us, each one individually, as a group – the “Australian Group” – I consider that alone is sufficient to ensure our on-going.

People like us, who have had the extreme dimness to get ourselves born or domiciled in such an outlandish place, are most readily lulled into complacency. Would it not be the greatest folly and loss, for any of us now to discontinue our studies, or to cut ourselves off from the living stream of love, by mere negligence and heedlessness.

So, although I have spoken about the Sufic idea of the necessity of a Master, there is still the aspirant’s own part to be done. He cannot just sit down like a fool and say, “I have a Master. Now I don’t need to do anything,” like many of the foolish orthodox. The two extremes of foolishness is (sic) to ignore the presence on the earth of the Perfect Master, and to imagine that He will give Salvation without any effort on one’s own part. Jesus distinctly said that He is the Way, and also gave the parable of the foolish Virgins who did not bother to have their lamps ready. The aspirant’s work is to have his lamp, i.e., his vehicles: body, heart and soul, ready for the Master to light. The aspirant cannot light that lamp of his own; but the Master will not

bother waiting round for him to get his lamp ready after He has come. It is then too late – just too bad. The aspirant can flit back and forth in a few more rebirths, until another cycle comes around ...

And so, in conclusion, I would like to read you a little work called *The Excellent Means, or 21 Aids Towards Shedding the First Coat of Confusion.*

Having listened to the words of the Master, and then thoroughly thought them over, and satisfied oneself that they were true, one should –

1. Immediately forsake the ranks of the heedless, and the dilettante, and determine to steadily devote the rest of one’s life to the realisation of His words.
2. One should never neglect the daily practice of meditation and worship.
3. One should never neglect the regular assembly of one’s fellow aspirants which is for the purpose and benefit of group meditation, unless one is too ill to travel, or the need of a dependent is urgent.
4. One should thoroughly imbibe the principle of the God-man, recognising that He is the Root of one’s life and activity.
5. One should constantly recall this fact that the God-man is the Root of one’s life and activity, and to one’s mind, until its remembrance becomes permanent.
6. One should establish the living Master as the Sun in the sky of one’s consciousness, and look towards that Sun for one’s every need, as the plants look towards the physical sun to sustain them.
7. Just as the air in a place where no sunlight comes is dank, so should

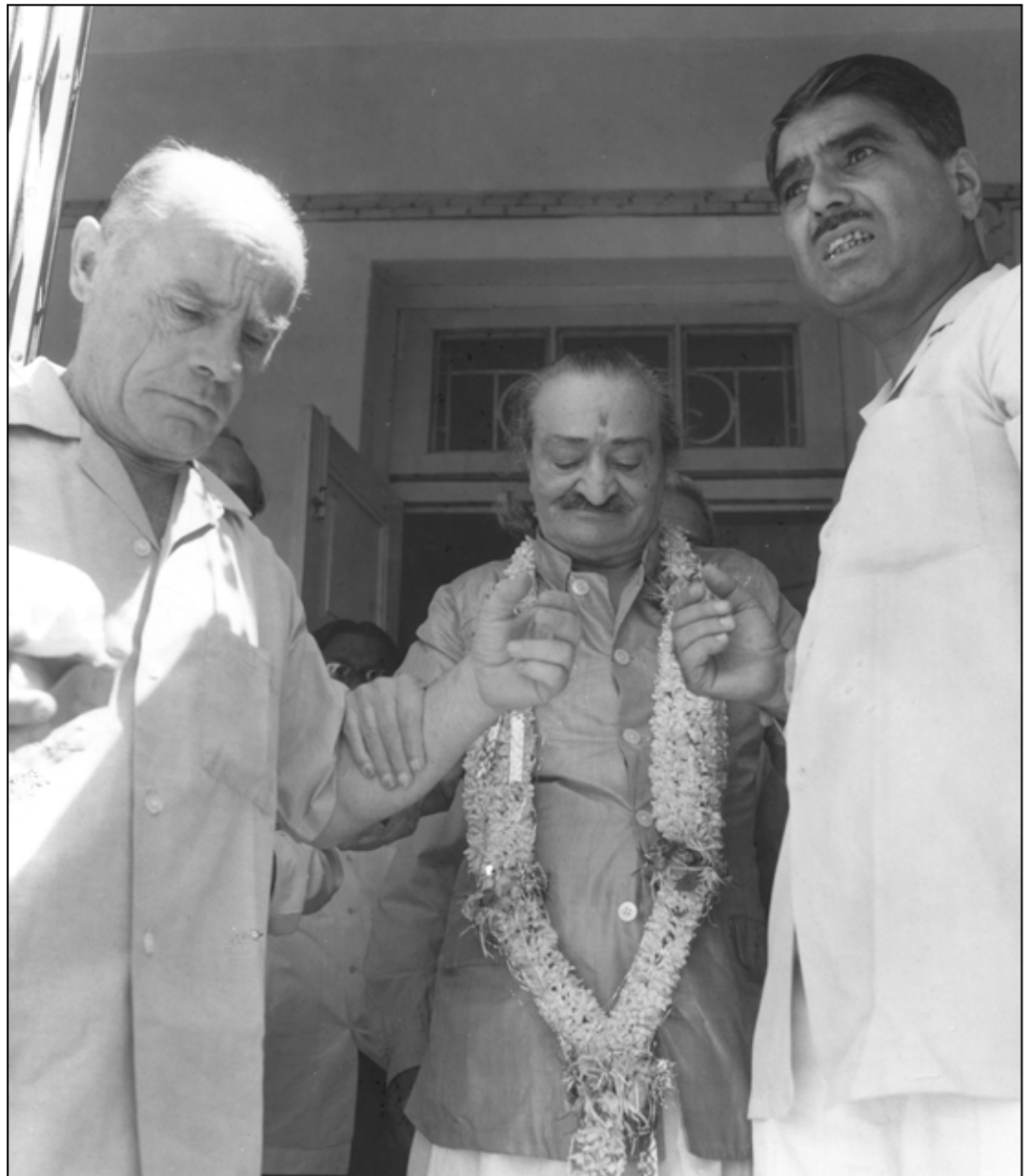
one recognise that one’s every breath is foul unless it is purified in the thought of the Divine Sun,

8. Just as the plants without sunlight droop and begin to die, but immediately revive as soon as the warmer days come back, so should one give up willfully and perversely living a dying life in the cold sunless world of one’s own falseness, and allow the rays of this sun to revivify this life again.

9. Once one has recognised clearly that the God-man is the Root and the Sun of one’s life, one should unreservedly offer that life back to Him and once and for all give up one’s doglike qualities wherein one would snatch a morsel of spiritual food and run away with it on one’s own, and even bark at the one who gives the morsel.
10. One should once and for all and finally give up hypocrisy, which is assenting with one’s mouth and rejecting with one’s heart because the hypocrite fools no one in the end but himself.
11. One should raise the banner of His Name wherever one lives and works, so that His glory may become manifest in the world.
12. One should make His Name as the dearest Person in one’s life.
13. One should be like a young man in love, to whom the world is well lost if he can but even think of his beloved.
14. One should consider that to associate any other name with His Name is infidelity, just as it would be unfaithfulness for the real worldly lover to link another woman’s name with his beloved.
15. One should remember that His Name is the Root of all names

and forms; and that success, even in the world, is dependent upon the right love of name.

16. One should look upon anyone who reminds one of one's faults as a dear friend, because it is difficult to know one's faults, and hard to overcome them.
17. One should look upon anyone who reminds one of one's age as a dear friend, because recollection of the passing of time and the shortness of life is a great spur.
18. One should frequently reflect on the fact of the uncertainty of life, and its shortness even under the best of circumstances; that one has already spent a large portion of it in childhood; and another large portion in profitless pursuits of adulthood; and that another portion will be eaten up in earning one's substance, in eating and in sleep; and by the time all this is subtracted, how little is left in which to realise the real purpose of coming here. So one should determine not to draw another single breath in thoughtlessness.
19. One should look upon one's fellow-aspirants as one's closest relatives because they are of spirit, whereas one's other relatives are only of blood. And blood is thicker than water.



Poona Centre, May 1964: Francis Brabazon and Eruch helping Meher Baba as they leave.
Photo supplied by Bill and Diana Le Page.

20. One should become thoroughly acquainted with the law of action (Karma) and debt, so that one can begin to free oneself by right perception (Viveka) of the unending bondage which is the lot of the worldly, and so attain to Purity and Indifference (Vairagya). For the life of the worldly is as the condition of a drunken man who ever becomes deeper in debt – a life without Freedom or honour.

21. One should seek the mercy of a God-man, and association with those who are on the road to His door; and having arrived there; lay the intolerable burden of one's life at His blessed feet. There is no other way. No one has yet accomplished this journey from falsehood to truth alone.

In His Name
I send my love,
(signed)
Sheikh Francis

Part of a talk given at the South-East Gathering, Toccoa, Georgia 2019

Meher Baba as the Provoker

Ross Keating

In November, 1955 Meher Baba held a *sahavas* for His men lovers at Meherabad in which one of the three reasons for holding it was “To show you [the *sahavasees*] how to do my work of spreading love” (*Listen Humanity* p. 242). Only two Westerners were invited: Don Stevens and Francis Brabazon. One of the significant remarks Baba made in relation to working for His cause was: “To spread my love among the people, you have to make them understand me *as you understand me* [my emphasis]. For that you have to bring them to love me *as you love me*, [my emphasis] and that means you have to cause them to feel my love *as you feel it* [my emphasis]” (*LH* p. 71).

During their stay, Baba asked both Don and Francis to each write a book about this occasion. I’m not sure if Baba gave Don the title for his book, *Listen Humanity*, but he certainly gave Francis his, *Stay With God*. Don was university educated in science and worked for a high-powered Oil Company. Francis was a poet, an autodidact, and his background was nearly the opposite to Don. In personal manner they were also very different and this is reflected in their writing. Don has a very conversational prose style while Francis distils his poetic lines to make them potent. And while their books are very different each reflects exactly what Baba said to do in spreading His message of love, to do so “as you understand me . . . as you love me . . . as you feel it”.



Meher Baba at Arti performance, 30 Nov 1955 Sahavas, Arangaon.
Photo supplied by Bill and Diana Le Page.

Soon after Baba gave this message He also stated, “The world is too full of preachers and teachers. Never forget that I have come not to teach, and I need no preachers” (*LH* p. 71). But He did not say that I need no artists. For art does not preach or teach; it does not aim at conformity; it simply presents what the artist feels. In a way, what Baba has said regarding spreading his love could be read as the way of art. It is interesting that Baba does not say in this context, “spreading my *message*” but “spreading *love*,” and art is arguably the only

medium that can really do this. Art seen not as some elitist sport but anything that is done with love or as Francis has expressed it as “an act of love in likeness of itself” (*SWG* p. 91). Spreading His message without love is preaching or evangelism of which Francis wrote: “Evangelism is message minus beauty of form – and so is no-message, because God-Man is Beauty itself” (*The Water Carrier* p. 41).

So what follows is a kind of collage of ideas and quotes that leaves a trail of thinking which reflects something of how I understand Baba.



Meher Baba, 9 June 1957, Poona. Photo supplied by Bill and Diana Le Page.

Let me begin my thinking, my collage making, with God's own impulsive beginning when He asked the question "Who am I?": the trigger that started the wheels of creation turning. In Baba's *God Speaks* we find an unbelievably detailed account of the evolutionary development of consciousness from this initial question to what Baba calls "full consciousness" in the human person then onto the state of God-realisation and the consequent answer to the original question "I am God." It is a monumental work and could only have been written by someone who has real knowledge.

And yet, towards the close of the book, under the title "Conclusion," Baba jolts His readers leaving them totally astonished, humbled, and spiritually grounded: "Nevertheless, all that is said here and explained about God to appease the intellectual convulsions of the mind of man, still

lacks many more words and further explanations because the TRUTH [Baba's emphasis] is that the Reality must be realised and the divinity of God must be attained and lived" (*God Speaks* 1st ed. p. 176).

But, I don't feel this means we should stop our questioning mind. I remember Eruch telling a person in *Mandali* Hall to hold onto her questions about Baba and not to glibly accept what He said. And then related how he never consented to what Baba had said without first questioning it himself. He said that because of his questioning and struggling to understand what Baba had said, Baba's grip on him in later life became all the stronger. And there is the story of Francis in which Baba told him, "It is no good just 'accepting' what I say – you must try to understand it. Use your whole mind and try to understand and you will" (*SWG* p. 158).

But the more existential question remains, how do we attain and live God? This obviously is where Baba, who is God in human form, is perfectly qualified to be our guide. But how do we know He is guiding us?

Once Eruch asked Baba what will we answer when someone asks us "Who is Meher Baba?" Baba replied with the stunning answer. Tell them, "He is the essence of your very being which provokes you to ask the question." It could be seen that the question Baba provokes "Who is Meher Baba?" is of greater significance than God's original question "Who am I?" For the former question is God-Man speaking in us and is something that we experience, while the latter is more of a divine explanation to "appease the intellectual convulsions" of our minds.

When you think about it, Baba's response confirms that He knew us before we knew Him. And that His first act in us is that of a provocation. In other words, Baba doesn't speak to us directly but stays, in a sense hidden, unseen; preferring to provoke rather than show Himself directly. This fits in with Baba's statement that "Things that are real are given and received in silence." In my life with Baba, things happen and change without me really knowing what is going on. I could say that Baba has never stopped provoking me ever since I found out about Him.

Baba's answer is certainly not one that you might expect. It doesn't give any biographical background, nor state that He is God in human form, the Avatar. Nor does it present anything for the intellect to grapple with. Instead it goes straight to the heart of the matter – to our very being itself. Baba has said that He

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is the Being of all beings, that only He exists. The fact that we don't realise this is an indication of the deluding power of our *sanskaras* which hoodwink us at every moment.

When God is defined as the Being of all beings even an atheist cannot deny God for they would be denying their very existence which is absurd. Baba once playfully told the *mandali*, as if in secret, that He actually knows nothing – imploring them, jokingly, not to tell anyone. The *mandali* were perplexed for one of Baba's attributes was all-knowingness. Baba later explained, because He is one with everything there is no object outside of Himself to know and therefore He knows nothing because He is actually everything.

So when Baba says that “He is the essence of our very being” – that is Him in us He's addressing. It is Himself in us that He is provoking. And this is His first act of awakening in us. Eruch said that the message engraved on Baba's tomb is not complete. It reads, “I have come not to teach but to awaken”; Eruch said, it should read, “I have come not to teach but to awaken *Myself in you*.” In short, when Baba provokes a person to ask “Who is Meher Baba?” then Baba awakens Himself in that person. In a sense, this could be seen as Baba breaking His silence in a person.

In “Meher Baba's Universal Message” Baba states that He will “help every individual break himself free from his bondage in his own way.” This idea of Baba guiding each person, individually, should engender a great respect and tolerance for the diversity in the Baba family. In any gathering of people it is usually not the diversity of people's natures that causes problems but rather when a few

want everyone to conform in some way to an artificial and abstract idea of what is “correct”. This statement of Baba's actually affirms diversity as a kind of spiritual truth.

Part of Baba's working with each person to help them break free from their own unique form of bondage is reflected in the unique relationship each person has with Baba. No two are the same. This relationship is our connecting point with Baba; this is where Baba becomes our Beloved, uniquely ours, and we actually become an integrated person, a Baba lover, and not simply a mind on legs.

This relationship, I think, manifests itself in how a person responds to and engages with the world; with how they live their life using their God-given talents and skills to the best of their ability and offering all their effort in dedication to their Beloved. Francis in his Preface to *Stay With God* clearly expresses this idea when he writes: “In this book I have tried to offer some praise to one who has not so much ‘changed the course of my life’ as given it sanction. For the course of my life was already set when, as a child, I used to weep at the beauty of the night ...” (SWG p. 7). In other words, Francis was born a poet, and after meeting Baba continued being a poet but used his talent and dedicated his nature in service to Baba.

Many of the stories from different spiritual traditions that Eruch told in *Mandali* Hall were about this kind of inner relationship with the Beloved. Even the *mandali* themselves each had a unique relationship with Baba; and through this relationship each felt uniquely connected to Him; they were all distinct people. This is the same with all of us today who try to love and serve Baba.

I would say that none of the *mandali* could have stayed with Baba or endured what He put them through without such a relationship – they would not have been able to survive. Their relationship provided the inner strength for them to endure their lot. How could you describe some of these relationships? All of their relationships were obviously built on love but were expressed differently according to their different natures. You could speculate, for instance, that Eruch's relationship seemed to be that of a loyal servant even unto death; Goher's to be based on total selfless service; Mani's was to do with the “Path of Joy”. But what was Francis's?

Francis often referred to Baba as his “true Friend” (*Let Us the People Sing* p. 13) or his “Lord and Friend” (SWG p. 5). But what is Francis's relationship with Baba during his creative act of writing poetry, which is where he mostly connected with his Beloved? In 1959, on Baba's Birthday, soon after Francis arrived in India to live with Baba as one of the close *mandali*, he gave a talk at a Bombay Press Conference. The talk was entitled “The Lord is Our Brother” and in this Francis describes his relationship with Baba as that of two “play-fellows”. Francis writes: “The world is the stage of [Baba's] Divine Play on which He does not only appear in the role of the Saviour and Bestower of boons, remaining aloof from the rest of the play as a spectator merely approving, encouraging, correcting, condoling and rewarding the efforts of the players; He involves Himself with us in the play as the Intimate Actor within each of us – as the hero within our hero, the heroine within our heroine experiencing with us the

Continued on next page

The Silence

Lorraine Brown, 10.7.2019 Avatar's Abode

The Silence of the egg
Waiting to hatch.
The Roar of Silence as the Word emerges
With heart-pervading tone
From its shell-bound womb.
It has been waiting, waiting, waiting,
For time and the tides of Maya
To be ready to receive its potent gift.
The patience of Silence
Waiting to hatch the Word –
The Word that will renew all languages
And re-awaken the True Story
The Mischievous Chicken created
With His whimsical love of adventure
And His all-creative curiosity.
The Mischievous One sought to sing
And Silence silvered into intercesses
Of space and time
And enabled the Music to be born.
Now Silence has drawn Itself together
In the God-Man, the Avatar,
Drawn Itself together
Into a mighty Word
That can be carried on the Wind,
The Breath of that Mysterious One,
That Mischievous One.
This Silence will shatter the hard shells
That have calcified around hearts
Lost in intellects' crazy stories of separation.

This patient and potent Silence
Will burst from Its own compassionate shell,
Renewing the Word,
Reminding hearts of Love Divine,
Renewing all languages,
Re-awakening minds
To the True Story –
The story of a Mischievous Chicken
With universe-spawning creative curiosity.
The Mischievous One
Born of the Great Mystery
Who fell in Love with the creation
That sprang from His Whim,
And ever returns,
Age after age, time immeasurable,
To hold in His Love
Each one of His seeming innumerable beloveds
And bring each one
Home to Him, to the One, to THE Beloved,
In His own good time.
He has come, pregnant with Silence,
To release the WORD,
To sing the song,
To dance to the tune of Silence unbound,
To re-awaken in each being
The Great Story –
The Story of Divine Love.

Meher Baba as the Provoker

continued from previous page

entire action of the play; our playing becomes the means of our becoming conscious of our part in His play ... The Avatar is our eternal Lord and Play-fellow. He loves the play He Himself created; He loves our playing of the roles of this play and He loves playing with us in these roles."

This I think, is the essence of Francis's creative relationship with Baba. The page was an arena for Francis in which he entered as he

began to write and the words that danced upon the page were his play with his internal Baba, his Beloved – and Baba loved "playing" with him in his role as a poet. In reading Francis's ghazals and from what Francis has said about them, for instance, that Baba gave him "the shape and content of these poems (*In Dust I Sing* p. iii) you get the idea that Baba was a kind of intimate co-writer, not just some muse in the distance.

Play in the sense that Francis uses it

is not pretending. It is what happens when you are totally absorbed in what you do to the extent that you forget yourself and yet are totally open to where the leader of the play, your Beloved, takes you. When Baba says that "Love alone is devoid of all purpose and a spark of Divine Love sets fire to all purpose" (*The Everything and the Nothing* p. 100) what is there left for us to do but play with "our eternal Lord and Play-fellow."

Meher Baba and Begum Akhtar

Peter Rowan

In previous issues of *Meher Baba Australia* I have written on Avatar Meher Baba's great love of the *Ghazal*, particularly by Hafiz, and also of the *Qawwali* form of music in which the *Ghazal* is used extensively.

I would therefore feel remiss, if I did not give full regard to Beloved Baba's love and extreme enjoyment of the singing of the *Ghazal* as an exacting musical form also, as exemplified through the greatest *Ghazal* singer of her era, Begum Akhtar, whom Baba listened to admiringly from the mid 30s onwards, mainly through radio and phonograph records, and then eventually in person to many years later.

In 1938, Baba suggested to Adi K. Irani to invite Begum Akhtar to sing for Him, and He would pay her roundtrip travelling expenses from Calcutta to Ahmednagar making all arrangements for her journey. She agreed to do so, but only if she were paid a large fee also! Baba told Adi to discontinue his enquiry, and foretold, "One day she will willingly come to me of her own accord".¹

Baba's prediction eventuated twenty- five years later, when Begum Akhtar sang on four occasions for Baba, during the years 1963 and 1965, at both Meherazad and Guruprasad, pleasing Beloved Baba enormously, and drawing the most wonderful response from Him as to her matchless voice and perfection of her *ghazal* singing.

Begum Akhtar's good fortune in coming into Beloved Baba's contact and having His darshan is a moving and stirring event, which we will see as her story unfolds, but first I will draw your attention to some of the details of her early years, and the traumas she suffered during her childhood which shaped her life to a large extent, and which I presume, was in part a catalyst that bought her to the Beloved's feet.

Begum Akhtar's mother was second wife to a Muslim lawyer, and Begum was born as a twin sister in October 1914, her given name was Akhtari Bai Faizabadi, the father, for reasons which are not known to me, disowned his wife and two daughters, leaving his wife to bring up the children alone.

The difficulties they faced were almost insurmountable, Akhtari Bai's twin sister was accidentally poisoned at four years of age and died, and their house in Lucknow burnt down leaving the family in an extremely difficult state.

What became evident to the mother and her associates was the amazing precocity Akhtari Bai was showing for singing, and by the time she had turned seven years of age how obvious was the extreme quality and clarity of her voice.

Akhtari Bai was then introduced into, what from Mughal times, was known as the tradition of *tawaif*, where a young girl with exceptional talent in music, dance, theatre and the Urdu literary tradition, in which the *ghazal* was an integral part, could be trained to exercise her ability. *Tawaif* was essentially designed to teach the young girl etiquette and charming manners with which to exercise her artistic talent for men of nobility and wealth, who may then become her patron.

The term *tawaif*, is loosely and generally translated into English to mean courtesan.

It was a traumatic and painful time in many respects for Akhtari Bai who by the age of thirteen was pregnant, having to present to the world her daughter as her sister.

As fortune would have it, an uncle gave full regard to her astounding aptitude for singing and music and arranged for her to train under a master *Sarangit** player in Patna. Her talent was such that she was readily accepted eagerly by other master musicians as their pupil also, she particularly excelled and flourished as an excellent exponent of the *ghazal* and gave her first public performance at the age of fifteen.

Akhtari Bai's fame increased with public performances and phonograph records and she became sought after for radio broadcasts, and then by the film industry which was beginning to flourish in the 1930s and made several films in which her singing and good looks were acclaimed.

Her greatest love though, was singing the *ghazal* with their pain of separation and longing for union with the Beloved to an appreciative audience, and she now devoted herself almost exclusively to singing the *ghazal* poetry she loved most.

During the next few years her fame and popularity increased enormously, and the honorific of *Begum* was conferred on her, indicating she was now recognised as a Muslim woman of the highest social status and accomplishment.

No longer was she thought of and addressed as Akhtari Bai, but as *Begum* Akhtar, which became her name for the rest of her life.

Even though born a Muslim and excelling in the ghazal which is predominantly the province of Islam, Begum also exhibited her liberality at being equally adept in superbly singing Hindu *Thumri*, in which the themes of Krishna's love play with the gopis of Vrindavan play a predominant part, and which portray in sensual devotional terms, Krishna's beguiling flute playing which drives Radha crazy with longing for him.

For many years she was feted throughout India as the greatest of ghazal singers, able to reach the heart and soul of an audience with consummate ease through the painful and intoxicating richness of her rendering of the pain of love for the Beloved.

In 1945 at the age of thirty-one, she married a Lucknow barrister, Ishtiaq Ahmed Abbasi, and attempted to settle into a life of conformity befitting her elevated social status and gave up singing.

Over time she became melancholic and depressed and took to drinking whisky and cigarette smoking, falling ill both



Begum Akhtar performing for Meher Baba with her Sarangi player, Golwalkar, and tabla player, Muhammed Ahmed. 3 May 1963 at Guruprasad, Pune. Photographer: Meelan. © Meher Nazar Publications.



Begum Akhtar performing for Meher Baba. Muhammed Ahmed on tabla and Golwalkar on Sarangi. 3 May 1963 at Guruprasad, Pune. Photographer: Meelan. © Meher Nazar Publications.

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psychologically and bodily, as the life she was leading was antithetic to her artistic and spiritual nature.

Even though she was treated medically by doctors, it wasn't until a doctor realised that the major problem for Begum Akhtar was not so much a bodily illness, but a deep need for her pain to be expressed through her innate God-given ability to convey through her singing the depth of her soul, and so he prescribed singing and music as her essential remedy, so that she may regain a degree of wholeness again after suffering four years of languor.

In 1949 Begum Akhtar returned to the recording studio, and sang three ghazals over Lucknow All India Radio, resuming once again her great love of expressing in her inimitable style the singing of the ghazal.

Begum began giving concerts again and was overwhelmingly received by an appreciative public as she had not lost any of her singing genius, in fact as time went by her voice matured, acquiring an even greater richness and depth.

She built up an astounding repertoire of almost four hundred songs, which were predominantly ghazals, many which she wrote herself, and was also able to command the best accompanists, who considered it an honour to play with her.

She became a regular performer on All India Radio, her sublime voice being heard the length and breadth of the sub-continent, eventually Begum became known as *Mallika-e-Ghazal*, which literally means, 'sweetest flowering jasmine of the ghazal', and then popularly known throughout India, as 'Queen of Ghazals'.²

In 1962, after many years of fame, fortune was now to smile on her lonely and melancholic nature in a way which she could never imagine.

At All India Radio in Poona, where Begum frequented regularly, was a master *Sarangi* player known as Golwalkar who accompanied her regularly for radio broadcasts and recordings.

Golwalkar was enamoured of Avatar Meher Baba and performed for Baba at Guruprasad several times in the early 60s.

In early 1962, Golwalkar told Begum Akhtar of Beloved Baba and his belief in Him as the Avatar, and that he was to play for Baba with two other top-flight musicians at Guruprasad in May of that year, and perhaps Begum would like to sing for Meher Baba, if He gave permission.

Not only did she agree, but her heart apparently responded to Baba in a way which she found to be

unprecedented in her life till then. She began to long intensely for Beloved Baba's darshan and be able to pour out her soul in singing to Him.

Baba gave approval for her to visit Guruprasad with Golwalkar and sing for Him on the 6th of May 1962, as He was having a gathering of one hundred and fifty intimate lovers to discuss details for the upcoming East-West Gathering.

Fate then took another turn, she became very ill prior to May, and was unable to attend Guruprasad with Golwalkar to sing for Baba, but Golwalkar performed for Baba and the gathering that day as arranged.

Golwalkar played his sarangi with a brilliant tabla and sitar player, Baba who did not usually enjoy instrumental music, seemed to do so on this occasion, so much so that He embraced the three musicians commenting to them that 'it was the best', Golwalkar told Baba they had never played so well before, and it was solely due to His presence.³

Begum's longing to have Baba's darshan and perform for Him increased passionately during the year and every day she sang a ghazal before His photograph she had composed as her personal prayer to Beloved Baba.

On the morning of the 13th of January 1963 her first opportunity came for Baba's darshan, she was driven by Adi and Meherji, along with her daughter and Golwalkar to Meherazad to see Baba, she had two beautiful garlands to adorn Baba with, one from her daughter and one from herself, but on meeting Baba she wept like a child and inadvertently placed both garlands around His neck!

She told Baba, "From the day I heard your call I have been craving your darshan and have been singing a ghazal before your photograph each day", she then beseeched Baba to allow her to sing her prayer to Him.

Baba's most wonderful answer to her plea was, "I am in seclusion now and not in the mood to listen to ghazals."

Begum further pleaded with Baba to allow her to sing, to which Baba replied, "I will give permission only on the condition that you agree to come to Poona and give a performance of four to five hours at Guruprasad in April or May of this year, if you agree I will hear your one ghazal now."

Delightedly she accepted the condition and sat before Baba and the mandali and sang her daily prayer to Beloved Baba, with the first line being, *O Love, my tears are the result of surrendering to you!* and as she sang tears of love and joy coursed down her cheeks, Baba gave her his handkerchief with which to wipe her tears, and was so pleased with

her that He asked her to sing three more ghazals, telling her “You have no idea how happy you have made me with your singing,” Begum exclaimed, “I am so fortunate to have done so.”

It was as if Begum had been in Baba’s inner contact for years, and when Baba asked her what fee she would want for singing at Guruprasad when the time came, she said “I want nothing but your love,” which pleased Baba greatly.

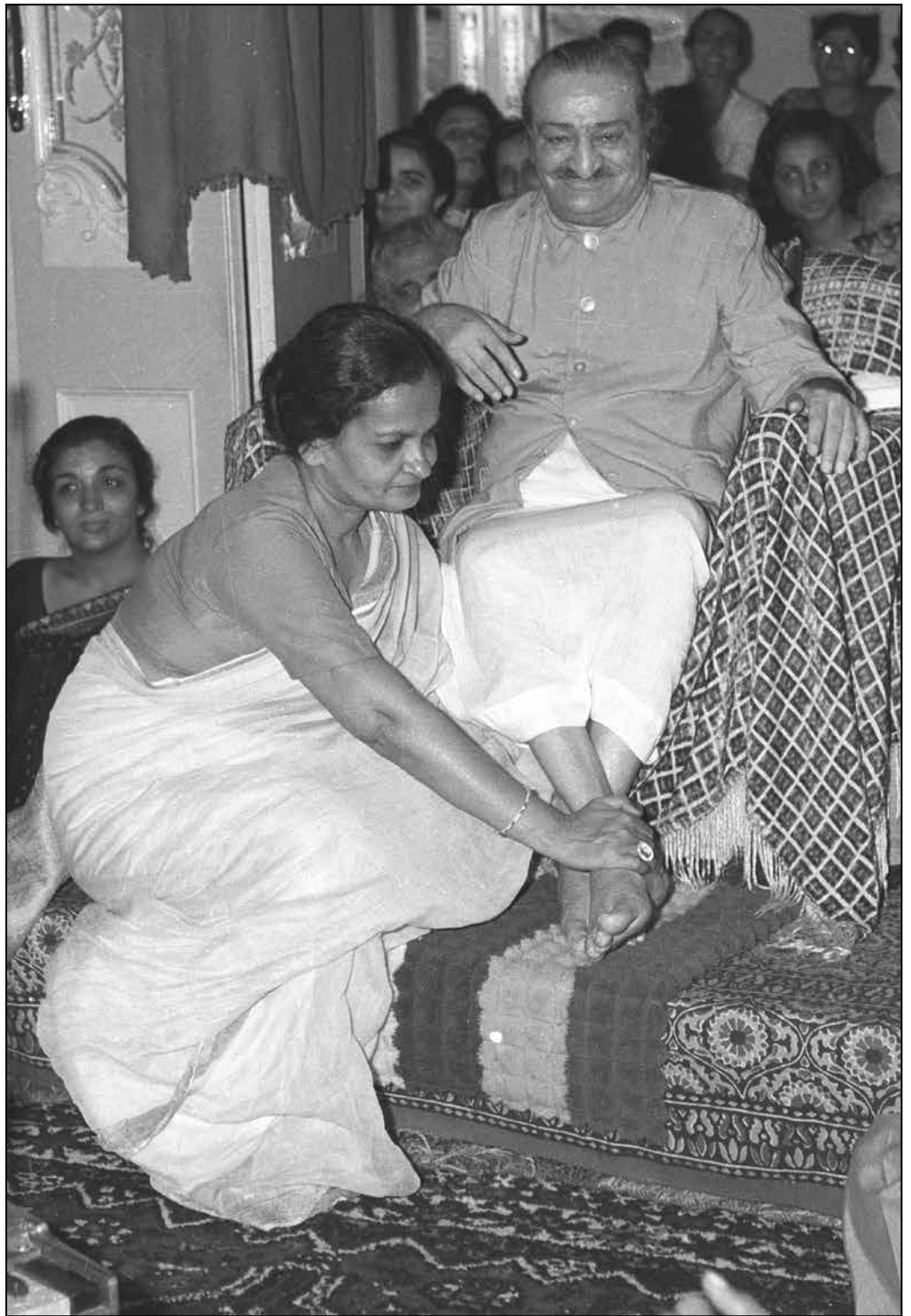
An astounding event then took place between Begum and Beloved Baba, before leaving she took hold of Baba’s feet, which He allowed, and with her head on His knee quietly wept for quite a long time, patting her bowed head Baba gestured, “You are most blessed.”⁴

On the 3rd of May 1963 Begum arrived at Guruprasad, fulfilling her promise to Baba she would sing for Him for two days, and on the following afternoon she sang for about three hours, accompanied by Golwalkar on sarangi and by a brilliant tabla player.

Guruprasad was overflowing for her recital, and Baba allowed the women mandali to listen to her from behind a partly open door, several times He would turn to them and gesture with a radiant expression, “What a magnificent voice she has!”

Baba commented lovingly to Begum, “A voice such as you have is very, very rare.” She bowed to the Beloved and said, “It is all by your grace.”

The following afternoon Begum gave her second ghazal performance for Beloved Baba who gave her a ring with His image on it and a pink scarf which she wore throughout the afternoon. While singing her last two ghazals tears flowed



Begum Akhtar touching Meher Baba’s feet, 3 May 1963 at Guruprasad, Pune.
Photographer: Meelan. © Meher Nazar Publications.

down her cheeks, and as Baba had done at Meherazad, He handed her his handkerchief to wipe her tears, many in the audience were also weeping with the beauty of her singing.

Begum saved the ghazal Baba loved most for her last offering, the first line being, *I am the smoke from a snuffed-out candle, going toward my Goal*.⁵

Even though Baba was in seclusion He allowed an

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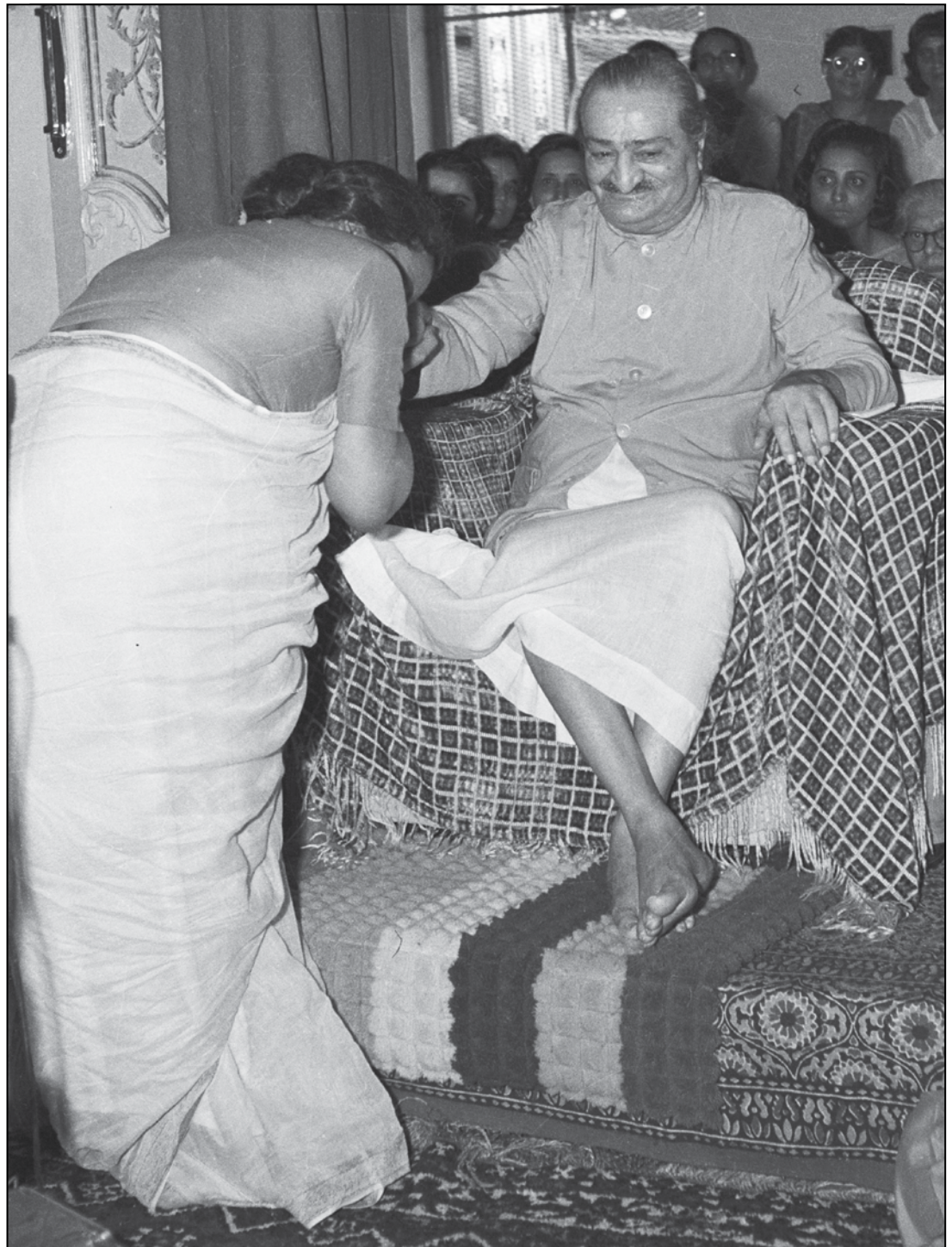
unscheduled visit by Begum Akhtar to Meherazad in October 1963. She had written to Beloved Baba pleading for His approval to allow her to sing to Him, as she was visiting Poona from Lucknow for a singing engagement.

Begum bought her sarangi and tabla players with her, and sang three ghazals for Baba's pleasure, Baba expressed how pleased He was by giving her, and her tabla player a shawl each which He had used, and to the sarangi player He gave one of His handkerchiefs, and as she was establishing a new music school in Lucknow she was presented with a large photograph of Baba to be hung there, receiving Baba's blessing for the school.⁶

As Lucknow is in Uttar Pradesh, Northern India, and was Begum's home and base of activities, her ability to visit Baba was not always accomplished with ease, unless her singing and concert schedules took her to Maharashtra.

It wasn't until 1965 that she had the opportunity of Baba's darshan again when the Avatar Meher Baba Centre of Ahmednagar arranged a public concert for her to sing for Baba's birthday on the 25th February in the evening before 7,000 people.

On the morning of the 25th, prior to the concert, Begum went to Meherazad and sang ghazals for Baba as her personal gift of love for His birthday, Baba told her, "Your voice is matchless, your songs were my best birthday present", which bought the response from her, "It is all



Begum Akhtar kissing Meher Baba's hand. 3 May 1963, at Guruprasad, Pune.
Photographer: Meelan. © Meher Nazar Publications.

your grace Baba, there is nothing else."

Baba commented on how tired she looked and said she should rest that afternoon, with tear-filled eyes she told Baba, "My rest is only at your feet."⁷

After 1965 there is no record of Begum visiting Baba again, perhaps one may detect a spiritual malady in her nature and infer a symbolic meaning from the conversation she had with Baba during her last meeting with Him at Meherazad in 1965, and its aftermath.

She had mentioned to Baba she intended going on pilgrimage to Mecca to visit Kaaba, the holy of holies for orthodox Muslims, Baba asked who would be accompanying her, she answered she would be going alone, to which Baba said, “Am I not going with you?”, He then gave her a handkerchief, asking her to place it on Kaaba and return it to Him after she had arrived back, but after returning, Begum wrote to Baba informing Him sadly she had lost the handkerchief on the way to Mecca, and could not carry out His wish.⁸

Begum's career continued to flourish even though she was drinking heavily and continuously in a state of loneliness and depression, which were constant factors during her life. Eventually the stress she put on herself resulted in her falling ill in 1974 and being rushed to hospital.

She died at the age of sixty, on the 30th October 1974, and was buried in a marble grave alongside her mother under a mango tree in the large garden of her home in Lucknow.

One of course wonders what personal connection she kept with Beloved Baba after 1965, but there can be no doubting the connection Baba kept with her, not only did He continue to derive pleasure from her matchless ghazal singing on record and radio over the next few years,⁹ but we should remember with wonder, the intense pleasure she gave the Highest of the High from the very first time she sang for Him personally and thereafter, and the compassionate response to her pain when she clasped His feet and wept on His knee in 1963 and He so compassionately told her, “You are most blessed.”

References

1. LORD MEHER online p. 4906.
2. Biographical details various Internet sources.
3. LORD MEHER online p. 4797.
4. Ibid pp. 4906-7.
5. Ibid pp. 4978-4982.
6. Ibid p. 5046.
7. Ibid p. 5121.
8. GIFT OF GOD. Arnavaz Dadachanji p. 182.
9. LORD MEHER online p. 5208.

**Sarangi*: a bowed string instrument which most resembles the human voice.

Becoming drowned

Meher Baba, 1960

“Says Hafiz: *Only the Grace of the Perfect Master can make you free from all wants. If even a wee bit of the effulgent Glory of God were to be revealed, you would become millions of times brighter than the earth's sun*”.

If for one slight moment you have the fortune to drown yourself in the ocean of Love, do not hesitate. That moment does not come frequently. As soon as the Master says “Drown”, do not hesitate. Drown, the moment the Master commands you to drown, and don't worry about what the world will think of you. The world will call you mad, but you should not hesitate.

If even one hair of yours is dipped in the ocean of love, you become wet eternally. In that bliss of Union with the Beloved that you then enjoy, there is no break. It is continuous. From head to foot you become God if in this Path you become footless and headless.

© AMBPPCT. Extract from *DARSHAN HOURS*,
p. 9. Edited by Eruch Jessawalla and Rick Chapman
Submitted by Reg Love.

Drowning in ice cream

Meher Baba

Meher Baba travelling by foot or by Train...

Discussion amongst the party led to a decision of ‘train’. They took the train the same afternoon to Moradabad in a general southerly direction and arrived there the same evening.

The party immediately set out to find sadhus. A man who, it was said, had been sitting under a tree for four years, beckoned them. They went over to him and he applied ash to their foreheads, including Baba's.

Baba asked him did he want anything to eat, and he said, yes, he would like ice-cream. Baba had a large bowl of it brought and with his own hands fed him as much as he could eat.

Baba told the man, ‘Become drowned’ and directed Padri to give the shopkeeper from whom they had bought the ice-cream, five rupees to pay for more ice-cream should the devotee ask later on again for more.

© AMBPPCT. Extract from *THE SILENT WORD*
by Francis Brabazon, p.p. 220, 221.
Submitted by Reg Love.

Avatar's Abode Trust Archive Committee Convenor's Report 2018-19

David Bowling, 19/7/2019.

Summary

Thanks to the efforts of a large group of volunteers this has been another very productive year for the Archives Committee. The commitment and enthusiasm of our volunteers is much appreciated.

We have made significant progress in continuing the preservation of the collection and we now are moving into a phase where we can share some of the collection items more widely with the Baba family.

Over the coming year we plan to:

- complete the rehousing of the Francis Brabazon document collection and other small collections gifted to the Trust;
- finish the cataloguing and safe storage and display of our artefacts and relics;
- continue digitising the document collection;
- transcribe documents that will be of interest to Baba lovers;
- develop the online searchable database of documents for public viewing; as well as
- install new display cabinets in the Baba House archive room.

Volunteers

23 volunteers plus 7 committee members are now actively supporting the work of the Archive Committee.

This year a new group of volunteer transcribers have joined the team plus a small team undertaking assessment of the sensitivity of documents before they can be approved for publication.

Workgroup Reports

1. Rehousing

Four volunteers have continued rehousing the Francis Brabazon collection. Approximately 200 pages remain to be rehoused.

The document collection has been rehoused into 46 archival boxes totalling over 23,000 pages. This year we also completed rehousing material from two other small collections gifted to the Trust.

2. Digitisation

Since July 2017 two volunteers have been scanning documents into PDF/A (archival PDF) format. Where the original document is typed scans are converted into searchable PDF format.

Over 14,000 pages housed in 29 boxes have been digitised. This is approximately two thirds of the Francis Brabazon collection. We expect to complete scanning of the Francis Brabazon collection in 2021.

3. Transcription

Over the past year twelve volunteers have transcribed and triple checked handwritten correspondence to and from Francis and have started transcribing some longer manuscripts.

These transcripts will be made available alongside the scans of the original documents on the database.

4. Archival Publications

A dedicated volunteer continues to maintain and add new items to the publications collection.

This collection now contains over 800 volumes plus many periodicals and pamphlets. He maintains a digital catalogue of the entire collection and continues liaising with overseas bibliographers re a more complete global bibliography.

5. Relics and Artefacts

Jeanette Isaacs-Young continues to manage the preservation, conservation, and display of artefacts and relics with assistance from six other volunteers.

Nearly 100 items have now been recorded in an archival artefacts and relics catalogue. Many items that were on long-term display have now been placed into secure storage.

6. Film, Video, and Audio

A volunteer with specific expertise with vinyl records has cleaned and re-sleeved the many records in Francis' collection.

The Australian National Archives recommends all magnetic tape material be digitised by 2025. A new member of the committee has specific technical expertise in this area and will be advising us on a plan to digitise the extensive collection of material on magnetic tape.

7. Photographs

Over 1,960 photographs in the Avatar's Abode collection have been catalogued. Detailed information on each image is catalogued on a special photographic database.

Close liaison is maintained with other photographic archivists in the USA, UK, and India and we respond to queries from people working with other collections. We are currently exploring options to include photographic images in the newly developed online searchable database.

8. Collection Sharing

A team of 7 volunteers has developed a systematic approach to assessing documents before approval for publication.

Documents are assessed to determine if they contain sensitive material that would not be suitable for publishing or if there are copyright issues that need to be resolved.

Information Technology

A skilled volunteer undertakes regular monthly maintenance and backups of the computer system.

Online Database

A trial version of an online searchable database using CollectiveAccess software has been developed with assistance from Baba lover in the USA.

This database is used worldwide by museums and galleries. It is structured to closely mirror the database used by the Trust in India.

The development of the database provides an opportunity for us to share selected items from the collection with the global Baba family and also provides secure access to a more complete range of material for people undertaking research.

The search capacity of the database is comprehensive. The artefacts and relics records and the photographic database records can also be added to this database. We expect this database to be launched later in the year.

Training

The Sunshine Coast Heritage Team provides an excellent series of free workshops during the year.

Volunteers attended 9 days of workshops which included:

- Environmental Conditions;
- Museum and Heritage Planning;
- Paper and Photographic Conservation; and
- First Nations Peoples in Museums.

My Wish

The lover has to keep the wish of the Beloved. My wish for my lovers is as follows:

- 1. Do not shirk your responsibilities.**
- 2. Attend faithfully to your worldly duties, but keep always at the back of your mind that all this is Baba's.**
- 3. When you feel happy, think: "Baba wants me to be happy." When you suffer, think: "Baba wants me to suffer."**
- 4. Be resigned to every situation and think honestly and sincerely: "Baba has placed me in this situation."**
- 5. With the understanding that Baba is in everyone, try to help and serve others.**
- 6. I say with my Divine Authority to each and all that whosoever takes my name at the time of breathing his last comes to me; so do not forget to remember me in your last moments. Unless you start remembering me from now on, it will be difficult to remember me when your end approaches. You should start practising from now on. Even if you take my name only once every day, you will not forget to remember me in your dying moments.**

— Meher Baba

Trust Master Plan engagement opportunity

Invitation to Australian and New Zealand followers of Avatar Meher Baba
Saturday 5th October 2019

David Bowling – on behalf of the Avatar's Abode Trust

In March 2019 the Chairman of the Avatar Meher Baba Perpetual Public Charitable Trust, placed the following information on the Trust website (see ambppct.org/masterPlanS.php)

In the Trust Deed of 1959, Beloved Baba charged the Avatar Meher Baba Trust with ensuring the development of the Trust estate; today primarily comprising of Meherabad, Meherazad, and Meher Nazar. In fulfilling this responsibility, the Trust is especially focused on the need to accommodate increasing numbers of pilgrims who will want access to these special places associated with the life and universal work of the Avatar of our age. And Meher Baba has assured us that the interest in these sites is going to increase substantially as the period of His advent unfolds.

In this respect, the Trust has over the past four years drafted a master plan to guide the long-term development of these sites. This level of planning is essential if the Trust is to secure the necessary conditions for the increasing number of pilgrims to experience Meher Baba's darshan. This current master plan draws extensively on other plans that have been used to guide development at Meherabad and Meherazad. However this current plan extends farther into the future, as it anticipates an increase in the number of pilgrims up to 1 million at Amartithi. Ample examples elsewhere in India show that this kind of increase would by no means be unprecedented.

This Trust master plan will be of considerable interest to countless lovers of Meher Baba throughout the world, and especially for those who care about the future of the Trust estate. Because of the worldwide Baba family's wholehearted concern about the well-being of the Trust estate, the Trust is planning to engage His lovers in an effort to learn about the master plan and to offer their feedback before the plan is finalized. Ultimately the successful implementation of this master plan will require the wholehearted support of His lovers globally.

Australian Presentation at Avatar's Abode

The Avatar Meher Baba Trust has generously included Australia in the itinerary planned for this engagement with His lovers.

A one-day presentation, coinciding with the annual Spring Sahavas celebrated at Avatar's Abode, **is scheduled for Saturday the 5th October 2019.**

The planned program is
9am – 11.30am morning session,
lunch 12 noon to 1.15pm,
1.30 – 4pm afternoon session.



Avatar Meher Baba's Samadhi at Meherabad, India.

The Presenters

The presenters will be **Merwan Dubash**, a Trustee from the Avatar Meher Baba Trust and member of the Trust Planning Committee, and **Daniel Stone**, a member of the Board at Meher Spiritual Centre in South Carolina who has been working closely with the Avatar Meher Baba Trust in the development of the draft Master Plan.

At each of these sessions, a program will be conducted in which the foundations of the Master Plan will be presented along with maps that show how the Trust properties will evolve over time.

Following opportunities for questions, all participants will be invited to gather in small groups to offer feedback and suggestions that will be gathered for later use by the planning committee in finalising the plan. Each program will conclude with a brief sharing of feedback that emerges from the smaller



Merwan Dubash



Daniel Stone

Spring Sahavas 2019

Sunday 6th & Monday 7th October

David Hobson – on behalf of the Spring Sahavas Committee

Merwan Dubash and Daniel Stone, who will facilitate the Avatar Meher Baba PPC Trust Master Plan Engagement Opportunity meeting on the 5th October at Avatar's Abode, have very kindly agreed to give presentations at this year's Spring Sahavas.

The Spring Sahavas will be on Sunday 6th and Monday 7th October, this being a long weekend in QLD, NSW, the ACT and SA.

Merwan Dubash

Merwan is the son of Rhoda and Adi Dubash, who were our guests at the Avatar's Abode Anniversary in June 1991. Merwan was born in May of 1947. In a second totally unexpected cable sent to Rhoda and Adi soon after Merwan's birth Baba directed Rhoda and Adi to name their first-born child Merwan. Merwan's first "meeting" with Baba was as a nineteen month old infant in 1948, when Baba held Merwan on His lap.

As a child in the 1950s Merwan again had two brief opportunities to be in Baba's presence, and then as a teenager in the 1960s he had three lengthy stays with Baba during Baba's summer stays at Guruprasad in Pune. This is also when Merwan first met Baba's twins nephews Rustom and Sohrab Irani, and Meherwan Mistry, and the four of them used to create quite a racket at Guruprasad, so much so that Baba directed them to maintain silence between twelve and two so as not to disturb His mandali Pendu's afternoon nap.

Merwan will give three one-hour talks related to his and his parents' experiences with Baba. In Merwan's words, "these will all be stories about being with Baba, and as my Dad Adi used to say 'with zero intellectual content'".

Daniel Stone

Daniel will give two presentations, one centred around his own coming-to-Baba story which links into the creation of the Meher Baba group in Washington, under the watchful eye of Kitty Davy; and the other, "Creating Real Harmony", which came out of experiences working with different Baba groups around the US, trying to map out the natural stages that Baba groups go through as they mature.

Program

The full Spring Sahavas Program will be available closer to the event.

The weekend of the 5th, 6th and 7th October promises to be a very special one at Avatar's Abode, with the Avatar Meher Baba PPC Trust planning meeting and the Spring Sahavas. We strongly recommend that you mark these dates on your calendar. Jai Meher Baba!

group discussions, followed by final comments. The entire program will last approximately 4 hours.

This is the first time that the Trust has embarked on such an effort, and the trustees are undertaking this effort in a spirit of transparency and in sharing a sense of responsibility with all of His lovers for making these precious sites as available as possible for the multitudes that will want to share in the bounty of the God-Man's advent.

All Baba lovers in Australia and New Zealand are invited to attend this presentation.

Please note the presenters have requested that no video or audio recording and no photographs are taken of the presentation.

Further information about the draft Master Plan will be circulated before the event.

Register by 22nd September 2019

For planning purposes, please register your interest in attending at your earliest convenience, but no later than 22nd September 2019 by emailing: david.bowling@westnet.com.au; or phoning or texting David on 0414 739 640.

We look forward to your participation.

Wafts of the fragrance of our Beloved Lord Meher Baba's visit to Avatar's Abode in 1958

The 61st Anniversary – 7th to 10th June 2019

Lorraine Brown

The fragrance of our Beloved Lord, Meher Baba's Presence at Avatar's Abode over the weekend celebrating the 61st Anniversary of His visit here in 1958 was strong and pervading. A rose garden of offerings was made to the Beloved throughout the weekend, each rose soul giving wholeheartedly what was in their nature to give to their Beloved Friend and Lord:- delicious food, organisation, stories, music, companionship, tea and coffee, hugs, smiles, challenges. As with all rose gardens, there are always thorns, some rose varieties being more thorny than others, but always, the fragrance of His Presence pervaded, and sometimes the offerings were 'surrenderings' and 'forgivings'.

Musically, Baba blessed us through His singers and musicians: Dr Ajit Soni, Adrienne Shamszad, Raine Eastman-Gannet, Angela, Amelie and Owen Newcomb, Jake Horsey, Ward Parks and the chorus of singers, Wineshop Singers, Robert and Ravi Welsh, Meherteja Chinthamuneedi, Torian Brewer, Phillipa, Jenny Thomson, Lorraine Brown and all who raised their voices wholeheartedly in the after Arti singing each morning and evening and joined in with Ward's songs on the Sunday evening program, touching the hearts of listeners. And the children presenting their play.

Through words, Baba blessed us through His poets and scholars:

Kendra, Geoff Gunther, Ward Parks and Ray Kerkhove, capturing through curiosity and over-awing with the power of words, the intellects of the listeners. And the words of the conversations of His lovers, in the intergenerational workshop facilitated by Jaya Foley, and the 'tea talk' and 'around the meal table talk' where He kept His lovers company through each other. It was just as Eruch had said when he was asked one time in Mandali Hall, Meherazad, "What shall we do when all you (Baba's close mandali) have gone?" Eruch replied, "You shall find Him in each other." And the wonderful opportunities Beloved Baba gives for this in the Sahavas of His Anniversary celebrations here on Avatar's Abode attest to what Eruch told us.

Through the generosity and deliciousness of the food prepared for His lovers, Baba blessed us with nourishment for the body: prepared with love by many willing helpers, the Chinthamuneedi's preparing curry for Saturday evening's dinner and Indian breakfast for Sunday morning, with delicious chai and savoury rabwa (sp?) to bring the taste of the Beloved into our mouths and the fragrance of His spiciness to our nostrils; Robert Blair creating another delicious curry for Sunday evening; warming soup and potato bake for Friday evening; Jedda bringing the spice of Mexico

for Sunday lunch; salad rolls and sandwiches, a picnic offering on the Saturday, as Baba would sometimes take His Western lovers on picnics during the tours in India; and lovely left-overs for our final meal together on Monday for lunch. And Jeannie Baker making sure everyone could always get a tea or coffee and some bikkies whenever they needed a little something to keep them going; and our baristas, Ira and Jethro, for coffee to spark up the energy when it was flagging.

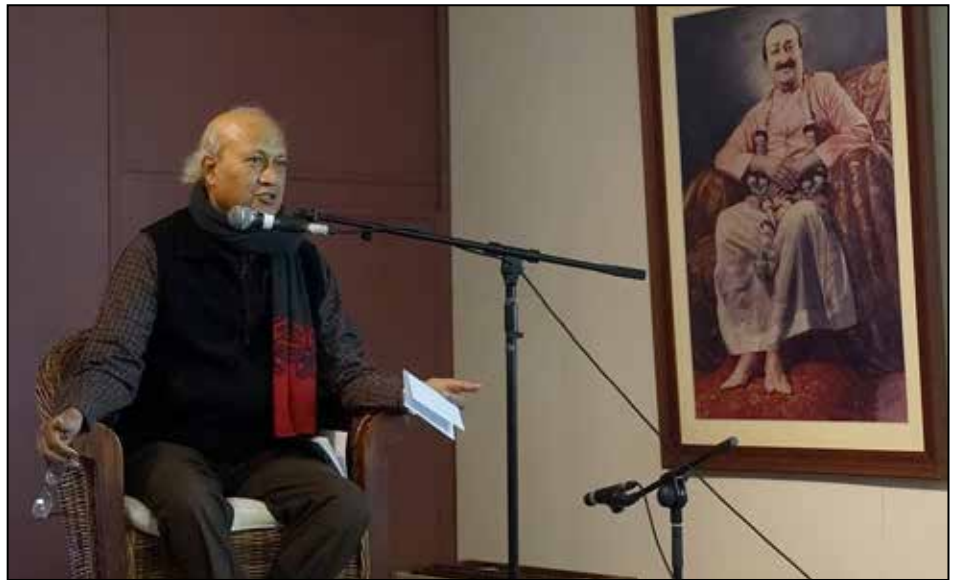
And through His 'organisers', Baba blessed us with clean toilets, venues that were kept clean and tidy and in order, programs that ran to time, with some challenges, but that is the nature of programs – His organisers plan and do their best and Baba can be mischievous and has His own ways of 'doing the rest'; reception to welcome all His guests to His Anniversary. The Anniversary Planning Committee, chaired this year by Tony Foley; the programming sub-committee, facilitated by Sue Jamison assisted by Leigh Rowan and the many volunteers who worked quietly behind the scenes. No need for 'thanking', for each one gives to the Beloved according to their own nature and the Beloved accepts according to His Nature. And the offerings to the Beloved are as many and varied as His lovers.

And through His 'recorders', Baba

blesses those of His lovers who were unable to attend to get some hint of what He poured out to His lovers fortunate enough to be there, and for those who were there to be able to experience again and remember their Beloved's generosity at the 61st Anniversary of His visit to Avatar's Abode in 1958: Michael Le Page, George Fricker, and many with smart phones (sometimes on 'flight mode', though sometimes their absorption in the loveliness of the moment made them forgetful of these practical details) recording what was happening to enhance their remembrances of their Beloved's gifts throughout the Anniversary.

And our Bountiful Beloved, Meher Baba, blessed us with some grey clouds, rain, mud and cold winds and some sun, blue skies and warmth – but throughout, the warmth of His Love and His Presence and His fragrance pervaded.

Avatar Meher Baba Ki Jai!



Dr Arjit Soni.



Adrienne Shamszad and Alan Manoukian.



Raine Eastman-Gannett raises Baba's Flag.



Angela and Owen Newcomb.



Top: Bob & Ravi Welsh. Centre: Lorraine Brown, Bottom: Jake Horsey.

Top: Ward Parks. Centre: Torian Brewer. Bottom: Kendra Keller.



The Wine Shop Singers.

My Dear Children

Given by Meher Baba at the East-West Gathering, November 1962

Your coming to me from different places and from across oceans has pleased me. And although no sacrifice to be near me is too great, I am touched by the sacrifice that some of you have made to come here.

Those who have not been able to come to me should not feel disheartened, for my love is with them as always, and especially so at this time. I know how they are longing to be near me even for an hour, and how helpless they are in their circumstances.

You have come from great distances, not for some convention or conference, but to enjoy my company and feel afresh my love in your hearts. It is a coming together of East and West in the house of their Father.

All religions of the world proclaim that there is but one God, the Father of all in creation.

I am that Father.

I have come to remind all people that they should live on earth as the children of the one Father until my grace awakens them to the realisation that they are all one without a second, and that all divisions and conflict and hatred are but a shadow-play of their own ignorance.

Although all are my children, they ignore the simplicity and beauty of this Truth by indulging in hatreds, conflicts and wars that divide them in enmity, instead of living as one family in their Father's house. Even amongst you who love me and accept me for what I am, there is sometimes lack of understanding of one another's hearts.

Patience have I suffered these things in silence for all my children. It is time that they become aware of the presence of their Father in their midst and of their responsibility towards Him and themselves. I shall break my Silence, and, with my Word of words, arouse my children to realise in their lives, the indivisible Existence which is God.

Throughout the years I have been giving many messages and discourses. Today I simply want to tell you who are gathered here in my Love to shut the ears of your minds and open the ears of your hearts to hear my Word when I utter it. Do not seek my blessing, which is always with you, but long for the day when my grace will descend on all who love me. Most blessed are they who do not even long for my grace, but simply seek to do my will.

— Meher Baba

Long Reef Headland

People fall into silence
when they reach the top of the headland
and look out.

Stone blocks the size of ritual altars
lie scattered below like offcuts
from a primordial work site
and beyond is the ocean.

Nothing can exist on this rock shelf:
no houses
no streets
no factory outlets
no real estate offices,
just creatures in pools or those hidden under shells
and solitary fisherman who sweep in and out like
homeless sea birds.

The cliff face itself shows the curling lines
of God's thumb print
impressed upon its high walls.

Aboriginal clans once collected red and white
ochre from them for their sacred ceremonies
and later they were mined for copper ore.

Ships were wrecked and lives were lost
coming too close to this headland.
While whales for centuries have passed by
on their migratory journeys unharmed.

The headland was never granted a lighthouse.
Yet over time it found its own sovereign radiance
like a person who sifts through their changing
life experience and finds a deeper reality.

Ross Keating

The Astronaut

The astronaut circling in space
cannot see his heart
only the earth
bathed in blue and white.

His secret longing roams about
restless, unseen,
like the earth's magnetic poles.

He takes pictures of what he sees:
a spinning sphere
touched by the sun's rays.

But his heart escapes his eye
just as silence passes
undetected
between the planets of words.

Ross Keating

Visiting the Optometrist

My optometrist tests my eyes for night blindness.
He says in my case it is caused by prolonged
exposure to sunlight leading to cataracts,
which over time have developed in both my eyes.
I realized something was wrong when my vision
became blurred. It was like looking through a cloudy
piece of glass or at some impressionist painting.
He said this is the result of protein clumping
which reduces the sharpness of an image reaching
the retina. He assured me that it often happens
with age and that my case was nothing special,
and if it really got bad I could always have
an operation, which involves a very effective and
safe procedure that always yields positive results.
He then qualified all this as only a medical
assessment. In his opinion, I should see it as a fact
of my mortality. He then looked at me closely:
*What more of the world do you need to see –
haven't you seen enough to know
it's just a non-stop movie that's projected
onto the screen of mind in which you act yourself.
These cataracts are a blessing, a gift in disguise;
a calling to re-focus on what is real and lasting.*

Ross Keating

The Day Becomes the Answer

Wit and wisdom of Elizabeth, disciple of Meher Baba

by Charles Haynes

From the Introduction:

Meher Baba Himself described Elizabeth as “My rock” – and indeed she was the most imperturbable, practical, and steadfast human being I have ever known. If “spirituality is poise”, as Meher Baba has said, then Elizabeth was an exemplar of true spirituality. Baba’s Persian name for her was Dilruba, meaning “stealer of hearts”. ... Elizabeth’s nickname among Baba’s Eastern women disciples was “Yes, Baba dear” because whatever Baba asked of her Elizabeth instantly responded, “Yes, Baba dear.”

In his recollections of life with Elizabeth Chapin Patterson (1896-1980), Charles Haynes provides an intimate portrait of one of Meher Baba’s foremost Western disciples. Through her care for Meher Spiritual Center and everyday interactions, Elizabeth – with her remarkable wit and wisdom – left an enduring example of how to live Meher Baba’s message of love and truth.

About the Author

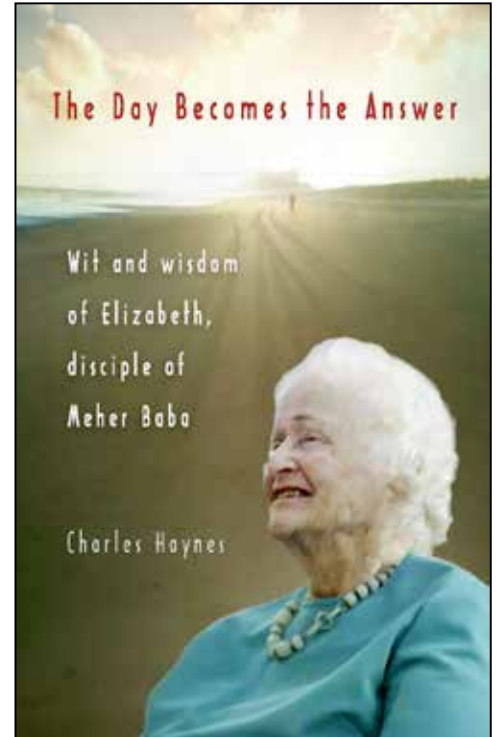
Charles Haynes met Meher Baba on May 21, 1958, one year after first learning about Him from Elizabeth Patterson. In 1962, Charles participated in Meher Baba’s East-West Gathering held in Poona, India. For 23 years, Elizabeth was a spiritual mother for Charles, as well as his sister Wendy and brother John. Charles also served with Elizabeth on the Meher Centre Board of Directors.

Available from Avatar’s Abode Bookstore

\$20.00 AUD. Plus postage if you want it sent.

Contact Steven Hein. Email: avatarsabodebookstore@gmail.com

Phone: 0412 080 424.



The Beloved Is All In All

by Francis Brabazon

Published posthumously, *The Beloved is All in All* is a collection of 101 ghazals and 11 poems written by Beloved Baba’s mandali member Francis Brabazon during the ten years he spent staying with Meher Baba in India.

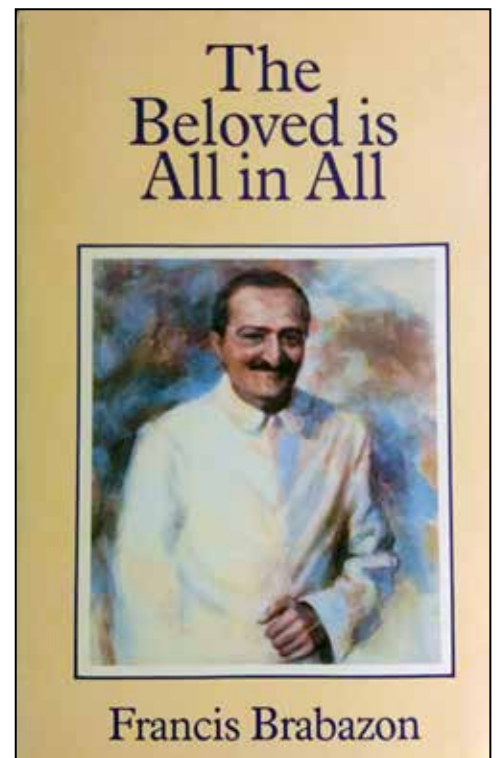
Each work in the book was read out to Baba. Francis recalls “each reading brought the blessing of His embrace, and every embrace contained the seed of the next pieces.”

Available from Avatar’s Abode Bookstore

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Phone: 0412 080 424.



Shirley Gillen

Chris Gillen writes to David Hobson at Avatar's Abode ...

Shirley Gillen passes away 3rd July 2019

Dear David and lovers of Beloved Baba,
Just wanted to let you know that my mother, Shirley Gillen, passed away yesterday 3rd of July, just after midnight in her retirement hostel room at Flynn Lodge in Alice Springs aged 92.

She was surrounded by a couple of photos of Baba and had the following quote on a little blue card from *The Everything and the Nothing* beside her bed which the nurse had thoughtfully put beside her head on the bed under a rose before I arrived:

... *"when you entrust your mind to Me by constantly remembering Me, there are no thoughts left which the mind can feed. This fasting is the true and essential fasting."*

I smiled when I saw that the staff had written on the paperwork beside the word Religion: Meher Baba.

Shirley found Baba (or Baba found Shirley) in 1972 in a lonely seeking period of her life because her only son, Chris, had gone off to a Catholic monastery. She wandered into the Meher Handcrafts shop in Mooloolaba on her birthday and picked up a Baba book and bought it. She was so impressed with the teachings in the book that she went straight back to the shop and ended up with an invitation (could have been from Raine or Rada) to Avatar's Abode.

Shirley quickly joined the Baba scene in both Queensland and Sydney with trips to India and a whole group of new friends beginning with Bill & Joan LePage, Judith Garbett, Ena Lemmon, Grace Swan, Joanna Bruford, John Grant, Roy & Ros Hayes and lots of others who came along later, too numerous to list.

It was just magic today going through her belongings and packing up her room while discovering such treasures as a locket given to her by Mehera with Baba's hair and the tiniest photo of Baba inside and such beautiful letters to her from Mani & Mehera and photos of her many adventures in India and around Australia. Although she lost most of her short term memory in recent years, her recognition of close family and the names of all the Baba lovers in the newsletter and in conversation stayed with her with



Shirley Gillen

astonishing clarity. She kept a photo of Joanna Bruford close beside her for years after she passed away.

Shirley expressed a wish to be cremated, which will take place here in Alice Springs on Thursday 11th July, the day after silence day. If it is okay with the AA Trust I am sure Shirley would love her ashes to find a place in the gardens of Avatar's Abode sometime in the next 6 months when my wife & I will be passing your way.

Cheers

Chris Gillen

Alice Springs

PS: You are welcome if you wish, David, to share this with a wider Baba community.

In Dust I Sing

150 Ghazals by Francis Brabazon

The eternal Beloved, Avatar Meher Baba, over the years I was with him at Meherazad gave me the shape and content of these poems.

The form is based on the Persian ghazal, perfected by Hafiz 600 years ago and carried down in the Urdu language to the present day. The content is the relationship between the Lover and the Beloved – a relationship that is never wholly fulfilled until the Lover ceases to exist in himself and passes away in the Beloved.

This relationship has its root in the very nature of God, which is love. As Baba has explained it:

God is Love. And Love must love. And to love there must be a Beloved. But since God is Existence infinite and eternal there is no one for Him to love but Himself. And in order to love Himself He must imagine Himself as the Beloved whom He as the Lover imagines He loves.*

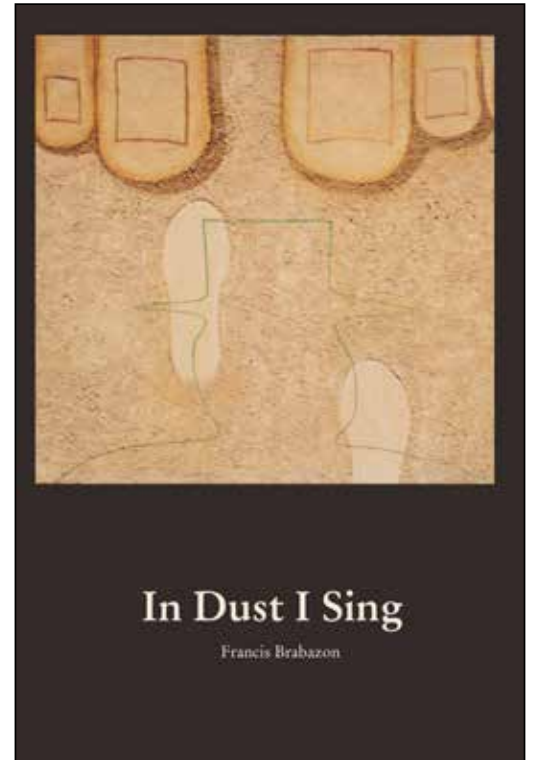
F.B.

*See page 1, *The Everything and the Nothing* by Meher Baba

Available from Avatar's Abode Bookstore

\$18.00 AUD. Plus postage if you want it sent.

Contact Steven Hein. Email: avatarsabodebookstore@gmail.com Phone: 0412 080 424.



Meher Baba Australia

Steven Hein, MBA Editor

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.

Interested in assisting with production? Contact Steven Hein, Editor. stevenhein101@gmail.com.

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 & 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 contacts

Editor: stevenhein101@gmail.com

Mailing List / Subscriptions: David Bowling
meherbabaaustralia@gmail.com



Avatar Meher Baba, 1954 Andhra, India.

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.

Meher Baba Australia

September to November 2019

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 meherbabaaustralia@gmail.com for information.

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.

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.

Deadline Next Issue:

NO LATER THAN 15th October 2019.

Cover This Issue: Meher Baba at the East-West Gathering, November 1962, Guruprasad, Pune. Elizabeth Patterson and Eruch Jessawala on the left; Shuddhanand Bharati (back of head in foreground). Photographer: Meelan.

© Meher Nazar Publications.

Sydney Meher Baba Community

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 are held on the last Sunday of every month. Prayers and Arti, open discussions about Baba, occasional guests, vegetarian potluck meal. Contact; Ross Keating M: 0416 883 373
E: ross-keating@hotmail.com.

Monday Night Discourse Meetings are held on most Mondays at the home of Kris Wyld. Occasional special guests. Contact Kris Wyld M 0407 481 323.

The Meher Baba Sydney community is always searching for volunteers to serve in Baba's cause and love and in a variety of ways. For further information contact Kevin Mossberger on 0412 559 402.

West Australia Meher Baba Gatherings

Phone Paul Morris 0429 310 169 or Julie Lee-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 Road, Wanganui. Phone: (06) 347 2974,
Email: jillhobbs1954@gmail.com

What's on at Avatar's Abode

AMBPPCT Master Plan engagement opportunity

Saturday 5th October 2019

The presenters will be **Merwan Dubash**, a Trustee from the Avatar Meher Baba Trust and member of the AMBPPCT Planning Committee, and **Daniel Stone**, a member of the Board at Meher Spiritual Centre in South Carolina USA who has been working closely with the Avatar Meher Baba Trust in the development of the draft Master Plan.

The planned program is 9am – 11.30am morning session, lunch 12 noon to 1.15pm, 1.30 – 4pm afternoon session.

More details will be made available on the Avatar's Abode website avatarsabode.com.au closer to the event.

Spring Sahavas

Sunday 6th and Monday 7th October 2019

Special Guests

Merwan Dubash and **Daniel Stone**.

Merwan Dubash and Daniel Stone, who will facilitate the Avatar Meher Baba PPC Trust Master Plan Engagement Opportunity meeting on 5th October at Avatar's Abode, have very kindly agreed to give presentations at this year's Spring Sahavas on Sunday 6th and Monday 7th October.

Keep up to date with the Spring Sahavas program at the Avatar's Abode website avatarsabode.com.au

Monday Mornings Meeting

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.

Tuesday Mornings You are most welcome to join us in the Bookstore, 11am–12pm. Geoff Gunther (07) 5442 2467.

Wednesdays Reading Group 4.30pm – 5.30pm in the Bookstore. Contact Wilma Pearson phone 0404 775 789 or (07) 5473 9947, email wilmapearson@aapt.net.au.

Friday Mornings This study group is taking a break until further notice.

Saturday Film Nights on 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 Regular Baba Meetings

Mid-month Morning Brunch in Camberwell. Ring Cynthia on 0409 880 005 for information.

Last Sunday of the Month at Avondale Heights, starting at 1pm. Lunch provided. Ring Jasmine 0438 300 193 for Avondale Heights Baba happenings in case of any changes.

Meher Baba Australia is a non-profit publication independent of the Avatar's Abode Trust. The views expressed in articles in *Meher Baba Australia* are solely those of the authors.